



## EXCURSIONS – OVERNIGHT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

**SOP Number:** EOSOP03:00  
**Status:** Ratified  
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**SOP Contact Officer:** Assistant Director – Learning Services  
**Related Documentation:**

Catholic Education in the Diocese of Lismore *Foundational Beliefs and Practices – The Essential Framework, 2007.*

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

Child Protection (Working with Children) Regulations 2013

Administering Medication Standard Operating Procedures

Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Digital Technologies Standard Operating Procedure

Employee use of Social Media Standard Operating Procedure

Excursions – Overseas and Long Distance Policy and Procedures

First Aid Standard Operating Procedure

Privacy Policy and Procedures

Sports Risk Management SOP

Working with Children Check Standard Operating Procedure

## **RATIONALE**

The school is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students, staff and volunteers. This commitment includes the health and safety of staff and students when conducting curriculum activities at school/college or other locations.

School excursions enhance student learning by providing the opportunities for students to participate in curriculum-related activities outside the normal school routine. School activities must be well planned curriculum-related activities that aim to maximise student learning experiences. All planned school excursions are to be approved by the principal and when more than one school is involved, by the principals of all participating schools.

To ensure the health and safety of students and staff, the excursion organisers are required to proactively manage all aspects of and variations to the normal routine. The school's duty of care to students extends to excursions and camps which are integral to student educational programs. Activities conducted away from the school site may increase risks and therefore the standard of care required must reflect the increase in identified risks. The use of the Diocesan MySafety Risk Management process must be undertaken for each excursion or camp.

It is important when considering overnight excursions that the organisers are able to demonstrate that activities have been thoroughly planned to protect students, staff and others whilst undertaking the activity. The school recognises the additional responsibility and level of care that must be undertaken when students are taken by the school for overnight excursions.

This standard operating procedure specifies the requirements for the planning of overnight excursions so that legal obligations are met.

## **SCOPE**

These procedures and the related policy apply to students enrolled in diocesan schools from Early Stage 1 to Stage 6. Schools may add material where necessary to better suit individual school circumstances however the deletion of any prescribed content in this Standard Operating Procedure must be approved by the School Services Consultant.

### **1. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL**

- 1.1 Any overnight excursion at a Catholic school is approved by the principal. Appendices A, B, C, D, E, F and G are to be completed and kept with all records associated with each excursion.
- 1.2 While recognising that excursions can have significant educational benefits, the school is aware that such activities can be disruptive to academic study, both for students undertaking the excursion and for those students whose teachers are participating and are therefore absent from the school. It also places additional financial pressures on parents.
- 1.3 In considering whether to proceed with an excursion of this type, the principal will weigh carefully the educational value of a proposed excursion with the total needs and resources of the school and the financial burden for families of students. Consideration should be given to whether the excursion will provide students with significant educational opportunities not available by other means.
- 1.4 In planning any excursion, the principal and staff need to be conscious of the legal and moral responsibility for student welfare that accompanies such activities. Arrangements for care and supervision must reflect the greater degree of risk to students that can exist when travelling long distances within Australia.
- 1.5 The principal will communicate to families that such the excursion is an approved school activity and that staff will exercise the appropriate duty of care. The principal will consider the cost of overnight excursion and the accessibility to students whose

families may be experiencing financial constraints. Excursions that would place financial pressure on a significant number of families will be carefully reviewed by the principal.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS**

- 2.1 Under normal circumstances staff members are expected to take part in overnight excursions where that has been a long standing practice. If for a particular reason a teacher cannot participate in the overnight excursion, the matter must be discussed with the principal well in advance of the excursion. No extra remuneration other than the reimbursement of genuine pre-approved expenses will be paid in respect of overnight excursions.
- 2.2 Accommodation and bathroom arrangements are to be such that no staff member or adult is placed in a position where there is the potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. For co-educational student groups, it is a necessary requirement that both male and female teacher supervisors are in attendance. In circumstances where there are a small number of students, or the mix of gender is unbalanced and the age of the students permit, the principal may approve a parent or teacher aide as a supervisor under the direction of the teacher.
- 2.3 When it has been determined there is an educational need for an overnight excursion, the person identified as the organiser planning the event must ensure all necessary requirements are met in relation to budget and number of supervising teachers to support the number of students attending.

## **3. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 A comprehensive risk assessment of the proposed excursion is essential and must be undertaken in the Diocesan MySafety. The purpose of excursion risk management is to make excursions as safe as possible. Risk management processes are used to identify hazards, assess risks and then eliminate or control risks associated with excursions. A formal proposal including the comprehensive risk assessment management plan should be presented to the principal for approval prior to the event being advertised.
- 3.2 In case of illness, accident or other emergency there must be a plan of action and agreed notification procedure approved by the principal prior to departure. At least one teacher member of the excursion group must have an appropriate qualification in CPR and all should have current First Aid certificates.
- 3.3 An updated school medical form must be obtained for each student and a copy taken with staff on the excursion. The school medical form is the preferred form for use on any excursion. Prior to departure all staff members attending the excursion must acknowledge that they have read each medical form so that he/she is aware of potential medical emergencies that may arise such as asthma attacks or serious allergies. (See Appendix F).
- 3.4 The student's welfare must be considered at all times. Alcohol should not be consumed by staff or accompanying adults whilst on the excursion.
- 3.5 The degree of planning required is influenced by the nature of the excursion, the level of risk and the student group. For excursions that have previously been planned and conducted, previous risk management plans may be reviewed, updated where required and reused.
- 3.6 An important component of the risk management process is consultation, which should include staff, and where appropriate external venue providers and families.

## 4. STUDENTS

- 4.1 It is important that the planned activities are appropriate for each student's capacity and the skills required for the activity have been identified.
- 4.2 The *Disability Discrimination Act* makes it unlawful for the school to subject a student to any disadvantage on the basis of his / her disability. All reasonable efforts must be made to enable disabled students to attend overnight excursions with their classes,
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the organising teacher and other nominated staff to work collaboratively with the Additional Needs Teacher to ensure that a coordinated process is followed for each student with a disability.  
  
Consideration must be made regarding special transport arrangements, suitability of venue (access, toilets, showering), suitability of activities, medication, personal care, supervision requirements and behavior management. As part of the planning process a meeting must be held between the family, additional needs teacher and organizing teacher.
- 4.4 In some circumstances a planning meeting will need to take place between the school and the venue to ensure that the student's needs can be met.
- 4.5 Consideration must be made in the budget to include extra financial costs and staffing to successfully include the students with a disability. Costs must be organised to ensure that there is no undue financial burden on any individuals.
- 4.6 Due to exceptional circumstances some students may not be able to stay overnight. This decision is made in conjunction with the families, additional needs teacher, organising teacher and principal. The student may be able to attend the day activities for the excursion.
- 4.7 Students will be advised by the school on a separate form on the correct school protocol for the use of mobile phones and other personal digital devices. Students and families will be advised on the consequences of inappropriate, dangerous, illegal and anti-social behaviour while on excursion.
- 4.8 On the rare occasion where it is proposed that a student or group of students participate in an independent activity outside the direct supervision of a school staff member, it is imperative that the family be fully informed of, and agrees with the arrangements. The initial information must include notice of how the facility's own staff are assigned to activities.

## 5. SUPERVISION

- 5.1 When determining the ratio of adults to students required for the adequate supervision of overnight excursions, the following factors should be taken into consideration:
  - I. age, capability and number of students
  - II. individual student's educational and behavioural needs
  - III. individual student's medical and physical requirements
  - IV. rationale for the activity
  - V. identified risks
  - VI. adequate instructions for students and supervisors
  - VII. provision of sufficient safeguards

- VIII. experience, qualifications and insurance status of commercial excursion organisers (if used)
- IX. health plans for individual students

- 5.2 As a general guide overnight excursions should have a staff/student ratio of at least one teacher and one parent to 20 students (more if the behavioural needs dictate) for both primary and secondary schools. Where there are fewer than 20 students, there must be at least two teachers.
- 5.3 The principal will discuss supervision arrangements with the nominated organiser prior to approval. The selection of additional staff is to be made with reference to the principal.
- 5.4 The selection of family members or volunteers to accompany teachers on an overnight excursion is important. Parents, caregivers and volunteers chosen to accompany students should be selected according to the expertise they have relevant to the activities undertaken and must be briefed on arrangements prior to the excursion. Written information should be provided to accompanying adults including information about their role, hazards that might be encountered and precautions to be taken.
- 5.5 All accompanying adults must provide a Working With Children Check number and should be asked to sign a declaration that they are aware of the risk management plan, accommodation arrangements, supervision details and the itinerary. (See Appendices F and G)
- 5.6 Arrangements need to be in place to facilitate the return to their families of any student who exhibits behaviour that seriously endangers themselves or others. Written confirmation should be obtained to acknowledge agreement to the arrangements proposed.

## **6. VIRTUAL EXCURSIONS**

- 6.1 Virtual excursions using videoconferencing and associated technologies are considered excursions for the purposes of this policy and standard operating procedure.
- 6.2 Issues identified in this document particularly in regards to curriculum relevance, educational value, duty of care, risk management, child protection, parental consent and student behavior should be considered when planning virtual excursions.
- 6.3 Planned virtual excursions should be in accordance with the diocesan *Digital Technologies (and Social Media) Policy*

## **7. FILM SCREENINGS AND LIVE PERFORMANCES**

Excursions to film screenings and live performances should be given careful consideration in regards to the appropriateness for the attending audience and risk assessments undertaken in regards to matters of a controversial nature that may arise.

## **8. RECORDS**

The principal is responsible for the retention of records related to the excursion. This includes a copy of any advice given to parents, costs, approval letters, risk assessments and administrative and travel details. In the event of an injury to a student or property damage, records relating to the excursion must be retained until the injured party reaches the age of 25, or for seven years, whichever is the longer.

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Application for Excursion to the Principal

Appendix B: Budget

Appendix C: Parent Permission and Medical Form

Appendix D: Excursion Emergency Contact Information

Appendix E: Overnight Excursions Organisation Flow Chart

Appendix F : Excursions Overnight Staff Declaration Form

Appendix G: Excursions Overnight Accompanying Adult Declaration Form

**VERSION HISTORY**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Authorised By</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1	2011	Assistant Director SRS	Originally issued as a Policy
2	2013	Assistant Director SRS	Reviewed and reformatted
3	September 2019	Assistant Director SRS	Reviewed and changed to Standard Operating Procedure