Camps and excursions policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this page must follow the process outlined on the creating, updating and deleting operational policies page.

Overview

This policy provides a framework for site leaders to plan and undertake camps and excursions that allow all children and young people to move safely and effectively beyond the site setting to participate in an array of learning experiences offered within the community and natural environment.

This policy and related procedures outline the obligations and procedural requirements of sites particularly, teachers, educators, workers and parents (refer to definitions section).

Scope

A camp or excursion is an activity organised by a site (including programs operated by a school or preschool such as, but not limited to, occasional care and rural care services) during which children and young people leave the site to engage in educational and recreational activities under the supervision of a teachers, educators or workers with a teacher-in-charge.

Excursions involving overseas travel should be planned in line with the overseas travel policy and overseas travel student excursions procedure and read along with this policy and its supporting procedure.

This policy does not apply to work placements (covered by the workplace learning guidelines), or children and young people attending adjacent campuses and facilities, such as school community libraries/gyms, that is an ongoing requirement of the school curriculum.

This policy does not apply to Family Day Care, Guardianship Family Day Care services or the Respite Care Program operated by the department.

Where Governing Councils are required under Education and Care Services National Regulation 168 (2) (g) to have an excursion policy and procedure they may use this policy as a resource.

Detail

Camps or excursions support and enrich a range of curriculum areas and provide deep learning experiences to children and young people in a variety of environments. Sites should plan excursions or camps within the context of the educational program specific to their site, and ensure children, young people and parents are adequately prepared and aware of the purpose of the learning experience.

Site leaders must make sure workers are aware preschool aged children are prohibited from participating in camps.

For the purposes of this policy and supporting procedure where a young person has enrolled at a school as an independent student (see clause 1.2.1 of the admission procedure (PDF, 425.3 KB) for definition) any obligation/responsibility of a parent applies/falls instead to that independent student.

All camp or excursion documentation must be submitted and approved in line with this policy and associated procedures before any camp or excursion taking place. Specific details on how to conduct a camp or excursion are contained in the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB).

Duty of care

All department workers owe a duty to take reasonable care to protect those children and young people in their care and control from a reasonably foreseeable risk of harm. If harm results from a failure to exercise the required standard of care, a negligence claim may result. Refer to duty of care policy (PDF, 242.1 KB).

In addition to the obligations outlined above, site leaders must advise departmental workers (including volunteers) that they have statutory obligations under section 28 and 29 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) (WHS Act) to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons
- comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the department to allow the department to comply with the WHS Act
- cooperate with any reasonable departmental policy or procedure relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to them.

To fulfil the department's legal obligations the site leader must nominate a teacher-in-charge for any camp or excursion.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and workers, camps or excursions must be conducted with all parties aware of their roles and responsibilities.

Education and early childhood services national law and regulations

Preschools must make sure there's adequate supervision of children at all times and to take every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm and any hazard or risk likely to cause injury, as per the:

- Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Act 2011 (Schedule 1 Education and Care Services National Law)
- Education and Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards) Regulations 2011.

This includes the requirements to conduct a risk assessment (see risk management of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB)) before an excursion and ensuring appropriate authorisations as per the acceptance and refusal of authorisations policy.

Inclusivity

As outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 camps and excursions must be inclusive of all children and young people to make sure they are given the opportunity to participate. Camps and excursions can provide a unique opportunity for all students to be included in enriching learning experiences that promote the principles of inclusivity.

It's unlawful for a site to discriminate against a child or young person on the grounds of disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status by denying the child or young person access to, or limiting their access to, any benefit such as a school camp or excursion. For more guidance on supporting gender diverse and intersex children and young people during camps or excursions refer to the gender diverse and intersex children and young people support procedure (PDF, 191.5 KB).

Costs should be structured to makes sure there's no undue financial burden imposed upon individual children or young people or their families. Sites should consider whether financial assistance (for example subsidy or payment plan) will be offered, and this should be communicated to families during the consent seeking process. Parents are liable for the costs associated with their child or young person's attendance on a camp or excursion.

However, in cases where a family has been approved for School Card and the site sets that family's materials and services charge less than the subsidy or the 'value of the standard sum' then the difference may be used by the parent against the cost of a camp or excursion. If for any reason a child or young person is unable to attend a camp or excursion the site should negotiate with the family reasonable reimbursement of costs paid.

The support needs of children and young people with disabilities or medical conditions, multicultural groups, including racial and religious backgrounds, and transgender and intersex will require careful consideration and consultation with parents. Appropriate support measures should be put into place for these children and young people so they can access the learning experiences available through camps and excursions. All support needs required for the child or young person in the context of the camp or excursion location and proposed activities must be captured within the sports, adventure, camps and excursions risk management form (DOCX, 2.1 MB) (see risk management of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB)).

Disability standards

The Disability Standards for Education 2005, in particular the Standard for Participation (see part 5) and the Standard for Curriculum Development, Accreditation and Delivery (see part 6), strengthen the obligation of sites to, amongst other things, make sure off-site activities are designed to include children and young people with disabilities by taking all reasonable steps to make sure the child or young person can participate in the courses or programs provided by the site. Sites should, where necessary, make reasonable adjustments to help the child or young person to participate in the camp or excursion. To determine whether an adjustment is reasonable consider the factors in the definitions section below. Course determination and planning must be undertaken before or alongside the initial planning for the camp or excursion.

If the adjustment is reasonable but would impose unjustifiable hardship (see definitions section) on the site or department then it may be considered appropriate for the site not to comply with the requirements of the standards.

Where a course or program necessarily includes an activity in which the child or young person cannot participate, the site may implement a measure to make sure the child or young person is offered an activity that constitutes a reasonable substitute or adjustment within the context of the overall aims of the course or program. However, thorough initial planning should reduce the likelihood of this needing to occur. Clause 5.3 of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 outlines other measures that a site may implement to allow the child or young person to participate in the course or program on the same basis as other children or young people.

The concept of inclusivity is further supported by the Ministerial Advisory Committee's children and students with disability publication - principles of inclusion for children and students with disability in education and care. Specifically principle one, which states 'all children and students who experience disability have the right to access and participate in education'.

These principles are endorsed by all 3 school sectors and must be considered when planning and implementing a camp or excursion.

Child protection

All workers for the purpose of this policy and associated procedures are mandated notifiers under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 and must be made aware of their obligations to report a reasonable suspicion that a child or young person is, or may be, at risk to the Child Abuse Report Line 131 478 or through the online child protection reporting system.

Workers must also be aware and implement their obligations in line with the department's child protection in education and early childhood services policy.

All people working or volunteering with children and young people on a departmental site or with a departmental program must undertake mandatory training related to their child protection responsibilities. The training ensures an understanding of roles and responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe, as well as reporting of reasonable suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk. For camps and excursions, mandatory training includes all departmental employees and volunteers attending the camp or excursion but does not include a third party provider of an activity or service where the nature of the camp or excursion is a time limited once-off activity where teachers provide constant supervision.

In the situation of a camp or excursion with an overnight stay, given the extended time and added risk, it's not considered a once-off activity and in such a case a third party provider of a camp or excursion is required to undertake mandatory training. In most instances Responding to Abuse or Neglect – Education and Care (RAN-EC) is the required training.

Refer to RAN-EC child protection training for more information and a tool to find out what mandatory notification training you need depending on your circumstances.

Screening requirements for departmental employees, volunteers, third party providers and external providers (workers) are provided in the screening and suitability - child safety policy (PDF, 136.3 KB).

See child protection of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) for more detail.

Risk management

Camps and excursions are an extension of the workplace as defined in the WHS Act. This includes transportation to sites and activities conducted while at the camp or excursion. To make sure children and young people and workers are safe, planning must start by identifying hazards and managing risks around health, safety and wellbeing in line with the department's camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB), before the camp or excursion takes place and must occur before the site leader gives approval.

The identification and management of risks on camps and excursions should be undertaken using the sports, adventure, camps and excursions risk management form (DOCX, 2.1 MB). Where a recurring camp or excursion has an existing risk management form, this may be reviewed and implemented for the current activity, if the details remain the same and the controls have been implemented and are effective in reducing risk s to an acceptable level.

Sites must make sure a risk assessment has been completed before seeking parental consent. See risk management of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) for more detail.

Incident reporting

All workers attending a camp or excursion must be made aware of their obligation to report incidents to the teacher-in-charge. The teacher-in-charge must contact the site leader as soon as practicable to ensure reporting of injuries and critical incidents in line with the department's reporting critical incidents and injuries procedure (PDF, 440.0 KB) as soon as possible through the incident and reporting management system.

See accidents, incidents, insurance and claims of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) for more detail.

Parents on camps or excursions

Where parents request to accompany their child or young person to provide specific one-to-one support, the request may be considered by the site leader. However, no parent must be expected to accompany their child and the child or young person's participation must not be dependent upon their support. If the parents' request is deemed appropriate and if the adult is a suitable person, those adults will be considered a volunteer and must comply with the requirements of the department's volunteer policyand volunteer procedure for schools preschools and care settings. Refer to screening and assessing suitability of volunteers in schools, preschools and settings for more information.

When considering such a request, the site leader must note that the presence of the parent does not diminish the site's duty of care for that child or young person or others in attendance at the camp or excursion. All provisions of this policy and the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) still apply, for example activity safety requirements, supervision ratios etc.

Site based contact person

There must be a site based or delegated contact person for all camps and excursions. This person must be a departmental employee, be contactable at all times for the duration of the event and have copies of all relevant documentation including relevant health care plans and a copy of the sports, adventure, camps and excursions risk management form (DOCX, 2.1 MB) which incorporates the emergency management plan.

See communications and call in procedure of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) for more detail.

Bushfire prone areas

Camp or excursion planning must consider bushfire danger. At the outset, sites should avoid planning camps or excursions in high bushfire danger areas during the summer months, particularly in the period between November and April, in favour of safer venues or times. If a bushfire is burning before departure and is likely to threaten the intended camp or excursion site, the camp or excursion must be cancelled.

See bushfire prone areas of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) for more detail.

Further information can be found on emergency management and bushfire procedures for schools and preschools.

Consent

To make sure the department meets its legal obligations all sites must use the parental consent for camp, excursion, sporting or adventure activity (ED170) (DOC, 101.5 KB) that outlines all necessary information (the form must not be altered). All schools and preschools must ensure the following:

- That a child or young person is not taken outside of the site premises on a camp or excursion unless written authorisation has been provided. Organisers of any activities outside the site grounds or beyond school or preschool hours must obtain the written consent of parents or adult students prior to obtaining approval for the activity to take place.
- This policy is accessible to parents when seeking their consent. Note the consent form provides a web link to this policy to ensure parents are aware of the requirements that apply when participating in an organised camp or excursion.
- The authorisation or consent given to a parent states the prescribed information (see the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) for more details).
- The authorisation or consent must be submitted by a parent to a site staff member or teacher-in-charge no later than a week before the scheduled camp or excursion.

Consent forms should not include a waiver clause that states the site or department cannot be held responsible for an accident or injury to the child or young person. Where a site is required to sign waiver forms for children or young people in order to secure a booking for a camp or excursion, contact the department's Legal Services directorate at education.legalrequests@sa.gov.au for advice.

Ultimately the site leader is responsible for making sure the required consent is obtained before the conduct of any camp or excursion and that all relevant information is provided to the parent.

See consent of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) for more detail.

Planning a camp or excursion

The site leader must make sure all necessary planning and documentation has been completed before the camp or excursion is finalised and approved.

See site leader responsibilities, planning, contingency and emergency management and of the camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB) and checklist to assist in planning camps or excursions (PDF, 172.2 KB) for more detail.

Alcohol, drugs and smoking

The health, safety and welfare of children, young people and workers during a camp or excursion must not be compromised by unsafe behaviour.

The consumption of alcohol, illicit drugs or prescription medication that impair judgement, by supervisory team members or children and young people on camps and excursions is not permitted.

Departmental employees on camps or excursions remain on duty even during rest and relaxation periods, and in an emergency are required to take responsibility for children and young people at short notice.

A camp or excursion activity and its facilities are an extension of the site. Therefore smoking, including the use of electronic cigarettes is not permitted on premises at any time. This includes inside buildings, tents, structures and outdoor areas (see smoke-free policy). At no time should workers smoke in the presence or view of children and young people.

Instances of children or young people being suspected of possessing, or being under the influence of, alcohol or illicit drugs should be managed using the alcohol, tobacco and other drugs incident management procedure found on the department's intranet.

Roles and responsibilities

Teacher-in-charge or responsible person

Make sure the camp or excursion is suitable for all participants.

Make sure the purpose of the camp or excursion is linked to the learning program, and children, young people and parents are aware of the learning focus and behavioural expectations.

Plan and undertake camps or excursions in accordance with this policy and associated procedure.

Make sure all relevant information about roles, responsibilities and obligations in line with this policy and associated procedures is clearly communicated to all accompanying adults, volunteers (workers) and children and young people.

Identify and manage risks associated with the camp or excursion through use of the sports, adventure, camps and excursions risk management form (DOCX, 2.1 MB).

Make sure activities are challenging but risk managed, reflecting curriculum-based children or young person learning outcomes.

Exercise reasonable care and supervision throughout the duration of the camp or excursion.

Make sure all participants understand the nature and purpose of the activity and have developed the prerequisite knowledge, understanding and skills.

Ensure appropriate first aid is available in line with the first aid and infection control standard.

Where private or hire vehicles are used, advise the owner and/or driver that appropriate insurance cover is required in accordance with Determination 3.2 of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment.

Make sure supervisory team members are fully briefed and trained for their roles and responsibilities.

Delegate appropriate roles and responsibilities to workers as required.

Make sure any injury or incident is reported to the department in accordance with this policy, associated procedure, and the reporting critical incidents and injuries procedure (PDF, 440.0 KB) and the site leader is notified.

Exercise mandatory notification requirements (as appropriate).

Workers

Comply with the requirements of this policy and associated procedure.

Comply with all reasonable instructions from the teacher-in-charge.

Work with and advise the teacher-in-charge of the following:

- contribute to the conduct of the risk management process by carefully assessing the range of activities and applicable risks
- identify and managing specific risks identified in participants' health care plans
- implement all identified controls to reduce the risk of injury to children and young people
- observe the standards of safe practice in any activity established by accredited organisations and other specialist practitioners
- use correct activity equipment, including any required safety equipment
- alert the specialist instructor or trainer to health care plans when needed and mandatory notification requirements
- exercise mandatory notification requirements (as appropriate)
- alert the specialist instructor or trainer to the department's behaviour management policy.

Site leader (principal or preschool director)

Make sure camps or excursions are planned and conducted in line with this policy and associated procedures before approval being given.

Make sure associated camp or excursion risks are identified and managed and that reasonable care is taken to ensure the safety and care of children, young people and workers.

Make sure the needs of all children and young people are accommodated such as health, safety, medical and behavioural.

Make sure all workers adhere to the requirements of this policy and associated procedures, including obtaining consent and authorisations.

Make sure all accompanying adults, volunteers and instructors (workers):

- meet screening and suitability requirements (refer to screening and assessing suitability of volunteers in schools, preschools and settings)
- are qualified or experienced or both
- are advised of their roles and responsibilities
- are provided with relevant departmental and site policies and safety procedures
- are appropriately trained to fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Endorse the selection of transport.

Endorse the curriculum component.

Approve the nomination of the teacher-in-charge or responsible person.

Exercise mandatory notification requirements (as appropriate).

Specialist instructors or trainers

Collaborate with the teacher-in-charge on the following:

- respective roles of workers
- contingency and emergency management plans
- providing the teacher-in-charge with evidence of a current child-related employment screening or working with children check in compliance with the Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016.

Comply with all reasonable instructions and directions of the site leader, teacher-in-charge and teachers. Exercise mandatory notification requirements (as appropriate).

Accompanying adults or supervisory team

Comply with reasonable instructions and directions of the site leader, teacher-in-charge and teachers.

Exercise their duty of care throughout the duration of the camp or excursion.

Follow any relevant department policies and procedures.

Comply with the volunteers policy and volunteers procedure for schools, preschools and care settings.

Exercise mandatory notification requirements (as appropriate).

Definitions

accompanying adult or supervisory team

Teachers, site administrative staff, parents, carers, activity leaders or instructors and volunteers.

camp

A camp is an activity that is approved or organised by a school during which children and young people leave the site to engage in educational and recreational activities overnight. This is the case regardless of whether the entire group (supervisors and students) leaves from the site or whether students are met at the activity location by supervisory team members.

Sporting and adventure activities are included (where appropriate) regardless of whether they occur on site or

child in care

Refers to where a child is under a guardianship or custody order, under the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA). This includes the following care arrangements:

- where a child is under custody or guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection
- where there is an order placing a child under custody or guardianship of a specified person
- Voluntary Custody Agreements
- unaccompanied refugee minors under the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946 (Cth) with guardianship delegated to the Chief Executive.

consent

The parent or authorised person agrees in writing to their child or young person participating in a camp or excursion and activity after they have been made aware of the details, risks and costs involved.

duty of care

The legal obligation to take reasonable care to protect another from all reasonably foreseeable risk of harm.

excursion

An excursion is an activity that is approved or organised by a school or preschool (not including work experience) during which children and young people leave the site to engage in educational activities. This is the case regardless of whether the entire group (supervisors and students) leaves from the site or whether students are met at the activity location by supervisory team members.

Sporting and adventure activities are included (where appropriate) regardless of whether they occur on site or not.

An excursion is a variation to normal activity and is not predominantly recreational.

guardian

A person who has legal guardianship or custody of a child.

in loco parentis

A person acting in a parental style relationship with a child, where and the person has intended to place themselves in the position of a parent toward a child and has assumed the same duty and authority as a parent with respect to the nurturing, control and protection of a child. A person in loco parentis may include a person:

- In a de facto relationship with a child's biological parent where they have assumed responsibility for the child.
- Who has taken over care of a child after the death of both biological parents, or where there has been a family breakdown and the child is estranged from both biological parents.
- In an informal fostering arrangement.

This person does not have to assume any or all financial responsibility for a child to satisfy this definition.

instructor or trainer

A person who has specific skills and whose primary role is to instruct the particular skills of an activity. The instructor is not necessarily a registered teacher, departmental employee or member of the site community but may be a private provider or a person in the employ of an external organisation.

parents

For the purposes of this policy, the term parent refers to all persons responsible for the child. A person responsible for the child means a person who is the child's:

- biological parent, adoptive parent or other person recognised as a parent if the child was conceived following a fertilisation procedure or under a surrogacy arrangement
- guardian
- step-parent
- person standing in loco parentis.

This does not include a person who has had their legal custody, guardianship or responsibility for the child removed by a Court, Act or Law. As an example, a biological parent who has had their custody, guardianship or parental responsibility for the child removed by a parenting order made under Family Law Act 1975 is not a person responsible for the child.

Includes independent students (see clause 1.2.1 of the admission procedure (PDF, 425.3 KB) for definition) Includes a caregiver (of a child in care) pursuant to the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017 (SA).

reasonable adjustments

An adjustment is reasonable in relation to a child or young person with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected.

In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a child or young person is reasonable in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, regard should be had to all the relevant circumstances and interests, including the following:

- the child or young person's disability
- the views of the child or young person or their associate
- the effect of the adjustment on the child or young person, including the effect on their:
 - ability to achieve learning outcomes
 - ability to participate in courses or programs
 - independence
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including the education provider or site, staff and other children and young people
- the costs and benefits of making the adjustment (clause 3.4(2) of the Disability Standards for Education 2005).

site

Includes:

- schools
- preschools (school based and standalone)
- occasional care
- rural care
- learning and behaviour units
- independent and community based learning centres (Flexible Learning Options).

site leader

Principal or preschool director.

step-parent

A person who is married to the parent of a child born to a previous relationship. A person ceases to be considered a step-parent when their marriage to the child's parent is dissolved by divorce.

teacher-in-charge (the responsible person in a preschool setting)

The teacher or educator nominated by the site leader to have ultimate responsibility and therefore authority for the implementation of this policy and associated procedures throughout the duration of the camp or excursion.

unjustifiable hardship

In determining what is considered to be unjustifiable hardship, all relevant circumstances of the particular case must be taken into account including:

- the nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by anyone concerned
- the effect of the disability of a person concerned
- the financial circumstances and the estimated amount of expenditure required to be made by the person claiming unjustifiable hardship (section 11 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).

workers

A worker is defined under section 7 of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA) as any person who works for the department as a:

- employee
- trainee
- volunteer
- outworker
- apprentice
- work experience student
- contractor or sub-contractor
- employees of a contractor or sub-contractor
- employee of a labour hire company assigned to work for the department.

Supporting information

Application to conduct an excursion (ED169) (DOC, 157.0 KB)

Camp or excursion consent form (ED170) (DOC, 101.5 KB)

Sports, adventure, camps and excursions risk management form (DOCX, 2.1 MB)

Related legislation

Education and Children's Services Act 2019

Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020

Education and Early Childhood Services (Registrations and Standards) Act 2011 (Schedule 1 Education and Care Services National Law)

Education and Early Childhood Services (Registration and Standards)

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Disability Standards for Education 2005

Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Child Safety (Prohibited Persons) Act 2016

Work Health and Safety Act 2012

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2012

Related policies

Camps and excursions procedure (PDF, 606.7 KB)

Overseas travel policy

Overseas travel student excursions procedure

Screening and suitability – child safety policy (PDF, 136.3 KB)

Children and students with disability policy

Protective practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people guidelines (PDF, 398.9 KB)

School transport policy (PDF, 462.3 KB)

Volunteer policy

Volunteer procedure for schools, preschools and care settings

Duty of care policy (PDF, 242.1 KB)

School and preschools enrolment policy

Admission procedure (PDF, 425.3 KB)

Insurance and claims management procedure (PDF, 507.7 KB)

Alcohol, tobacco and other drugs incident management procedure

Site bushfire preparation procedure (PDF, 282.1 KB)

Site bushfire response procedure (PDF, 1.4 MB)

Smoke-free policy

Safety management procedure

Information management policy (PDF, 148.6 KB)

First aid and infection control standard

Working in isolation procedure (PDF, 322.1 KB)

Reporting critical incidents and injuries procedure (PDF, 440.0 KB)

Managing allegations of sexual misconduct procedure (PDF, 714.4 KB)

Child protection in schools, early childhood education and care policy

Information Sharing guidelines for promoting safety and wellbeing (PDF 13.3MB)

Gender diverse and intersex children and young people support procedure (PDF, 191.5 KB)

Sporting and adventure activities standard

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