



Excursions

Children's Services Policy No 3.2

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Aim:

- To ensure that excursions are planned and conducted in a safe manner, taking into consideration the age, skills and abilities of the children, the mode of transport to be used and the identified risks of such excursions.

Background Information:

Excursions are essential in the provision of high quality children's services programs. Well planned quality excursions should challenge, educate and expose children to a range of experiences and opportunities enabling them to extend their abilities and explore their world.

Relevant Legislation:

- Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations (modified July 2018)
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011
- Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010

Notes: This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following Willoughby City Council Children's Services Policies:

- **2.11 – Sun Protection**
- **2.12 – Water Safety**
- **2.13 – Safe Transportation of Children**
- **2.14 – Road Safety**

Note: In this policy "staff" and "educators" refers to staff employed by Willoughby City Council.

Resources:

- Occupational Health and Safety, Community Child Care Resource Sheet, 2014
- Work Health and Safety in Education and Care Services, Child Australia, 2012
- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian – SAFE series resources
- National Quality Standards:
 - Quality Area 1, Standard 1.1, Element 1.1.3;
 - Quality Area 2, Standard 2.1, Element 2.1.1 and Element 2.1.2; Standard 2.2, Element 2.2.1, Element 2.2.2 and Element 2.2.3;
 - Quality Area 4, Standard 4.1, Element 4.1.1 and Element 4.1.2.
 - Quality Area 7, Standard 7.1, Element 7.1.2 and 7.1.3.

Practices:

An excursion is defined as an outing organised by the education and care service.

For children not yet attending school:

At no time are staff to take children who are not yet attending formal education on an excursion for the purpose of water activities, such as swimming, fishing, or on a ferry/cruise trip.

Whilst excursions for this age are not to be conducted at a lake, river or beach; it is possible that another excursion will bring children into contact with bodies of water, such as the pond at the zoo. It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor to identify these in the risk assessment and apply appropriate control, to safely manage the children at the time.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations provide specific requirements in regards to the conduct and preparation of excursions for all education and care services.

Excursions are categorised into Regular outings and Major excursions:

- **Regular outings** are those excursions that are undertaken on a regular basis to a particular place within the local community, such as the local park.
- **Major excursions** are those excursions that are not considered to be regular, such as a one off visit to the zoo or a Vacation Care programmed school holiday excursion.

Planning of excursions:

When planning both regular outings and major excursions, staff and educators are to consider the appropriateness of such excursions, taking into account the following:

- Age and abilities of the children attending.
- The educational and/or recreational purpose of the excursion.
- Suitability of the venue and access (including wheelchair accessibility information if required).
- Access to food, refreshments and other facilities.
- The amount of shade available if the venue is outdoors.
- Any specific clothing, safety requirements and equipment needs.
- The mode of transport required to attend the excursions.
- Any identified risks associated with the excursion.

Risk assessment:

The preparation of a risk assessment is required to be conducted **prior** to an excursion being undertaken and permission must be sought from parents/carers for the excursion to take place. This will assist staff and educators to identify and assess any potential hazards, including water hazards, measure that risk and determine the level of required management associated with any excursion.

Risk assessments are to be prepared as follows for Council operated Education and Care Services:

1. Centre Based Services

- Once the risk assessment has been completed it is to be forwarded to the Children and Youth Services Team Leader and then submitted via the Safety Matters portal for approval by Council's Safety Management Specialist. A copy is to be saved on Council's Document Management system (ECM) and at the service available to parents/carers on request.

All Risk Assessments should be based on the location and condition of the venue as well as hazards that are visible enroute to the venue, manner or mode of transport to the venue; and potential hazards within the venue. Consideration must be given but not be limited to the following:

- Proposed route and destination for the excursion.
- Any water hazards and associated risk of the water based activity.
- The mode of transport to and from the venue.
- The number of adults and children that will be involved in the excursion.
- Given the risks the excursion may pose, the number of educators or other adults that is determined to be appropriate to provide supervision and any specialised skills required (e.g., Life Saving Skills).
- The proposed activity.
- The proposed duration.
- The items that should be taken on the excursion.

Other considerations may include:

- Water hazards enroute to or at the venue, and risks associated with water based activities.
- Water or weather conditions that may impact on the safety of the excursion.
- The height and condition of any play equipment and surrounding fall zone.
- The depth and condition of a specified body of water, children's skill level and staff's ability to actively supervise water activities and swimming excursions for children attending school aged services.
- The safety of crossing roads and availability of pedestrian lights
- The proximity to road hazards.
- Appropriateness of fencing provided at the venue, such as a park.

If management deem that the planned excursion presents a level of risk that is considered to be of significant concern regarding injury/accident, the Children and Youth Services Team Leader, Community Life Manager or Nominated Supervisor will advise that the excursion is not approved and therefore not to be undertaken.

Where the risk assessment is for an excursion that is deemed to be a "Regular Outing" the risk assessment needs to be completed on an annual basis, unless the service or educator is aware of a need to update the risk assessment. This may include a change in the manner of transport or route taken, or an upgrade to a venue.

Permission for excursions

Parents/carers are to be given information regarding the excursion and they are to provide written permission for their child/ren to attend any proposed routine or non-routine excursion in the following manner:

Regular Outings:

All service types

- On enrolment parents/carers are asked to sign a general permission statement for children to participate in regular outings within the local area. These need to be signed for each 12 month period that the child is enrolled.
- Where the staff or educator determines that they will take the children on a regular outing, a notice is to be displayed for parents/carers, where possible, the day before the outing. Information is to include:

- the destination of the excursion
- an itinerary
- timetable for the excursion
- contact phone number

Major Excursions:

All Service types

Written authorisation from parents/carers **must** be obtained prior to any child leaving the premises of a service or Educator's home.

Such authorisation is to include:

- The child's name.
- The date of the excursion.
- The purpose of the excursion.
- The proposed destination.
- The mode of transport or walking itinerary.
- The activities to be carried out during the excursion and, if required, parents/ carers are to provide information about the skill level of their child in relation to specific activities, e.g. swimming ability.
- The proposed period of time during which the excursion is to take place.
- The number of children that may attend the excursion.
- The number of adults to accompany and supervise the children (ratio of staff to children).
- If practical, an emergency contact number for the excursion.

Adult to staff ratios

When determining the number of adults required to attend an excursion, for the purpose of supervision, staff and educators are required to adhere to those ratios as detailed below:

If an excursion has been planned however the required number of adults is not available on the day, the excursion is to be cancelled or postponed until such time as the required number of adults can be present.

Minimum Adult to Child ratios for Regular Outings and Major Excursions – Centre based Services Only:

Location or activity	0-3 year	3-5 year	5-12 years
Any out of service activity (*see local excursion exemption)	1:2	1:4	1:8 Except walking to/from school – 1:15
*Local Excursions for OOSH services within close proximity to service, *e.g. local park	N/A	N/A	1:15
Any out of service activity involving a form of transport or major road crossing	1:2	1:4	1:8 Or as managed with risk assessment to ensure safety, max. 1:15

Any out of service activity where there has been a water hazard identified that is able to be controlled *(such as a water feature)	1:2 Determine if this is an appropriate excursion for this age group or demonstrate risk minimisation strategies on the Risk Assessment	1:4 Determine if this is an appropriate excursion for this age group or demonstrate risk minimisation strategies on the Risk Assessment	1:8
Any activity involving swimming, activities at a lake, beach or ferry/cruise trip	Not permitted	Not permitted	1:5 Grades 3-6 only

***Water Hazards**

Where the staff/educator has determined through the risk assessment that there is a water hazard, (e.g. a water feature within the zoo), the staff/educators are to identify an alternate route away from the hazard, maintain ratios for water hazards, or identify how the hazard can safely be negotiated. An example may be to employ the water hazard ratio in small groups until all children are past the hazard.

Conduct of Excursion

All service types

Staff/educators are to ensure that the following information and equipment is taken on regular outing or excursion:

- A fully stocked first aid kit.
- Individual Asthma medication for children who have submitted an Asthma Action plan.
- Individual medication for children who have been identified as anaphylactic.
- Individual drinking cups/bottles.
- Sun cream, hats and tissues.
- A list of contact numbers for parents and contact information for the Nominated Supervisor, Children and Youth Service Team Leader and the Community Life Manager.
- Where snacks or lunches are to be provided, a list of food allergies for children.
- A mobile phone (provide the parents with the mobile number).
- Children are to wear Willoughby City Council Excursion wristbands for all major excursions (recommended for all excursions in Long Day Care).
- For LDC, children are to wear Willoughby City Council Excursion red hats.
- Staff/educators will not change the itinerary of the excursion unless it is in the best interests of the children's safety.
- Where the children are to be transported on an excursion in an educator's car, staff/educators are to refer to the Children's Services Policy 2.13 - Safe Transportation of Children Policy.