



EMU HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Excursion Policy

August 2017

This policy sets out clearly the organisation of excursions, performances and school-based activities outside normal routine; safety considerations, system and legal requirements, expectations of behaviour and the use of excursion experiences back in the classroom.

RATIONALE

Enhancement to in-school, classroom based programs, in the form of excursions and changes to routine, are an integral part of a child's education. These organised experiences, when fully integrated with classroom work, contribute to children's growth and development through:

Enriching student's experiences.

- ❖ Broadening student's concepts
- ❖ Reinforcing the achievement of outcomes
- ❖ Providing opportunities for the development of appropriate social skills
- ❖ Promoting the development of self esteem

There are legal and system requirements that must be met before students can attend an excursion.

DEFINITIONS

Excursion- An educational visit initiated, organised and supervised by the school for a specific educational purpose. The venue is outside the school grounds. Sports carnivals and inter-school sport, conducted outside the school grounds are classed as excursions.

Change of Routine- A change of routine refers to any alteration to the normal classroom program for which planning on a stage, joint stage or whole school basis is required. For example visiting performance, integrated unit culmination activities, mini sports carnivals, stage video afternoons etc

Duty of Care- The DOE and its staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable care to protect students against risks of injury which are reasonably foreseeable. This duty extends to taking reasonable care to prevent a student from injuring him or herself, injuring others or damaging property. Duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions.

Foreseeable Risk- A foreseeable risk is a risk which a reasonable person could be expected to identify as a risk. In identifying a foreseeable risk it is expected that procedures would be put in place, or measures taken to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or, if possible, eliminating the risk completely. This includes the preparation of Risk assessment documents.

FUNDAMENTAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

- ❖ Determining the educational value of an excursion must take account of the needs and resources of the school, the needs of the students and the total learning program

INCLUSIVITY

- ❖ Excursions are inclusive, and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate
- ❖ Costs should be organised to ensure that there is no undue financial burden imposed upon individual members of the group or their families. Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation the school will endeavour to provide financial assistance
- ❖ Where a student cannot participate in an excursion, alternate activities must be available that provide for similar learning outcomes, particularly where an assessment task relates to the excursion

SUPERVISION OF EXCURSIONS

TEACHER STUDENT RATIOS

Teacher to student ratio

- The number of teachers to accompany the students for each excursion is to be determined by the principal. Decisions about the number of students and teachers should take 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
- The Principal and organising teacher, in determining the number of teachers required for an excursion should be guided by Departmental statements on class sizes
- Fewer students per teacher will be necessary for some excursions such as bushwalking. Particular aquatic and outdoor recreation activities have specific teacher/instructor to student ratios. These are identified in the Guidelines for Specific Activities section of Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools policy
- There must be sufficient numbers of appropriate, responsible adults, including support teachers and teachers' aides, to ensure and assist with adequate supervision

RISK MANAGEMENT

- ❖ A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before seeking approval for any excursion. (See Appendix 1 – Excursion Timeline)
- ❖ Teachers planning excursions must adopt a risk management approach to emergency response planning, including medical procedures, and should check relevant forecasts or other safety warnings, including fire bans, immediately prior to events. In consultation with relevant authorities, schools must be prepared to alter or cancel excursions due to emerging safety concerns. These decisions must be communicated to students and parents as soon as possible
- ❖ Fundamental to effective excursion risk management is the communication of risk management plans to those who need to know, including staff and other adults on the excursion who may be instrumental in initiating an emergency response. Students should be informed of these plans where necessary
- ❖ 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. horse riding or water activities)

ACCESS TO PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The following documents are to be considered:

- ❖ EHPS Excursion/Camp/Performance/School-Based Activity Policy
- ❖ EHPS Excursion/Sport/Change of Routine Submission Form
- ❖ WWCC Policy
- ❖ Completed risk assessment forms for all sports and transport by walking, train or bus

All excursion, sport and change of routine organising teachers are required to ensure that all the documents relevant to their excursion are filed on the SAM's computer. This will facilitate planning in following years.

DUTY OF CARE / CHILD PROTECTION

- ❖ A duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions
- ❖ The DOE's duty of care owed to students for the duration of an excursion cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers, volunteers or employees of external organisations
- ❖ All EHPS staff are also required to have current child protection training
- ❖ The principal or other delegated person must ascertain if an employer or contractor providing a service to students during a school excursion has verified the Working with Children Check number of 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. If the employer or contractor has not registered as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian, in order to verify employee Working with Children Check identification numbers, they must not be used to provide a service to students until such time as they:
 - a) register as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian
 - b) have verified the Working with Children Check numbers of those staff considered to be engaged in paid child-related employment

The obligation to report suspected risk of harm to children and young people applies throughout all stages of an excursion, as it does in schools.

PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- ❖ The Department's duty of care owed to students for the duration of an excursion cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers, volunteers or individuals associated with external organisations
- ❖ Parents or caregivers will frequently volunteer to assist in excursions. The number of parents or caregivers who might be of assistance will vary according to circumstances
- ❖ The principal must be satisfied that there are sufficient teachers to maintain adequate control of the whole excursion. Teachers retain the ultimate responsibility for supervision
- ❖ In most circumstances parents, caregivers and volunteers who assist on excursions should not have to pay to attend
- ❖ Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be appropriately briefed on safety and behaviour measures, including student health conditions that may require an emergency response, prior to the excursion to ensure competency
- ❖ The student and his or her parent must be advised that this is being done
- ❖ The Principal, through the organising teacher, must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers accompanying school excursions meet WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK requirements prior to the excursion in terms of the Department's Working with Children Check Policy

FIRST AID, HEALTH PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- ❖ All school staff are required to have completed e-Emergency care training and anaphylaxis training. These qualifications must be current
- ❖ An appropriately equipped first aid kit must be taken on all excursions. Additionally, as required by the Department's First Aid Procedures, the first aid kit must include a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen® /Anapen ®) and an ASCIA action plan (general use) for adrenaline auto injector
- ❖ Principals should ensure that individual health care plans for students with health care needs or disabilities include provision for the management of such conditions on excursions. A copy of this plan should be given to the teacher in charge of the excursion and its implications discussed before departure
- ❖ Where a particular excursion activity requires special protective equipment or apparel (e.g. hard hats, helmets for snowboarding), these must be used. Staff and student safety must not be compromised. Students and staff on outdoor excursions should wear clothing that protects them from the sun, such as broad brimmed hats and longer sleeve lengths and apply at least a 30+ sunscreen. Students should also be encouraged to carry water in a non-breakable container

CONSENT

Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in excursions and a medical information form are to be obtained from parents or caregivers. The fact that parents or caregivers consent to the participation of their child in an excursion does not remove the responsibility of school staff for taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the particular activity is safe.

Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.

Students must behave appropriately at all times while on excursions, including when animals are encountered.

PARENT INFORMATION NOTES -Excursion/Camp/Performance/School-Based Activity

Parents will be sent a comprehensive information note regarding the planned excursion/change of routine at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the activity.

The note will include the following details:

Curriculum link and follow up to the excursion at school;

- ❖ Description of all the planned activities the students will experience
- ❖ Date of the excursion/change of routine
- ❖ Deadline date for the return of permission notes and payment
- ❖ Time of departure and return to school
- ❖ Details regarding travel arrangements
- ❖ Clothing requirements e.g. school uniform, walking shoes etc. Parents should be informed in the note that students who are not in full school uniform will not be allowed to attend the excursion
- ❖ Details of safety equipment – mouth guards, sun screen, hats, hard hats, safety vests etc
- ❖ Permission sign off
- ❖ Medical information statement and parent response option
- ❖ Where an excursion involved water sport or swimming the note must include a section where the parent indicates the child's swimming ability

In the case of a video/DVD screening at school, the note should advise parents of the classification of the film/DVD by the Office of Film and Literature Classification. At EHPS films above PG classification are not to be shown.

1. 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 necessary (e.g. horse riding or water activities)

2. Notes should include the following statement

Teachers supervising the excursion will take with them a copy of your child's parent and emergency contact and medical information from the ERN database. If this information has changed since the last time you updated it then please contact the school immediately.

List existing medical conditions or illnesses (include asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, allergies etc.). Outline the treatment for each. Leave appropriate space for the parent to respond.

Outline special dietary needs including possible reaction to inappropriate diet. Leave appropriate space for the parent to respond.

Medication(s) to be administered during the excursion. Include name of medication, instructions for administration, time of administration, and any possible reactions. Leave appropriate space for the parent to respond.

3. This excursion will involve students in water sports and/or swimming. Please circle one of the following options to describe your child's swimming ability: My child is a NON-SWIMMER WEAK SWIMMER AVERAGE SWIMMER (refer swimming section for full details of required procedures)

OBTAINING ORAL PERMISSION

- ❖ In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary for teachers to phone parents to obtain verbal permission for a child to attend an activity
- ❖ In such circumstances the phone call must be made from the school office, with a second member of staff present
- ❖ Details of the call – date, time, person contacted must be recorded in the 'Verbal Permissions Book'
- ❖ During the call, the caller must ask parents if there are any medical issues of which the school may be currently unaware. These should be noted in the 'Verbal Permissions Book'

DEADLINE FOR THE RETURN OF PERMISSION NOTES AND PAYMENT

- ❖ To enable smooth planning of excursions and changes to routine, the deadline for the return of permission notes and payment will be two (2) school days before the planned date of the activity. Students who have not returned permission notes and payment by this deadline will be provided with an alternative program at school. Parent information notes should clearly identify the deadline for notes and payment

MEDICATION

- ❖ Parents must complete a written request for the administration of the medication
- ❖ Students must not self-administer or carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parents
- ❖ It is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication to the school in a timely manner. If the principal agrees, this responsibility may be fulfilled by the student but this will be dependent upon the maturity of the student, parental consent and any other issues that could affect the safety of the individual student or others in the school environment

Schools should not supply medications for administration to students

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

OVERNIGHT EXCURSIONS

On overnight and extended excursions, supervisory and accommodation arrangements are to be such that no staff member or accompanying adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. In particular, sleeping and washing arrangements should not place any adults in a situation where the propriety of their behaviour could be questioned. Likewise, for sleeping and supervisory arrangements every attempt must be made to ensure that there is no inappropriate behaviour including sexual contact by or between students.

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

FILM AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

- ❖ Film screenings and live performances must carefully consider the appropriateness of the film or performance for the proposed viewing group
- ❖ With the enhancement of information and communications technology, the school is including a greater variety of 'virtual excursions' into teaching and learning programs. Using videoconferencing and the associated technologies, students are visiting locations across the globe and interacting in real time with other students, teachers and content specialists. Authority to Publish consent is a requirement of students participating in these excursions. Curriculum relevance and educational value; duty of care and risk management; child protection; parental consent; and appropriate student behaviour should be considered when planning 'virtual excursions'

SPORT

- ❖ Teachers leading excursions involving sporting or physical activities should also consult the Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines

SWIMMING AND WATER ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Principals and teachers organising excursions involving swimming and water activities should consult the Swimming and Water Safety section of Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools. (99/490)
- ❖ Any excursion involving swimming or water activities and any excursion involving overnight stays, MUST include a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. In addition, 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 to be complied with
- ❖ 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
- ❖ If parents indicate students are poor or non-swimmers and no flotation devices are available for use by the students, principals will need to assess whether such students should participate in the swimming or water activities of the excursion. This assessment must take place irrespective of parental or caregiver permission for the students to participate in the swimming or water activities
- ❖ Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, principals may encourage but not insist that parents provide any flotation devices considered necessary for students
- ❖ 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 even if parental or caregiver permission for the student to participate in the swimming or water activities is granted. Where parental or caregiver

permission is declined student participation in swimming or water activities should not proceed

TRANSPORT

- ❖ Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions
- ❖ In some circumstances where the site of the excursion is close to the school, it will be appropriate for students and their supervisors to walk to the site. The decision to walk should be preceded by a risk assessment and the route should be determined consistent with the objective of ensuring staff and student safety

Bus and train travel

- ❖ When hiring buses for excursions, principals should refer to the policy on the use of seatbelts on buses (99/293). Seatbelts must be worn on buses and coaches when they are available. In the case of large vehicles, the number of passengers must not exceed the number that the vehicle is licensed to carry
- ❖ The Principal and organising teachers, should attempt to hire buses with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel. In the case of large vehicles, the number of passengers must not exceed the number that the vehicle is licensed to carry
- ❖ Bus, rail and ferry services should be used for school excursions, wherever appropriate. In these circumstances students will be required to provide their own OPAL card
- ❖ When hiring buses or coaches for excursions, schools should attempt to hire vehicles with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel outside urban areas
- ❖ If students with disabilities are participating in an excursion, accessible transport will be required

CAR TRAVEL

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

- ❖ written permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained
- ❖ the driver is licensed
- ❖ the vehicle is registered
- ❖ the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number of seatbelts
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Comprehensive insurance is not generally required. Nevertheless, comprehensive insurance is required if a member of staff is authorised to use his or her vehicle for official business and wishes to make a claim for the payment of mileage. Further information about the use of cars for transporting students can be found in Legal Issues Bulletins 8 and 24
- ❖ Principals must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete a Working with Children Check – Declaration for volunteers and contractors prior to the excursion

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

- ❖ 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

- ❖ Policies and procedures relating to student discipline in government schools also apply while students are on excursions. The school 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
- ❖ Students must behave appropriately when animals are encountered on excursions
- ❖ Students also should be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Responsible behaviour involves not interfering with the animal. Injury is likely to occur if the animal panics and either attacks or attempts to flee the situation. If people remain calm, the risk of injury to either students or the animal or both will be lessened
- ❖ Appropriate touching of animals, where there is educational value in the activity, should be supervised by teachers, parents, caregivers or volunteers

GENERAL POLICY & PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The following information is provided to ensure that all aspects of the DOE Excursions Policy are considered in the planning process. This will ensure that excursion/change of routine activities are fully planned, support the curriculum and are conducted in as safe a manner as possible.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

- ❖ Full school uniform must be worn to all excursions except when the nature of the activity requires alternative clothing
- ❖ The clothing requirements should be communicated to parents in the information note

The wearing of school uniforms on an excursion greatly assists with:

- ❖ the easy identification of students
- ❖ the effective supervision of students
- ❖ the safe conduct of the excursion through the maintenance of an acceptable standard of discipline; and
- ❖ projecting a positive image of EHPS and Public Education, to the wider community

Students who are not in full school uniform will not participate in the excursion.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Where a particular excursion activity requires special protective equipment or apparel (e.g. mouth guards, protective apparel), these must be used. Staff and student safety must not be compromised. Students and staff should be encouraged to use sunscreen and wear a peaked or broad brimmed hat on outdoor excursions.

MOUTH GUARDS – All sport notes should recommend to parents that students wear a mouth guard. The mouth guard information sheet from the Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools should be included in all sport notes.

BRIEFING OF STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEER PARENTS

- ❖ Prior to any excursion, students should be briefed on the school's expectations of their behaviour
- ❖ Students should also be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, about protective strategies and of avenues for support should concerns arise
- ❖ Organising teachers should take time to work with groups of students to consider unexpected situations and risks that might occur during the excursion and to discuss strategies, consistent with the risk management plan, for eliminating or controlling risks
- ❖ 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
- ❖ Students should also be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Reference should be made to the memorandum, Cruelty to animals (96/169) when considering the content of such briefings

- ❖ Prior to any excursion, parent volunteers should be briefed regarding
- ❖ The school's expectations regarding student behaviour and their role to refer misbehaviour or other issues to the class teacher or executive in charge of the excursion
- ❖ The venue for the excursion and identified risks and how the risks will be managed

IMPACT ON TEACHER RELIEF FROM FACE TO FACE (RFF)

Where an excursion results in a teacher missing their scheduled RFF the teacher may, as part of the planning process, negotiate a 'swap'.

This swap is to be:

- ❖ mutually agreeable with both teachers
- ❖ of equivalent duration
- ❖ organised by the classroom teacher not the teacher who provides the RFF
- ❖ organised during the planning stage of the excursion and included in the excursion submission form

EXCURSION/CHANGE OF ROUTINE REFUNDS

- ❖ Teachers plan a number of excursions, guest speakers and various activities which enhance the educational programs being offered in classrooms. These activities usually have a cost associated with them. Occasionally children are disappointed when they are unable to participate in the activity because they are sick on the day, or late to catch the bus etc. In such cases parents often request a refund of the fees that have been paid
- ❖ In making a decision regarding a refund one issue has to be considered: Has the school outlaid money for the student to participate in the activity?
- ❖ If the school has already had to pay for the activity then a refund cannot be given. For example in the case of a live show, the seats had to be booked and pre-paid. In this case this money could not be refunded
- ❖ When buses are used to transport children the total cost of the bus is divided by the total number of children expected to attend. It is therefore not possible to give refunds on bus travel
- ❖ However, some guest speakers charge on the basis of the children present on the day. Therefore, the school did not have to outlay any money and a refund may be possible
- ❖ Each request for a refund will be considered based on the circumstances of the activity with the principal making the final decision

RETENTION OF EXCURSION RECORDS

Records of all excursions, including overseas excursions, is maintained. The record must include a copy of the risk management plan, any advice given to parents or caregivers, costs and approval letters and administrative, supervision and travel details.

BRIEFING STUDENTS PRIOR TO EXCURSIONS

- ❖ Prior to any excursion, students should be briefed on the school's expectations of their behaviour
- ❖ Students should also be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, about protective strategies and of avenues for support should concerns arise. Organising teachers should take time to work with groups of students to consider unexpected situations and risks that might occur during the excursion and to discuss strategies, consistent with the risk management plan, for eliminating or controlling risks. Students should also be given strategies for seeking help and regaining safety
- ❖ The parents of individual students with particular health care needs, and to the extent this is practicable, individual students, must be consulted about how their health care needs will be met during the excursion, especially where the arrangements differ from standard practice at school
- ❖ All students should be briefed on the importance of advising staff or others (eg volunteers, billet parents) if they are unwell or if they believe one of their fellow students is unwell

- ❖ 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

SCHOOL PLANNING PROCEDURES

In order for the learning opportunities of an excursion to be optimised, the planning process must be thorough and comprehensive. The following steps are a recommended sequence.

1. Determine the educational value of an excursion, taking into account the needs and resources of the school, the needs of the students and the value/impact of the excursion on the total learning program
2. Determine whether the excursion can be inclusive of all students. "Excursions are inclusive, and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate, including students with disabilities." (DET Policy) However, in some cases students who have demonstrated unsatisfactory behaviour may be prevented from attending an excursion as a consequence of the EHPS Student Welfare Policy
3. Organising teachers should ensure that individual health care plans for students with health care needs or disabilities include provision for the management of such conditions on excursions. A copy of this plan should be given to the teacher in charge of the excursion and its implications discussed before departure
4. Pre-excursion planning may include a visit to the proposed excursion site by teachers so that decisions on supervision and injury prevention are well informed and so that access for disabled students is investigated. In some cases, this will involve the employment of a casual teacher in order to release a teacher from class so the pre-visit can be undertaken. In such cases the cost of this casual teacher is to be included in the total cost of the excursion
5. 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 reasonable person with a sound knowledge of the site will suffice. However, a visit to the proposed excursion site is recommended when unfamiliar or potentially high risk activities are contemplated e.g. wilderness camping or field trips to inhospitable terrain. In such circumstances the pre – excursion visit should address issues such as access, injury prevention and emergency evacuation
6. Consult with the venue, service provider, school calendar and principal's diary regarding suitable dates
7. Consult with and identify the number of staff required to ensure the excursion can be conducted safely
8. Complete the Excursion Submission Form (attached). This will involve analysing impact on school programs and procedures, planning the itinerary or program and completing a risk assessment
9. Identify all the costs involved in conducting the excursion, including 'incidental' such as photography, printing digital photographs on the colour laser printer, casual relief, special equipment etc
10. 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 organization documentation in the school office
11. Draft the information and permission note for parents
12. Present the Excursion/Camp/ Performance/ School-Based Activity application and all the associated notes to the principal for approval. At this point all details must be complete
13. Ensure that all the documents relating to the excursion are placed in the Excursion Folder kept in the Staffroom