



EXCURSION POLICY

SUB CATEGORY: Children's Learning and Development

POLICY GOAL

To provide safe opportunities for children to participate in experiences which positively enhance their learning and development. To ensure that educators take all reasonable precautions in the planning and implementation of excursions away from the centre and use a risk management approach.

RATIONALE

There may be opportunities where educators believe that children's learning can be enhanced by participating in well organised activities outside of the service when integrated into learning programs. We understand that excursions involve greater risk and therefore particular attention must be given to ensuring the safety and welfare of all excursion participants.

Under Regulation 168 of the National Education and Care Services Regulation, services are required to have in place policies and procedures in relation to excursions.

"99 Children leaving the education and care service premises

- (1) The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that a child who is being educated and cared for by the education and care service does not leave the education and care service premises except in accordance with subregulation (4). Penalty: \$2000.*
- (2) A nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure that a child who is being educated and cared for by the education and care service does not leave the education and care service premises except in accordance with subregulation (4). Penalty: \$2000.*
- (3) A family day care educator must ensure that a child who is being educated and cared for by the educator as part of a family day care service does not leave the residence or approved family day care venue except in accordance with subregulation (4). Penalty: \$2000.*
- (4) The child may only leave the relevant premises if the child—*
 - (a) is given into the care of—*
 - (i) a parent of the child; or*
 - (ii) an authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record; or*
 - (iii) a person authorised by a parent or authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record to collect the child from the premises; or*
 - (b) leaves the premises in accordance with the written authorisation of the child's parent or authorised nominee named in the child's enrolment record; or*
 - (c) is taken on an excursion in accordance with this Division; or*
 - (d) is given into the care of a person or taken outside the premises—*
 - (i) because the child requires medical, hospital or ambulance care or treatment; or*
 - (ii) because of another emergency.*
- (5) In this regulation **parent** does not include a parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child.*

100 Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion

- (1) *The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure a risk assessment is carried out in accordance with regulation 101 before an authorisation is sought under regulation 102 for an excursion. Penalty: \$2000.*
- (2) *A nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure a risk assessment is carried out in accordance with regulation 101 before an authorisation is sought under regulation 102 for an excursion. Penalty: \$2000.*
- (3) *A family day care educator must carry out a risk assessment in accordance with regulation 101 before an authorisation is sought under regulation 102 for an excursion. Penalty: \$2000.*
- (4) *A risk assessment is not required under this regulation for an excursion if—*
 - (a) *the excursion is a regular outing; and*
 - (b) *a risk assessment has been conducted for the excursion; and*
 - (c) *that risk assessment has been conducted not more than 12 months before the excursion is to occur.*

101 Conduct of risk assessment for excursion

- (1) *A risk assessment for an excursion must—*
 - (a) *identify and assess risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child being taken on the excursion; and*
 - (b) *specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.*
- (2) *Without limiting subregulation (1), a risk assessment must consider—*
 - (a) *the proposed route and destination for the excursion; and*
 - (b) *any water hazards; and*
 - (c) *any risks associated with water-based activities; and*
 - (d) *the transport to and from the proposed destination for the excursion; and*
 - (e) *the number of adults and children involved in the excursion; and*
 - (f) *given the risks posed by the excursion, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required; **Example.** Specialised skills could include life-saving skills and*
 - (g) *the proposed activities; and*
 - (h) *the proposed duration of the excursion; and*
 - (i) *the items that should be taken on the excursion.*

Example. *A mobile phone and a list of emergency contact numbers for children on the excursion.*

102 Authorisation for excursions

- (1) *The approved provider of an education and care service must ensure that a child being educated and cared for by the service is not taken outside the education and care service premises on an excursion unless written authorisation has been provided under subregulation (4). Penalty: \$1000.*
- (2) *A nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure that a child being educated and cared for by the service is not taken outside the education and care service premises on an excursion unless written authorisation has been provided under subregulation (4). Penalty: \$1000.*
- (3) *A family day care educator must ensure that a child who is being educated and cared for by the educator as part of a family day care service is not taken outside the residence or approved family day care venue on an excursion unless written authorisation has been provided under subregulation (4). Penalty: \$1000.*
- (4) *The authorisation must be given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise the taking of the child outside the education and care service premises by an educator and must state—*

- (a) *the child's name; and*
 - (b) *the reason the child is to be taken outside the premises; and*
 - (c) *the date the child is to be taken on the excursion (unless the authorisation is for a regular outing); and*
 - (d) *a description of the proposed destination for the excursion; and*
 - (e) *the method of transport to be used for the excursion; and*
 - (f) *the proposed activities to be undertaken by the child during the excursion; and*
 - (g) *the period the child will be away from the premises; and*
 - (h) *the anticipated number of children likely to be attending the excursion; and*
 - (i) *the anticipated ratio of educators attending the excursion to the anticipated number of children attending the excursion; and*
 - (j) *the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children on the excursion; and*
 - (k) *that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service.*
- (5) *If the excursion is a regular outing, the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12month period.*¹

“Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2020 under the Education and Care Services National Law” August 2020 (effective 1 October 2020)

8 Conduct of risk assessment for excursion

For regulation 101(2)(d) of the National Regulations substitute—

"(d) if the excursion involves transporting children—

- (i) the means of transport; and
- (ii) any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported; and
- (iii) the process for entering and exiting—
 - (A) the education and care service premises; and
 - (B) the pick-up location or destination (as required); and
- (iv) procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking; and".

9 Authorisation for excursions

In regulation 102(4) of the National Regulations—

(a) for paragraph (c) substitute—

- "(c) if the authorisation is for a regular outing, a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings; and
- (ca) if the authorisation is for an excursion that is not a regular outing, the date the child is to be taken on the excursion; and";

(b) (b) for paragraph (e) substitute—

"(e) if the excursion involves transporting children—

- (i) the means of transport; and
- (ii) any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported; and".²

¹ *Education and Care Services National Regulations (version Dec 2019)*

² *“Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2020 under the Education and Care Services National Law” August 2020*

An excursion as defined under the National Education and Care Regulations as *“an outing organised by an education and care service or family day care educator, but does not include an outing organised by an education and care service provided on a school site if—*

- (a) the child or children leave the education and care service premises in the company of an educator; and*
- (b) the child or children do not leave the school site;”³*

Division 6 of the Regulations sets out the requirements for conducting an excursion including the need to *“conduct a risk assessment in accordance with regulation 101 before an authorisation is sought under regulation 102 for an excursion. A risk assessment is not required under this regulation for an excursion if—*

- (a) the excursion is a regular outing; and*
- (b) a risk assessment has been conducted for the excursion; and*
- (c) the circumstances of the excursion have not changed since the most recent risk assessment.”⁴*

“Approved providers, nominated supervisors and family day care educators must ensure a risk assessment is carried out before children are taken on an excursion. Authorisation must also be obtained from parents and authorised nominees. A risk assessment is not required if the excursion is a regular outing and a risk assessment was conducted less than 12 months before the excursion takes place, and there has been no change in circumstances.

Although the National Regulations does not specify a higher educator to child ratio for excursions, children must be adequately supervised at all time. A thorough risk assessment should determine whether the minimum ratios are sufficient to provide adequate supervision while attending an excursion.

Supervision is a key aspect of ensuring that children’s safety is protected at all times in the service environment and while on excursion.

Risk assessments must identify and assess risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child taken on the excursion and specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.”⁵

When preparing the Risk Management Plan/ Risk Assessment for an excursion, educators should consider all aspects including, but not limited to;

- Transportation, proposed route and destination
- Water hazards and risks associated with water activities
- Proposed activities and duration of the excursion
- Medication and Medical conditions
- Toileting and nappy change facilities (where needed)
- Meals and the provision of safe drinking water
- Protection from the environment including sun and rain.
- Emergency procedures
- Handwashing and other hygiene practises
- The number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision to ensure children’s safety and if any specialised skills are required

³ *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (version September 2020)

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⁵ *“Guide to the National Quality Framework”* Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2020

- Specialised skills of educators and responsible adults such as first aid, anaphylaxis and Asthma training and training to manage other known medical conditions
- Items that should be taken such as a mobile phone, first aid kit, emergency medication, attendance records and emergency contacts for families
- Other persons who may be present such as members of the general public
- Increased supervision requirements especially around water, roads, public toilets
- Checking areas to be used prior to arrival
- Educational benefits of participation
- The number of adults and children involved in the excursion
- Educators should use a risk management approach when planning and implementing excursions
 - Identify hazards
 - Assess the risk
 - Control Risks
 - Implement Plan for controlling risks
 - Monitor and review

Leaving children unattended in a car can result in serious injury or death.

On a typical Australian summer day, the temperature inside a parked vehicle can be 20 degrees to 30 degrees hotter than the outside temperature. In as little as five minutes, the temperature in a vehicle can double, reaching dangerous levels extremely quickly. The impact of heat on a child's body is almost immediate and can be fatal. A child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult's placing them at greater risk of life-threatening heat stroke, brain injury, heart and lung failure and dehydration. A child left unaccounted for in a vehicle is also unprotected and vulnerable to danger, particularly in an emergency situation. Early childhood services transporting children, must be vigilant of the dangers of leaving children in vehicles and have strategies in place to manage the risks and protect children in their care.

Approved providers should review their policies and procedures relating to the transportation of children, excursions, and drop-off and pick-up times.

The following steps can ensure children's safety at all times:

1. ***Make sure your roll records are accurate and up to date.***
Ensure your service's policies and procedures support accurate and up-to-date roll record-keeping, including for those times when children are being dropped off and collected from the service and during excursions. Ensure staff receive an induction and are re-trained regularly in these policies.
2. ***Conduct both roll checks and head counts.***
Conducting roll checks as children enter and leave the vehicle is essential. Conducting head counts only, can miss individual children as they arrive and depart, so you need to also tick off names on rolls, as well as count children. When completing roll checks, visually look at the child as they respond. If a child is not named on the roll, the educator should confirm with the service, school or the parent of the child whether they should be in care that day and update the roll accordingly.
3. ***Thoroughly check the vehicle.***
*Conduct a physical inspection throughout the vehicle to ensure all children have left the vehicle, **including checking under the seats, in the luggage racks and in any storage areas.***
4. ***Conduct another roll check and head count upon entry to the service.***
Once the children are in their respective room at the service or family day care home or venue, conduct a roll check and head count to ensure all children are accounted for.

5. **Check the vehicle again.**
*Have a second person physically check the vehicle again, **including checking under the seats, in the luggage racks and in any storage areas.***
6. **If a child is unaccounted for, immediately make all necessary enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts. You will need to conduct physical searches of the service and, if necessary, contact the child's family and/or the police.**

All staff should receive a practical induction and regular, practical training relating to the transportation of children. It is important that these processes and procedures are rehearsed regularly.

It is your responsibility to ensure children in your care are not left unattended in vehicles.

Failure to take reasonable precautions to protect children from harm and hazards such as these may give rise to an offence under section 167 of the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law). Also, a failure to adequately supervise children may give rise to an offence under section 165 of the National Law. Both offences attract maximum fines of \$10,000 in the case of an individual or \$50,000 in any other case. The Regulatory Authority will take appropriate action against services when a child has been placed at risk.”⁶

IMPLEMENTATION

Planning an excursion:

- Prior to planning an excursion, educators should meet with their nominated supervisor to discuss the option of conducting the excursion.
- If the excursion is initially approved the regular educators caring for the group of children must complete a risk management plan (risk assessment) and submit for approval by the nominated supervisor or Approved Provider. The Risk Management Plan provided should be used to ensure all requirements under the regulations are covered.
- Risk Management Plans/Risk Assessments involving excursions must include the means of transport, requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints, the process for entering and exiting each location and procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking.
- Any Risk Management Plan for a reoccurring excursion must not be older than 12mths.
- Excursions for regular outings to local areas may last for up to 12mths but should be reviewed and modified based on changes as they occur. Risk Assessments and Permission Forms for regular outings may last for up to 12mths. Educators should use the “Excursion Form Reoccurring” for permission from families for regular outings.
- Educators should consider how food and beverages will be managed and how this contributes to healthy choices and food hygiene.
- During this process educators should conduct a visit to the proposed excursion destination so that information can be gathered about the availability of toilets, hand washing, drinking and shade facilities at the destination and details can be checked such as mobile phone coverage and access for emergency services.
- Ratios will need to be determined based on the risk management plan, these must, at minimum, meet the Regulation requirements and provide additional adults (educators, parents, volunteers) to maintain safety.

⁶ NQF e-bulletin Department of Education issued 20 Feb 2020
<https://www.vision6.com.au/v/51732/1423605/email.html?k=KjwRwT6Q8HpelBzd77Ppx1dthGkx2LJCAxu7pvjAYI>

- If the excursion is approved by the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider then written authorisation on the Excursion Permission Form must be obtained for each child participating
- Educators should conduct discussions with children and other adults involved about the safety rules, and the what, why, when and how of the excursion prior to the event
- Where transport is used please refer to the Transportation Policy and related forms.
- Details of transport used for the excursion must also be included in the Excursion Risk Assessment including safety restraints.
- Ensure all adults, including volunteers have read the associated Risk Assessment and understand the control measures.

Excursion Procedure:

- Where possible a visual of the proposed destination should be carried out on the morning of the excursion (where this is suitable).
- Educators should ensure that all adults are briefed on the risk minimisation strategies being used and relevant information including;
 - Travel
 - Procedures/activities at the destination
 - Meal times
 - Toileting and hygiene
- **There must be a minimum of 2 adults in attendance at all times.**
- One adult must hold a current first aid qualification prescribed under the regulation (a certificate must be kept at the service)
- Educators must carry the following at minimum;
 - First Aid Kit,
 - Emergency medication for children participating,
 - A reliable form of communication able to initiate and receive communications (mobile phone),
 - Sunscreen and waterless handwash if applicable,
 - A copy of all children's names and family contact details.
- Where vehicles are used to transport children, there must be one seat per child with restraints adequate for the age of the child under the state transportation laws, please refer to the Transportation Policy.
- **The person responsible for the excursion must ensure the booking records are current and accurate and consult these before commencement of the excursion.**
- **Checking off a roll as children depart and arrive at each location must be conducted by staff.** By only counting heads, you can miss individuals as they arrive or depart. When you look at the child, tick off their name on the roll. If calling out names from a roll, look at the child as they respond. If a child is present but not named on the roll or vice versa, confirm with the service, school or their parent whether they should be in care that day and if permission has been provided and update the roll accordingly.
- **All adults must ensure attendance lists are checked against children physically present, this should include conducting a head count and ticking off names on a roll by visually confirming each child.**
- **All adults must check collection lists as children depart and leave each location, this should include conducting a head count and ticking off names on a roll by visually confirming each child.**
- **All adults must perform a physical check of any transportation before leaving the transport.** This physical check should include a check behind and under all seats and any luggage or storage areas.

- Where children leave the College premises, all children must be marked on a paper attendance role as leaving the premises and again be checked into the service at the completion of the excursion, **this should include conducting a head count and ticking off names on a roll by visually confirming each child.**
- Once the children are in their respective room at the service or venue, **conduct another roll check and head count to ensure all children are accounted for.**
- Educators/staff must ensure that they are positioned to have adequate **monitoring/supervision** of all children at all times. Adults must ensure that children are being appropriately supervised when being transported to or from the service by car, bus, train or on foot.
- **A second adult must check the transportation to ensure there are no children left. This should be a thorough check including under and behind seats and in luggage and storage areas.**
- Educators should follow the flow chart at the end of this policy, a copy of which should be kept with the excursion documentation.

Upon return:

- The excursion should be evaluated and form part of the ongoing learning experiences for children.
- Where procedures have been identified as requiring improvement for future excursions these should be shared with other educators and the nominated supervisor.

In the event of an emergency situation:

- The educator or member in charge of the group must take all precautions to ensure the safety of all children and adults participating in the excursion.
- If required, first aid will be administered by an adult with current first aid qualifications.
- In the event of medical attention or other emergency, the educator in charge of the group must call emergency services and advise of the situation and their location.
- The educator in charge must contact the service in the event of;
 - an incident, injury, trauma or serious illness occurring
 - a change to the proposed activities or destination due to unforeseen circumstances
 - a child going missing from the group
- Where an incident, injury, trauma or serious illness occurs the relevant authority must also be notified, please refer to the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy.
- Reporting will be required as per the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy within 24hrs through NQAITS, including an instance where a child appears to be missing.
- Where a child appears to be missing;
 - Ensure safety of all other children and relocate to a safe, secure location. Keep children calm to avoid being exposed to any trauma. Ensure the ratio of educators to carers is appropriate for the location and at minimum meets the Regulation Requirement.
 - Begin searching previous locations and areas surrounding, seek assistance from other adults at the venue if appropriate.
 - If the child is not located within a few minutes,
 - Seek assistance from the venue where appropriate
 - Call 000 to seek assistance from police service
 - Contact the service to advise the nominated supervisor, who will then contact the family to advise and send additional persons where possible to assist in the search

- No one is authorised to speak with the Media without the Approved Providers authorisation.
- Support is to be provided to educators, children and families where identified as needed
- The Regulatory Authority should be contacted as soon as is practicable and within 24hrs.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

- Educators and families will have access to this policy at all times.
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.
- All persons involved in the excursion must be provided with the Excursion Risk Management Plan
- Parents will be advised of the preparation and availability of the Risk Management Plan on the Excursion Permission Form
- Rules and responsibilities should be communicated to all children, educators, volunteers, parents and other persons participating prior to the excursion

RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

- Excursion Risk Management Plan
- Excursion Permission Form
- Excursion Permission Reoccurring Form
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Transportation Permission Form
- Transport Risk Assessment

SCOPE AND ENFORCEMENT

The Failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to;

- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination
- A restriction on an adult or child participating in future excursions.

RECOGNISED AUTHORITIES AND DOCUMENTS WHICH GUIDE POLICY

- *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (version Sept 2020)
- *"Guide to the National Quality Framework"* Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2020
- *"Education and Care Services National Law Amendment Act 2017 No. 9 of 2017"* Published 22 September 2017
- NQF e-bulletin Department of Education issued 20 Feb 2020
<https://www.vision6.com.au/v/51732/1423605/email.html?k=KjwRwT6Q8HpeIBzd77Ppx1dthGkx2LJJCAxu7pvjAYI>
- *"Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2020 under the Education and Care Services National Law"* August 2020
- *"Safe Transportation of Children Information Sheet"* ACECQA October 2020 (sourced on-line September 2020)
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-08/Infosheet-SafeTransportationOfChildren.pdf>

DATE CREATED: November 2011**REVIEW DETAILS:**

Review Date	Details of Changes
January 2013	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
January 2014	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
May 2015	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
April 2016	No changes made, sources updated where applicable
April 2016	Updated sources. Removal of requirement to have first aid certificate certified. Change to minimum number of “educators” to minimum number of “adults”. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inclusion under Scope and Enforcement: “A restriction on an adult or child participating in future excursions.”
April 2017	Additional information in the rationale
September 2017	The Regulation amendments October 2017 states “that risk assessment has been conducted not more than 12 months before the excursion is to occur.
April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Addition of Bus Permission Forms for “Related Forms and Documents” ● Updated source to “<i>Guide to the National Quality Framework</i>” Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority Feb 2018, quotes in rationale updated but no change to implementation ● Included regulations 99-102 in rationale ● Updated latest versions for other sources
March 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sources updated
March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sources updated ● Additional information in Implementation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Around reoccurring excursions (forms and risk assessments) ○ Additional responsibilities for conducting head counts, visually checking children against rolls ○ Actions to take in the event of a missing child ● Included flowchart for head counts and visual checking – see last page
Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sources updated ● Amendment of regulations for 1 October 2020 included in Rationale ● Risk Management Plans/Risk Assessments involving excursions must include the means of transport, requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints, the process for entering and exiting each location and procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking. ● Any Risk Management Plan for a re-occurring excursion must not be older than 12mths. ● Details of transport used for the excursion must also be included in the Excursion Risk Assessment including safety restraints. ● Renamed Bus Permission Form to “Transport Permission Form” and added Transport Risk Assessment” to related forms section

EXCURSION FLOWCHART

ALL EDUCATORS MUST

Before leaving venue

Conduct a head count and tick off names on a current/accurate roll by visually confirming each child.

On-Route to next venue

Conduct numerous head counts and checks along the way

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL ADULTS ON THE EXCURSION TO ENSURE ADEQUATE SUPERVISION AT ALL TIMES AND

TO CONDUCT BOTH REGULAR HEAD COUNTS AND VISUALLY CONFIRM EACH CHILD AGAINST THE ACCURATE AND CURRENT LIST PROVIDED

Before leaving transportation

2nd person to conduct a head count and tick off names on a roll by visually confirming each child

Arriving at venue

Conduct a head count and tick off names on a current/accurate roll by visually confirming each child.