**NASHDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL**



POLICY: EXCURSIONS AND CHANGE OF ROUTINE

*Excursions provide an invaluable opportunity for experiential learning and are therefore a worthy consideration for inclusion in all teaching and learning programs. Well planned and effectively conducted excursions to relevant destinations provide some of the most memorable events in a child’s education. They take them to places they might otherwise never see. They add life to learning and learning to life.*

*An excursion is a structured learning experience provided by the school which are external to the school site both physically and virtually. They can pose risks. This policy and its procedures are directed at managing such risks.*

*Educational excursions and visits are integral to the school curriculum. The purpose of excursions is to enhance learning through first hand experience.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*

**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 (incursion), integrated unit culmination activities, mini sports carnivals, stage video afternoons etc that are held on site

# Policy Statements

There are **nine** policy principle statements which appear in the Department’s Excursions Policy and these are used as a reference to frame this policy.

* 1. 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.
  2. Excursions are **inclusive**, and **all students** within the specific learning group are to be given the **opportunity to participate**.
  3. A **duty of care** is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions.
  4. 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 employees of external organisations.
  5. 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
  6. A **risk assessment** is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before seeking approval for any excursion**.**
  7. **Signed consent forms** granting permission for students to participate in excursions and a **medical information** form are to be obtained from parents or caregivers.
  8. **Safe transport** or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.
  9. Students must **behave appropriately** at all times while on excursions, including when animals are encountered.

**Implementation Procedures at Nashdale Public School**

1. **Educational Value** ~ “while recognising the potential benefits of excursions, schools must also recognise that such activities may interrupt regular learning routines of students. Accordingly, principals 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 reference the school's curriculum objectives and should be relevant to their achievement”.

All excursions must be approved by the Principal.

* ***Film screenings and live performances* “**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”. (refer to DET Excursions Policy Procedures section 2.2.2 & 2.2.3 Controversial Issues in Schools)
* “***Virtual Excursions”*** ~ “with the enhancement of Information and Communications Technology, schools are including a greater variety of “virtual excursions” in their 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”. (refer section 1.3.3 “Virtual Excursions”)
* ***Variation of Routine*** –Staff are to consult a variation of routine checklist. School activities are often carefully timetabled where a minor change to routine may affect others in the school. It is essential to communicate any potential changes so that others are consulted and kept informed in advance of the change.

1. **Inclusivity** ~ “all students should have the opportunity to participate in an excursion. Costs should be organised to ensure that there is no undue financial burden imposed upon individual members of the group or their families”.

“Where a student cannot participate in an excursion, **alternate activities** must be available that provide for similar learning outcomes. The support needs of students with **disabilities or medical conditions** will require careful consideration and consultation with parents and caregivers”.

Excursion information sheets will make it clear to parents that Student Assistance Scheme funding is available to families requiring financial assistance.

When planning for **overnight excursions**; the time frame should be extended so that ‘Expression of Interest’ notes are issued at least two months prior to the visit. These notes should include the estimated cost of the excursion, the (reasonable) deposit required, payment options, information about the assisting families undergoing financial hardship and the relevant dates.

Following receipt of expressions of interest from students, the cost should be finalised and parents advised.

If a student is absent on the day of the excursion or withdraws before the excursion the cost will be refunded except for:

1. amounts of less than $5 will not be refunded
2. when the number of students attending is used to determine the cost of the excursion, students who withdraw and cannot be replaced by another student will not receive a refund unless a Doctors Certificate is provided. Parents will be made aware of these conditions on the excursion information sheet.
3. **Duty of Care** ~ “teachers participating in excursions are responsible for the students in their care for the duration of the excursion. Consideration of safety issues and possible dangers to students will be included in the planning of the excursion. Students will be made aware of safety precautions before the excursion.

* 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. Refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Directorate’s [Safety Management System](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/index.htm) (Intranet access only) and, in particular, the Department’s [Emergency Management Guidelines](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/adminandmanage/ohands/safeworklearn/emergency/index.htm) (intranet access only).
* All excursions must be accompanied by a member of staff who has undertaken [emergency care training](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/profcurr/emergencycare/welcome.htm) (Intranet access only) and whose qualifications are current. An appropriately equipped first aid kit must be taken on all excursions.
* Students that are involved in **swimming or water activities** and or overnight excursions must be accompanied by a member of staff who possesses current training in **cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and emergency care**. All other excursions must be accompanied by a member of staff who has undertaken emergency care training.
* 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”. All staff members are trained in Anaphylaxis.
* Effective procedures which ensure all students are accounted for at all times during the excursion must be implemented. Roll marking and ‘head counts’ should also be included as appropriate.
* ***Teacher to student ratios*** ~ “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”.

“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 [*Sport and Physical Activity in Schools*, Safe Conduct Guidelines](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/student_welfare/safe_sport/PD20020012.shtml)*”*.

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

1. **Parents, Carers and volunteers** ~ adults who accompany teachers on an excursion and who are with children in an unsupervised capacity will be required to complete a “Working with Children” declaration. School staff retain the ultimate responsibility for supervision while on excursions and cannot transfer that responsibility to parents or other adults.

In most circumstances parents, caregivers and volunteers who assist on excursions **should not have to pay to attend.** Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be **briefed on safety and behaviour** measures **prior to the excursion** to ensure competency.

* If parents are to accompany an excursion to assist with supervision of students, they are to be given information and training (if necessary) to a level that will allow them to effectively carry out their duties. Parent volunteers are required to sign a Prohibited Employment Declaration prior to their participation.

**Child Protection** ~ “the same standards of conduct and the obligation to report suspected child abuse, improper conduct of a sexual nature and misconduct apply to staff throughout all stages of an excursion as they do in schools”.

* ***Child Protection Issues relating to Excursions to Courts*** ~ “teachers planning excursions to courts and court hearings should be mindful of the potential for students to be exposed to psychological harm and trauma due to the nature of the matters being heard before some courts. For example, cases regarding allegations of sexual and physical assault are likely to involve assaults being described in explicit detail and victims being cross-examined extensively on their version of events. Photographic or other exhibits may be tendered involving extremely explicit sexual or sensitive material”.

1. **Risk Management** ~ “the [*Occupational Health and Safety Act*](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/scanview/inforce/s/1/?TITLE=%22Occupational%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Act%202000%20No%2040%22&nohits=y)and [*Regulation*](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/scanview/inforce/s/1/?SRTITLE=%22Occupational%20Health%20and%20Safety%20Regulation%202001%22&nohits=y) require principals and teachers organising excursions to use risk management to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and excursion volunteers. Risk management supports better decision making by contributing to a greater insight into the **potential risks and their impacts”**.

* ***“***[***Risk Management Process and Proforma***](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/excursions/excursion_pol/riskmanage.doc) (Intranet access only) provides advice on the major steps in the risk management process as it relates to school excursions. A sample risk management plan proforma for excursions is also provided”. **Students who have previously exhibited violent behaviour will need to have a risk assessment completed prior to any decisions about them being accepted to participate in the excursion.**
* “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”.
* “The extent of **pre-excursion planning** will depend on the nature of the excursion and its location”. (Refer section 7.1.4 & 7.1.5 DET’s Excursion Policy Implementation Procedures)
* ***Special requirements including special protective equipment*** ~ “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”. (refer DET’s excursion Policy implementation procedures section 7.2.1 & 7.2.2)
* ***Swimming and water activities*** ~ “where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, principals must ensure that the eight elements of the *Water Survival Guidelines* (venue selection; parent/caregiver consent; staff supervision; risk management; staff induction; student induction; testing student proficiency; and classifying students) are all 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. 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.

⮚It will also be necessary to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity. The foundation skills deemed critical to aquatic participation- water confidence; survival skills; safe water entry and exit; and elementary swimming skills will all need to be assessed. This assessment must take place irrespective of parental or caregiver permission for the students to participate in the swimming or water activities.

⮚ Principals and teachers organising excursions involving swimming and water activities should particularly consult the [*Swimming and Water Safety* section of *Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools*](http://www.sports.det.nsw.edu.au/spguide/swimwate.htm)*”.*

* *Additional activities* ~ “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)”.

1. **Consent** ~ “refer to [Parent or caregiver information and consent form](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/excursions/excursion_pol/consent.doc) (Intranet access only) and school excursion [Medical Information Form](https://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_admin/excursions/excursion_pol/medical.doc) (Intranet access only)

* For many excursions it will **not be necessary** to collect a **new medical information form**. Medical information held by the school should, however, be updated regularly and as required and take account of activities proposed for the excursion.
* 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”.
* ***Unscheduled activities*** ~ **local spontaneous educational activities on site** will arise from time to time. On these occasions it may not be possible to obtain permission of parents prior to the visit.
* Signed permission notes for each excursion must be retained by the class teacher for the calendar year then sent to the office for filing.
* If the venue for the excursion or visit is to the Nashdale Hall or areas around the school, a separate permission note is not required. These are covered by our general permission note signed early in the year. However, we are required to inform parents of the visit via the Newsletter or special note.
* Obtaining oral permission - In some 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 on the permission note. 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 on the permission note.

1. **Transport** ~ “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 or coaches for excursions, schools should attempt to hire vehicles with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel. Seatbelts must be worn on buses and coaches when they are available”. Quotes from three bus companies are required if the cost of transport is over $500.
* If buses are required, administrative staff are to be given the relevant information and asked to seek quotes prior to a booking being made. Cost is not the only factor to be considered when choosing a transport provider.
* ***Car Travel ~*** “the transporting of students in the cars of staff members, parents, caregivers, volunteers and other students should 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 vehicle is registered and the no. of students doesn’t exceed the no. 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.
* principals must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete a [*Prohibited Employment Declaration*](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/child_protection/work_child/implementation_6_PD20050264.shtml)*/*[*Working with Children Check*](http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/working-with-children/working-with-children-check/about-the-check/volunteers-and-students)prior to the excursion”.

1. **Student Behaviour** ~ all students within the specific learning group will be given the opportunity to participate (*refer Inclusivity section*). However a **high standard of behaviour** is **expected from all students**. Students whose **behaviour could endanger the safety** of the group (violent students or those very non compliant) **may not be able to attend** the excursion. A **risk assessment** will be completed for those students considered “at risk”.

* “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 [The](https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/discipline/stu_discip_gov/PD20060316.shtml) [Behaviour](http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/supported-students-successful-students/behaviour-code-for-students) Code 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”.
* As a general rule, students will be expected to wear school uniform when participating in excursions.

Refer DET’s Excursions Policy Implementation Procedures for more information about:

* Excursions involving Preschool Children (section 1.3.2)
* Reviewing of School excursion procedures “schools are to regularly review and update their procedures” (section 1.5)
* Air travel and overseas excursions
* Reporting of incidents Occurring while on Excursions (refer section 12.2)
* Retention of Excursion Records (refer section 12.3)
* Insurance Arrangements relating to Excursions (refer section 12.5)
* Briefing Students Prior to Excursions – “prior to any excursion, students should be briefed on the school's expectations of their behaviour”. (section 13.1)
* Billeting of Students on Excursion (refer section 14)
* Related documents and Advice (refer section 15)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Major excursion guidelines** | |
| Kindergarten | Local excursion within hour of Orange |
| Stage 1 | Full day local excursion |
| Stage 2 | Alternating – Wambangalang/Dubbo Zoo/ Burrendong Sport & Rec |
| Stage 3 | Alternating – Sydney & environs/Canberra & environs |

Attachments:

*Educational Excursion Proposal*

*Excursion planning checklist*

*Variation of Routine*



## EXCURSION CHECKLIST

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Discussed excursion with Principal and submit excursion proposal one month prior to visit. (At least 2 months for overnight excursions) |
|  | Ensured details regarding transport, accommodation and venues are given to office staff so that bookings can be made. |
|  | Completed a RISC assessment for travel to and from the excursion and for the excursion site.  If there is no RISC assessment provided by the facility staff must visit facility prior to the excursion to complete one |
|  | Discussed excursion with students and send information and permission note home at least one week prior to proposed date. Provide a copy to the office for filing. |
|  | Collected and file permission notes. |
|  | Collected money and note payment on class/excursion list. |
|  | Prepare roll of students attending |
|  | Prepare roll of students remaining at school |
|  | Made provision for students remaining at school |
|  | Completed variation of routine checklist |
|  | Excursion requirements explained to students. Eg. Water bottle, hat… |
|  | Work prepared |
|  | Medical requirements noted |
|  | Check that all is okay with accommodation, transport and venues |
|  | Met and trained parent volunteers. |
|  | Have parent volunteers complete Child Protection Declaration |
|  | Ensured attendance of male/female staff as required. |
|  | Ensured attending staff meet requirements for overnight/water excursions |
|  | Contingency plan for inclement weather |
|  | First aid kit & individual medications collected |
|  | Mobile phone |
|  | Camera |
|  | Video Camera |

**Variation of Routine**

Changes to school routine include things like excursions, visiting performances, sporting events, special events, visitors and even something simple like a teacher being away.

School activities are often carefully timetabled where a minor change to routine may affect others in the school. It is essential to communicate any potential changes so that others are consulted and kept informed in advance of the change. This is a common courtesy and it is something we should all value.

**ACTIVITY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE:**

Before making a change to your usual routine please consider existing timetables and if it will affect:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Check** | **Consider** | **Notes** |
|  | RFF teacher |  |
|  | Librarian |  |
|  | Assembly |  |
|  | Scripture |  |
|  | Parent helpers |  |
|  | School Counsellor |  |
|  | Playground duty |  |
|  | Canteen |  |
|  | Learning Support |  |
|  | Use of Nashdale Hall |  |
|  | Band, Dance, Choir |  |
|  | Minilit/Multilit |  |
|  | Other classes ~leftover students |  |
|  | Bus travellers |  |
|  | Office staff informed |  |
|  | School sport & PSSA training |  |
|  | Lunchtime activities |  |
|  | Cleaner |  |
|  | General Assistant |  |
|  | Newsletter – entry & day |  |
|  | Risk Assessment |  |

**Proposed changes need to be discussed with and approved by the principal.**

## NASHDALE EDUCATIONAL EXCURSION PROPOSAL

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date of submission** |  | | **Date of proposed excursion** | | |  |
| **Class/Grade/Stage/Group** |  | | **Approx number of students** | | |  |
| **Purpose of excursion**  **Links to KLA’s** |  | | | | | |
| **Organising teacher** |  | | | | | |
| **Accompanying teachers** |  | | | | | |
| **Accompanying parents** |  | | | | | |
| **Time of departure** |  | | | **Time of return** | |  |
| **Method of travel** |  | | | **Company** | |  |
| **Cost to students** |  | | | | | |
| **OVERNIGHT EXCURSIONS** | | | | | | |
| **Accommodation** |  | | | | | |
| **Cost of food component** |  | | | | | |
| **Team Leader** | **Recommended** | **Not recommended** | | | **Comment (if applicable)** | |
|  |  |  | | |  | |
|  | **Recommended** | **Not recommended** | | | **Comment (if applicable)** | |
| **Principal’s decision** |  |  | | |  | |
| **Signed** |  | **Date** | | |  | |