



# Out of School Activities Policy

(Suggested name change: Excursions and Activities Policy – in line with DEECD nomenclature).

## Definitions:

For the purpose of this document, 'camp' refers to any overnight activity including sleeping at school, and 'excursion' refers to any off-campus learning activity organised by the school including sporting fixtures and school community initiatives held on designated school days.

Created: 4/3/2016	Ratified: April 2016
Review:	By: OLHC staff Future review: 2020

## Rationale

Excursions, camps and other out-of-school activities enhance learning at Our Lady Help of Christians by providing our students with opportunities to learn by doing. Through the experience of engaging, observing and reflecting on life in community situations outside of the family and the school, students are assisted in gaining new perspectives on themselves and others, and to develop a clearer understanding of their relationship with the larger environment, both made and natural.

The opportunity to transfer this learning back to our student's everyday life experiences at home and at school assists greatly in their understanding of the community in which they live. Planning, acting, observing and reflecting on engagement in an excursion or camp most importantly assists our students in building skills in communication and personal development (self-awareness; self-regulation) whilst promoting the school values of respect, responsibility and resilience in a broader context.

## Scriptural Context

*"They met as a group, sharing their meals, praising God and enjoying the goodwill of the people."*

Acts of the Apostles 2:46,47

Excursions and camps usually involve both staff and students leaving the school premises, and therefore will present risks to which staff and students are not normally exposed. Safety procedures will ensure that the health and safety of staff and students on excursions is managed just as it would be within our school grounds.

## Policy Statement.

Principals are responsible for the conduct of all excursions and must ensure:

- a notification of school activity form is completed prior to the activity
- a planning and approvals process is undertaken which takes into account the following considerations:
  - a. venue selection
  - b. safety, emergency and risk management.
  - c. informed consent from parents
  - d. medical information
  - e. appropriate staffing and supervision. **The principal needs to consider if there is sufficient staff to cope with any reasonably foreseeable emergency.**
  - f. student preparation and behaviour
  - g. requirements for any beach/ adventure activities. (see appendix 1)

**Important:** When undertaking excursion planning, principals, teachers and the Occupational Health and Safety Officer must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.

## Planning and Approval.

The excursion planning and approval process should take into account the following considerations:

- the educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum
- maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process
- venue selection: the suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion
- safety, emergency and risk management:
  - a. assessment of excursion risks
  - b. procedures in the event of an emergency

- c. arrangements if the excursion needs to be cancelled or recalled (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions)
- d. notification to CEOB
- e. first aid requirements
- f. any other measures necessary for student and staff safety and welfare.

- informed consent from parents or carers
- adequate student and staff medical information
- student preparation and behaviour
- requirements for any adventure activities
- transportation requirements
- communication requirements
- that staff and students have appropriate clothing and personal equipment
- that group or technical equipment is in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken
- that continuous instruction is provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion
- any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed
- that the excursion meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedures.

### **Schools must:**

- give parents or carers, who are to sign consent forms, sufficient information about the excursion to enable them to make an informed decision. This information should include:
  - a. nature of the proposed activity
  - b. degree of supervision, including any particular overnight supervision as outlined above
  - c. risks involved
- keep the consent forms at the school
- ensure that the teacher in charge of the excursion takes a copy of each consent form on the excursion, for excursions requiring school council approval.

## **Informed Parent or Carer Consent.**

When requesting parental consent for a student to take part in an excursion, it is essential parents/guardians are provided with relevant details about the degree of supervision (including any overnight supervision arrangements), the nature of the activity, and the risks involved.

Schools must obtain written consent from parents or carers for school excursions, for the school to:

- take the student out of the school environment for a day excursion
- have the student in its care after normal school hours on an overnight excursion
- obtain parent or carer authorisation:
  - a. for the financial costs of the excursion
  - b. for any adventure activities that may be undertaken during the excursion
  - c. for students to be sent home from an excursion in the event of serious misbehaviour and for the costs of the student's return to be the parent or carer's responsibility
  - d. that if needed the school can consent to emergency medical treatment
- enable the parent or carer to alert the school to any medical conditions or allergies.

- **Supervision:**

The Principal must ensure:

- a. there are sufficient staff to provide appropriate and effective supervision
- b. the experience, qualifications and skills of each staff member (including volunteers, instructors, etc) will allow them to provide effective supervision in general and for planned activities (as applicable)
- c. there are appropriate levels of supervision in view of the activities undertaken and students involved. Enhanced staffing may be required if the activity involves increased risk or if students with disabilities are present.

The following general minimum guidelines for supervision apply:

- Students must be under the control of a teacher employed by the school and at least one other excursion staff must be present. Note that a teacher in charge of an excursion cannot delegate his or her duty of care to a student or non-teacher.
- Principals need to ensure that excursion staff have levels of first aid training which are appropriate to the excursion activities and location.
- Where excursions involve overnight stays for mixed groups, excursion staff should include at least one person of each gender. In primary schools, this requirement may be waived where staff of each gender are unavailable. If staff of each gender are not available, the parents will be informed during the informed consent process.
- Where excursions involve overnight stays for mixed groups, excursion staff may provide supplementary supervision for students with somnambulism (sleep walking) or anxiety by cohabiting with the student or groups of students. In this case the parents will provide full consent, being informed of the name of the staff member/s providing the overnight care, and the nature of the accommodation.
- Where excursions involve overnight stays for mixed groups and a behaviour breach has occurred putting a student or group of students at risk, and it is impractical for parents/ carers to collect their child from camp, excursion staff may provide supplementary supervision for students. In this case the parents will provide full consent, being informed of the name of the staff member/s providing the overnight care, and the nature of the accommodation should it prove necessary.
- In addition to teachers employed by the school, excursion staff may include other adults on a volunteer or paid worker basis, such as parents, school services officers, community members, instructors, campsite staff and trainee teachers. These persons would need to be subjected to the statutory requirements of having a criminal records and Working with Children check.
- All approved excursion staff can be included in the staff-student ratio. School students cannot be used as excursion staff.

## Supervision Ratios:

For local day excursions, the **absolute minimum** requirement is one excursion staff per twenty students (1:20).

For local overnight excursions in residential premises or under canvas, the **absolute minimum** requirement is one excursion staff per ten students (1:10).

For activities involving adventure, swimming pools or the beach, different ratios apply. Please refer to Appendix 1.

## Parents/ carers must:

- Provide all relevant medical information.
- Provide relevant mental health advice pertaining to anxiety, sleep disturbance etc.
- Provide clear advice pertaining to allergies:
  1. a list of prohibited food
  2. active involvement in the negotiation of an alternate diet provided by the venueand/ or
  3. supply of alternate foods (as necessary).

*NB: this advice pertains to allergies rather than food preferences.*

- Provide the school with updated management plans for students with asthma and anaphylaxis, including the signature of the GP.
- Provide all necessary medications (prescription and non-prescription in amounts sufficient for the duration of the excursion/ camp) including those not taken on a daily basis but potentially necessary, such as hay fever medication.
- Ensure medications are clearly named and accompanied by precise directions, additional to the directions provided on packaging.
- Provide medications within the use-by date and not expired.

- Provide any supplementary requirements (including equipment) for the safe management of chronic health conditions, such as the apparatus and food required for diabetes militis.

### **Students must:**

- adhere to the school's expected standards of behaviour
- adhere to the venue's expected standards of behaviour
- observe all safety requirements as presented during the preparation for camp, in the lead-up and during excursion and camp activities.

## **Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the 4- year school improvement framework cycle.

## **Reflective Material**

School Policy & Advisory Guide. Department of Education and Training, Victoria. 2014

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursions.aspx>

Supervision of Students on Camps, Excursions, Outdoor Activities and Tours. July 2010  
Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009) Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/edoutdoors/>

## APPENDIX 1.

### **Swimming pool and Beach Activities:**

Special guidelines apply. Refer to the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide, Section 4.4.4 and note recommendations as to staff qualifications in swimming and water safety.

For students in the water, including swimming pools and beach paddling (not full immersion swimming or surfing activities), the ratio is 1:10 with a minimum of **2** qualified school supervisors present. Pool and/ or camp personnel cannot be counted unless supervision of the students is their sole responsibility. That is, lifeguards on duty at a swimming pool cannot be counted as supervisors. A teacher employed by the school must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity.

Beach: the maximum number of students paddling in the water at one time should be based on an assessment of beach conditions and their affect on effective supervision. A plan to rotate students in and out of the water may be implemented to maintain safe supervisory ratios. The minimum ratio of one excursion staff to no more than twenty students (1:20) should be maintained for students who are not in the water. Appropriate on-shore activities may need to be provided for these students.

### **Adventure Activities:**

Full details of supervision requirements for a wide range of adventure activities can be found in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009) Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

<b>Adventure Activity</b>	<b>Supervision Ratio</b>
Artificial climbing and abseiling walls	2:12
Bush walking: day night	2:20 2:12
Canoeing/kayaking	2:12
Cycling	2:20
Ropes courses: low ropes high ropes	2:24 2:12
Sailing	2:17

Please note the supervision ratios are absolute minimums.