



BANKSTOWN WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL

Excursion Policy

As at 11 September 2014

Policy Statement:

- 1.1 School excursions are structured learning experiences provided by the school which are conducted external to the school site. As they can pose risks this policy is directed at managing those risks.
- 1.2 Excursions are inclusive and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate.
- 1.3 A duty of care is owed to students while on excursions and cannot be delegated to parents, caregivers, volunteers or employees of external organisations. This includes providing safe transport options.
- 1.4 A risk management plan is to be developed before seeking approval for any excursion.
- 1.5 Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in excursions, including relevant medical information, are to be obtained from parents/caregivers.
- 1.6 Students must behave appropriately at all times while on excursions.
- 1.7 "Virtual excursions" form part of our teaching and learning programs. Using videoconferencing students are visiting locations across the globe and interacting in real time with other students, teachers and content specialists. Many of the procedures which follow are relevant to "virtual excursions". In particular, issues of curriculum relevance and educational value; duty of care and risk management; child protection; parental consent; and appropriate student behaviour.

Audience:

- 2.1 The students, parents and staff of Bankstown West Public School.
- 2.2 Regular weekly sport is not regarded as an excursion but is subject to consent and operational procedures.

Context:

- 3.1 The school is committed to providing a safe, secure, disciplined and quality learning environment in which students can develop their individual talents, interests and abilities through a curriculum that fosters the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of the student. Excursions are part of quality teaching and learning programs.
- 3.2 Excursions are a valuable teaching and learning vehicle, often integral to quality curriculum delivery in that they provide access to teaching content and learning experiences not available at the school.
- 3.3 School excursions vary in terms of the curriculum focus, the students involved, the duration of the excursion and the excursion venue(s). The student group participating in the excursion may be a class or classes or students drawn from a number of classes. They may be, for example, a team, a performance group or an audience for a performance. An excursion can range from a brief visit of less than one hour to a local point of interest, to an extended journey occupying a number of days or weeks requiring overnight or long term accommodation.

- 3.4 While recognising the potential benefits of excursions, we also recognise that such activities may interrupt regular learning routines of students. Accordingly, prior to any excursion there must be consultation between the principal and teacher concerned with its organisation. The principal must consider the educational value of all proposed excursions in relation to the overall needs and resources of the school. The rationale for any excursion should be the school's curriculum objectives and should be relevant to their achievement.
- 3.5 Parents or caregivers must be informed in writing of the details of any excursion, including details of all planned activities, their educational value, how it is integral to the learning program, the method of transport and level of supervision.
- 3.6 Prior to approving excursions involving film screenings and live performances, principals must give careful consideration to the appropriateness of the film or performance for the proposed viewing group. Staff giving consideration to excursions involving film screenings should refer to [Use of Classified Films, Videos, DVDs and Computer Games in Schools \(Office of Schools June 2007\)](#).

Responsibilities:

4.1 A school excursion is organised and supervised by a school and approved by the principal.

4.2 Inclusivity

4.2.1 Excursions are inclusive, and all students in the specific learning group, including those with disabilities, are to be given the opportunity to participate.

4.2.2 Unless exceptional circumstances exist, all students should have the opportunity to participate in an excursion. Costs will always be kept to a minimum to ensure there is minimal financial burden imposed upon families.

4.2.3 Where a student cannot participate in an excursion, alternate activities will be available that provide for similar learning outcomes, particularly where an assessment task relates to the excursion.

4.2.4 The support needs of students with disabilities or medical conditions requires careful consideration and consultation with parents and caregivers. Appropriate support should be provided for these students so they can access the learning experiences available through excursions. Individual health care plans must be reviewed prior to excursions to confirm that any necessary planning and emergency arrangements are in place.

4.2.5 Nothing in the above paragraphs is intended to prevent schools from selecting individual students or groups of students to represent the school at functions, events or competitions held at venues outside the school.

4.3 Duty of Care

4.3.1 Teachers planning excursions adopt a risk management approach to emergency response planning, including medical procedures, and check relevant forecasts or other safety warnings, including fire bans, immediately prior to events. In consultation with relevant authorities, the school is prepared to alter or cancel excursions due to emerging safety concerns. These decisions will be communicated to students and parents as soon as possible.

4.3.2 All excursions will be accompanied by a member of staff who has undertaken [emergency care training](#) and whose qualifications are current. An appropriately equipped first aid kit will be available on all excursions. Additionally, as required by the Department's First Aid Procedures, the first aid kit will include a general use adrenaline auto injector e.g. an EpiPen and an ASCIA action plan general use for EpiPen.

4.3.3 Any excursion involving swimming or water activities and any excursion involving overnight stays, will include a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency care.

4.3.4 Staff planning excursions involving students diagnosed at risk of an emergency will consider issues such as administration of prescribed and emergency medication (e.g. EpiPen, Ventolin) health care procedures and emergency response plans. Particular care will be taken where casual staff attend and/or replace regular staff members on excursions. Among other things, they must be briefed about any student with particular health care needs and the role they may have in supporting those needs. They must also be briefed on any student who is the subject of a risk management plan.

4.3.5 Under occupational health and safety legislation, the Department has an obligation to ensure the health and safety of staff at work. Consequently, excursion planning is to take account of staff health and safety issues in addition to those of students.

4.3.6 The school's duty of care to students while on excursions remains with the accompany teachers and cannot be delegated to anyone else. Anyone other than school staff accompanying school excursions must complete a Prohibited Employment Declaration prior to the excursion, in terms of the Department's Working with Children Check Policy.

4.3.7 Students participating in an excursion must not be permitted to engage in additional or alternative activities, which were not originally scheduled in the program, and for which parental or caregiver approval would normally have been required (e.g. water activities).

4.3.8 Full school uniform must be worn on all excursions except where the nature of the activity requires alternative clothing. This necessity should be clearly stated on the permission note. The wearing of school uniforms on an excursion assists with: easy identification of students; effective supervision; safe conduct of the excursion through the maintenance of acceptable standard of discipline; and the projection of a positive image of BWPS and Public Education to the wider community.

4.3.9 The Changes to Routine forms are an essential part of the excursion planning process and must be submitted as indicated. Also consider Working With Children Checks and the development of risk assessment plans. All organising teachers are required to save all planning documentation on the server to facilitate future excursions.

- ❑ Consult with the venue, service provider, school calendar/whiteboard and school diary regarding suitable dates.
- ❑ Consult with and identify the number of staff required to ensure the excursion can be conducted safely.
- ❑ Complete the *Submission for Proposed Excursion* form (part of *Changes to School Routine* documentation). This will involve analysing impact on school programs and procedures, planning the itinerary or program and completing a risk assessment. Ideally this should be completed four weeks prior to any planned excursion. This forms an essential part of the approval process.
- ❑ Identify all the costs involved in conducting the excursion, including 'incidentals' such as photography, printing digital photographs on the colour laser printer, casual relief, special equipment etc.
- ❑ If the total cost of the excursion is over \$1,000, three (3) quotes must be obtained. The three quotes need to be filed with the excursion organisation documentation in the school office.
- ❑ Draft the information and permission note for parents.

- ❑ Present the *Submission for Proposed Excursion* form and all the associated notes to the principal for approval. At this point all details must be complete.
- ❑ Ensure that all the documents relating to the excursion are placed in the Excursion Folder kept in the Office.

- At the staff meeting the week before the planned event the organising teacher must present details of the event to all staff.
- Two days prior to the event the organising teacher must submit the paperwork titled *Changes to School Routine* (part of file titled *Changes to School Routine* documentation).

4.4 Teacher to Student Ratios

4.4.1 The principal determines the number of teachers to accompany students for each excursion taking into account factors such as the age of the students, their maturity, the location of the excursion, specific needs of students, anticipated behaviour and the nature of the activities to be undertaken. There must be sufficient numbers of appropriate, responsible adults, including support teachers and school learning support officers, to ensure and assist with adequate supervision. Other adults assisting with supervision may include volunteers, specialist instructors and venue staff. Students on excursion must be subject to direct adult supervision. Particular aquatic and outdoor recreation activities have specific teacher/instructor to student ratios. These are identified in the Guidelines for Specific Activities section of [Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#).

4.5 Overnight Excursions

4.5.1 For coeducational groups, male and female staff supervisors are required.

4.5.2 Sleeping and washing arrangements for adults on overnight excursions must ensure propriety is maintained.

4.6 Child Protection

4.7.1 Students should be briefed about their right to be safe, relevant safety strategies and ways of seeking help should concerns arise during an excursion.

4.7.2 The principal or delegate will ascertain if an employer or contractor providing a service to students during a school excursion is registered with an Approved Screening Agency (ASA) for the purpose of conducting the [Working with Children Check](#) on their employees. The principal or other delegated person must ascertain that the employer or contractor has met their legal requirements as a child-related employer.

4.7 Risk Management

4.8.1 A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before approval can be given for any excursion.

4.8.2 Health care plans for students should include provision for the management of such conditions on excursions. The teacher in charge should have a copy of this plan.

4.8.3 The extent of pre-excursion planning will depend on the nature of the excursion and its location. In many situations prior experience of the site or a briefing from a responsible person with a sound knowledge of the site will suffice.

4.8.4 Teachers leading excursions involving sporting or physical activities should also consult the [Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#).

4.8.5 In general, students are expected to wear full school uniform on excursions, unless the principal has deemed it more appropriate and safer to wear alternative clothing. In all circumstances students and staff on outdoor excursions are encouraged to wear clothing that protects them from the sun, such broad brimmed hats and long sleeves, and apply 30+ sunscreen. Students are also encouraged to carry water in a non-breakable container.

4.8 Swimming and Water Activities

4.9.1 Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, the principal will ensure that the eight elements of the [Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activity](#) (venue selection; parent/caregiver consent; staff supervision; risk management; staff

induction; student induction; testing student proficiency; and classifying students) are all complied with.

4.9.2 Parents must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent for students to participate in excursions involving water activities. See Section 2 Step 2 of the [Water Safety Guidelines](#) on Obtaining Parent/Caregiver permission which contains links to [Aquatic Activity Consent Forms](#). The determination of whether or not a student will participate in swimming or water activities while on the excursion will not, however, depend solely on advice from parents.

4.9.3 It will also be necessary to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity. See Section 3 Step 7: The Challenge - Testing Student Proficiency of the [Water Safety Guidelines](#). This assessment must take place irrespective of parental or caregiver permission for the students to participate in the swimming or water activities.

4.9.4 Schools planning excursions involving aquatic activity other than swimming such as boating, sailing or board riding, should investigate requirements relating to the provision of personal flotation devices (such as lifejackets, buoyancy vests or buoyancy garments) and ensure all students and staff comply.

4.9 Consent

4.10.1 Signed consent forms, that include medical information, granting permission for students to participate in an excursion, are to be obtained from parents or caregivers. Refer to [Parent or caregiver information and consent form](#) (Intranet access only) and school excursion [Medical Information Form](#) (Intranet access only).

4.9.2 Information identifying food or other allergies, special dietary needs and other health care related issues (including prior conditions such as medical procedures in the last 12 months), should be provided by parents or caregivers. This information will assist planning to support students and minimise risks, including the risk of exposure to allergens for students at risk of anaphylactic reactions.

4.9.3 As a general rule, students without a signed consent form from a parent or carer must not be permitted to participate in a school excursion. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to obtain signed consent forms from parents or caregivers, oral approval can be sought. The principal will keep a written record of any oral approvals given by parents or caregivers

4.9.4 If parents or caregivers do not permit participation of a student in an excursion, the school will make available a sound alternative educational experience which provides for similar learning outcomes, particularly where an assessment task relates to the excursion.

4.9.5 To enable planning of excursions and changes to routine, the deadline for the return of permission notes and payment will be, at the very least, the day preceding the planned date of the activity, and in many situations may need to be even earlier to allow for finalised numbers to be communicated. Students who have not returned permission notes and payment by the deadline will be provided with an alternative program at school as far as possible. Exceptions are whole school events where 100% attendance is anticipated eg athletics carnival. Parent information notes should clearly identify the deadline for notes and payments.

4.9.6 In the event an excursion has to be postponed, a new permission slip will be sent home with details of the changes. This revised note must be returned before students can be allowed to attend on the new excursion date.

4.9.7 In general, refunds for are not possible if children miss an excursion as the school has usually been required to pay entrance fees and such in advance. Likewise, bus costs have been divided by the number of children attending. Any such request is to be taken to the principal for the final decision which will be based on the outlay the school has had to make.

4.10 Transport

4.11.1 When hiring buses or coaches for excursions, the school will attempt to hire vehicles with seatbelts wherever practicable but particularly for long distance travel outside urban areas. Seatbelts must be worn on buses and coaches when they are available.

4.11.2 The transporting of students in the cars of staff members, parents, caregivers or volunteers will only occur in those circumstances where there is no feasible option available to provide alternative transportation. This may only occur under the following conditions:

- a) written permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained
- b) the driver is licensed and, if issued with a provisional licence, complies with any [relevant peer passenger conditions](#)
- c) the vehicle is registered
- d) the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number of seatbelts
- e) current driver's licence and car registration details are sighted by the school prior to giving permission for students to be transported in the vehicle.
- f) Comprehensive insurance, though not required, is preferred.
- g) All parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete a [Prohibited Employment Declaration](#) prior to the excursion.

4.11 Student Behaviour

4.12.1 Students must behave appropriately at all times on excursions. Students on excursions interact with the public and are representatives of their school and community. Prior to excursions, they should be reminded of expected standards of behaviour and the application of the school's discipline code and Mobile Device Policy.

4.12.2 The school's discipline policy applies outside of school hours and off school premises because there is a clear and close connection between the school, the students and the activity in which they are engaged.

4.12.3 Students whose behaviour is causing significant concern on excursion may be removed from the activity by staff or their parents may be required to remove them.

4.12.4 Students participating in excursions to communities which are culturally different to their own should be briefed on cultural sensitivities and appropriate communication in cross-cultural contexts.

4.12.5 Students will be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Responsible behaviour involves not interfering with the animal.

4.12.6 Students will be briefed on the school's expectations of the behaviour and the possible repercussions of non-compliance in the weeks before the planned event. Attendance on excursions is always at the principal's discretion.

4.12 Insurance

4.13.1 The Department will not accept liability for the loss of, or damage to, personal property brought on excursions or bought during excursions.

4.13.2 Staff members are considered "on duty" and therefore covered by the usual insurance arrangements provided by the Department. Contact the Administrative Services Directorate for information.

4.13.3 Staff organising school excursions should establish whether the school has *Ambulance School Cover* so that neither the school nor parents will be responsible for payment of an ambulance account.