



LEONAY PUBLIC SCHOOL EXCURSION POLICY



This policy sets out clearly the organisation of excursions, performances and school-based activities outside normal routine; safety considerations, system and legal requirements, expectations of behaviour and the use of excursion experiences back in the classroom.

RATIONALE

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.

There are legal and system requirements that must be met before students can attend an excursion.

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, integrated unit culmination activities, mini sports carnivals, stage video afternoons etc

Duty of Care- The DoE and its staff owe a duty of care to students to take reasonable care to protect students against risks of injury which are reasonably foreseeable. This duty extends to taking reasonable care to prevent a student from injuring him or herself, injuring others or damaging property. Duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions.

Foreseeable Risk- A foreseeable risk is a risk which a reasonable person could be expected to identify as a risk. In identifying a foreseeable risk it is expected that procedures would be put in place, or measures taken to reduce the likelihood of the risk occurring or, if possible, eliminating the risk completely. This includes the preparation of risk assessment documents.

FUNDAMENTAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

- 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.

INCLUSIVITY

- Excursions are inclusive, and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate.
- Costs should be organised to ensure that there is no undue financial burden imposed upon individual members of the group or their families. Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation the school will endeavour to provide financial assistance.

SUPERVISION OF EXCURSIONS

TEACHER 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.
- The Principal and organising teacher, in determining the number of teachers required for an excursion should be guided by Departmental statements on class sizes.
- 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.
- There must be sufficient numbers of appropriate, responsible adults, including support teachers and teachers' aides, to ensure and assist with adequate supervision

RISK MANAGEMENT

- A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before seeking approval for any 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. In consultation with relevant authorities, schools must be prepared to alter or cancel excursions due to emerging safety concerns. These decisions must be communicated to students and parents as soon as possible.
- Fundamental to effective excursion risk management is the communication of risk management plans to those who need to know, including staff and other adults on the excursion who may be instrumental in initiating an emergency response. Students should be informed of these plans where necessary.

DUTY OF CARE / CHILD PROTECTION

- A duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions.
- The DoE'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.
- All LPS staff are also required to have current Child Protection training.
- The Principal or other delegated person must ascertain if an employer or contractor providing a service to students during a school excursion has verified the Working with Children Check number of their employees. The Principal or other delegated person must ascertain that the employer or contractor has met their legal requirements as a child-related employer. If the employer or contractor has not registered as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian, in order to verify employee Working with Children Check identification numbers, they must not be used to provide a service to students until such time as they:
 - a) register as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian
 - b) have verified the Working with Children Check numbers of those staff considered to be engaged in paid child-related employment
- 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.

PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- 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 individuals associated with external organisations.
- The Principal must be satisfied that there are sufficient teachers to maintain adequate control of the whole excursion. Teachers retain the ultimate responsibility for supervision.
- In most circumstances parents, caregivers and volunteers who assist on excursions should not have to pay to attend.
- Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be appropriately briefed on safety and behaviour measures, including student health conditions that may require an emergency response, prior to the excursion to ensure competency.
- The Principal, through the organising teacher, must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers accompanying school excursions meet WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK requirements prior to the excursion in terms of the Department's Working with Children Check Policy.

FIRST AID, HEALTH PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- All school staff are required to have completed e-Emergency care training and anaphylaxis training. These qualifications must be current.

- An appropriately equipped first aid kit must be taken on all excursions. Additionally, as required by the Department's First Aid Procedures, the first aid kit must include a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen®) and an ASCIA action plan (general use) for adrenaline auto injector.
- 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.
- Where a particular excursion activity requires special protective equipment or apparel, these must be used. Staff and student safety must not be compromised. Students and staff on outdoor excursions should wear clothing that protects them from the sun, such as broad brimmed hats and longer sleeve lengths and apply at least a 30+ sunscreen. Students should also be encouraged to carry water in a non-breakable container.

CONSENT

Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in excursions and a medical information form are to be obtained from parents or caregivers. The fact that parents or caregivers consent to the participation of their child in an excursion does not remove the responsibility of school staff for taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the particular activity is safe.

Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.

PARENT INFORMATION NOTES-Excursion/Camp/Performance/ School-Based Activity

Parents will be sent a comprehensive information note regarding the planned excursion/change of routine prior to the date of the activity.

The note will include the following details:

Curriculum link and follow up to the excursion at school;

- Description of all the planned activities the students will experience
- Date of the excursion/change of routine;
- Deadline date for the return of permission notes and payment;
- Time of departure and return to school;
- Details regarding travel arrangements;
- Clothing requirements e.g. school uniform, walking shoes etc. Parents should be informed in the note that students who are not in full school uniform will not be allowed to attend the excursion;
- Details of safety equipment – mouth guards, sun screen, hats
- Permission sign off;
- Medical information statement and parent response option;
- Where an excursion involved water sport or swimming the note must include a section where the parent indicates the child's swimming ability.

1. 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 necessary (e.g. horse riding or water activities).

2. Notes may include the following statement:

Teachers supervising the excursion will take with them a copy of your child's parent and emergency contact and medical information from the school database. If this information has changed since the last time you updated it then please contact the school immediately.

List existing medical conditions or illnesses (include asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, allergies etc.). Outline the treatment for each. Leave appropriate space for the parent to respond.

Outline special dietary needs including possible reaction to inappropriate diet. Leave appropriate space for the parent to respond.

Medication(s) to be administered during the excursion. Include name of medication, instructions for administration, time of administration, and any possible reactions. Leave appropriate space for the parent to respond.

3. This excursion will involve students in water sports and/or swimming. Please circle one of the following options to describe your child's swimming ability: My child is a NON-SWIMMER WEAK SWIMMER AVERAGE SWIMMER

OBTAINING ORAL PERMISSION

- In exceptional 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 in file called 'Verbal Permissions'. 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 file as well.

DEADLINE FOR THE RETURN OF PERMISSION NOTES AND PAYMENTS

- To enable smooth planning of excursions and changes to routine, the deadline for the return of permission notes and payment will be at least 3 school days before the planned date of the activity. This may vary from event depending on venue requirements. Students who have not returned permission notes and payment by **10am** on the day of the deadline will be provided with an alternative program at school. Parent information notes should clearly identify the deadline for notes and payment. All online payments must be made by 6pm the night before the deadline to ensure payment is received on time. Written permission notes must also be sent with an online payment.

MEDICATION

- Parents must complete a written request for the administration of the medication.
- Students must not self-administer or carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parents.
- It is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication to the school in a timely manner. If the Principal agrees, this responsibility may be fulfilled by the student but this will be dependent upon the maturity of the student, parental consent and any other issues that could affect the safety of the individual student or others in the school environment.
- Schools should not supply medications for administration to students.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

FILM AND VIDEO CONFERENCING

- In the case of a video/DVD screening at school, any PG classification of the film/DVD by the Office of Film and Literature Classification requires written permission from parents. A note must be sent home and written permission granted prior to the screening. At LPS films above PG classification are not to be shown.
- Film screenings and live performances must carefully consider the appropriateness of the film or performance for the proposed viewing group.
- With the enhancement of information and communications technology, the school is including a greater variety of 'virtual excursions' into 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. Authority to Publish consent is a requirement of students participating in these excursions. Curriculum relevance and educational value; duty of care and risk management; child protection; parental consent; and appropriate student behaviour should be considered when planning 'virtual excursions'.

SPORT

- Teachers leading excursions involving sporting or physical activities should also consult the Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines.

SWIMMING AND WATER ACTIVITIES

- The Principal and teachers organising excursions involving swimming and water activities should consult the Swimming and Water Safety section of Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools. (99/490).
- Any excursion involving swimming or water activities and any excursion involving overnight stays, MUST include a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation. In addition, the eight elements of the Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activity (venue selection; parent/caregiver consent; staff supervision; risk management; staff induction;

student induction; testing student proficiency; and classifying students) are all to be 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. See Section 2 Step 2 of the Water Safety Guidelines on Obtaining Parent/Caregiver permission which contains links to Aquatic Activity Consent Forms. 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.
- If parents indicate students are poor or non-swimmers and no flotation devices are available for use by the students, Principals will need to assess whether such students should participate in the swimming or water activities of the excursion. This assessment must take place irrespective of parental or caregiver permission for the students to participate in the swimming or water activities.
- Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, Principals may encourage but not insist that parents provide any flotation devices considered necessary for students.
- It will also be necessary to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity. See Section 3 Step 7: The Challenge - Testing Student Proficiency of the Water Safety Guidelines.
- This assessment must take place even if parental or caregiver permission for the student to participate in the swimming or water activities is granted. Where parental or caregiver permission is declined, student participation in swimming or water activities should not proceed.

TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

- Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.
- In some circumstances where the site of the excursion is close to the school, it will be appropriate for students and their supervisors to walk to the site. 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 for excursions, Principals should refer to the policy on the use of seatbelts on buses (99/293). Seatbelts must be worn on buses and coaches when they are available. In the case of large vehicles, the number of passengers must not exceed the number that the vehicle is licensed to carry.
- The Principal and organising teachers, should attempt to hire buses with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel. In the case of large vehicles, the number of passengers must not exceed the number that the vehicle is licensed to carry.
- Bus, rail and ferry services should be used for school excursions, wherever appropriate. In these circumstances students will be required to provide their own OPAL card.

Car Travel

The transporting of students in the cars of staff members, parents, caregivers or volunteers should only 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 driver is licensed;
 - the vehicle is registered;
 - the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number 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.
- Principals must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete a Working with Children Check – Declaration for volunteers and contractors prior to the excursion. Appendix 5 + 100pts ID.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

- Students must behave appropriately at all times on excursions.
- 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 student discipline in government schools 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.
- Students must behave appropriately when animals are encountered on excursions.
- Students also should be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Responsible behaviour involves not interfering with the animal. Injury is likely to occur if the animal panics and either attacks or attempts to flee the situation. If people remain calm, the risk of injury to either students or the animal or both will be lessened.

GENERAL POLICY AND PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The following information is provided to ensure that all aspects of the DoE Excursions Policy are considered in the planning process. This will ensure that excursion/change of routine activities are fully planned, support the curriculum and are conducted in as safe a manner as possible.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

- Full school uniform must be worn on all excursions except when the nature of the activity requires alternative clothing.
- The clothing requirements should be communicated to parents in the information note.

The wearing of school uniforms on an excursion greatly assists with:

- the easy identification of students;
- the effective supervision of students;
- the safe conduct of the excursion through the maintenance of an acceptable standard of discipline; and
- projecting a positive image of LPS and Public Education, to the wider community.

Students who are not in full school uniform will not participate in the excursion.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Where a particular excursion activity requires special protective equipment or apparel (e.g. mouth guards, protective apparel), these must be used. Staff and student safety must not be compromised. Students and staff should be encouraged to use sunscreen and wear a peaked or broad brimmed hat on outdoor excursions.

MOUTH GUARDS – All sport notes should recommend to parents that students wear a mouth guard. The mouth guard information sheet from the Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools should be included in all sport notes.

BRIEFING OF STUDENTS AND PARENT VOLUNTEERS

- Prior to any excursion, students should be briefed on the school's expectations of their behaviour.
- Students should also be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, about protective strategies and of avenues for support should concerns arise.
- Organising teachers should take time to work with groups of students to consider unexpected situations and risks that might occur during the excursion and to discuss strategies, consistent with the risk management plan, for eliminating or controlling risks.
- The parents of individual students with particular health care needs, and to the extent this is practicable, individual students, must be consulted about how their

health care needs will be met during the excursion, especially where the arrangements differ from standard practice at school.

- All students should be briefed on the importance of advising staff or others (eg volunteers) if they are unwell or if they believe one of their fellow students is unwell.
- Students participating in excursions to communities which are culturally different to their own should be briefed on cultural sensitivities and appropriate communication in cross-cultural contexts.
- Students should also be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Reference should be made to the memorandum, Cruelty to animals (96/169) when considering the content of such briefings.
- Prior to any excursion, parent volunteers should be briefed regarding:
The school's expectations regarding student behaviour and their role to refer misbehaviour or other issues to the class teacher or executive in charge of the excursion;
The venue for the excursion and identified risks and how the risks will be managed.

EXCURSION / CHANGE OF ROUTINE REFUNDS

- Teachers plan a number of excursions, guest speakers and various activities which enhance the educational programs being offered in classrooms. These activities usually have a cost associated with them. Occasionally children are disappointed when they are unable to participate in the activity because they are sick on the day, or late to catch the bus etc. In such cases parents often request a refund of the fees that have been paid.
- In making a decision regarding a refund one issue has to be considered: Has the school outlaid money for the student to participate in the activity?
- If the school has already had to pay for the activity then a refund cannot be given. For example in the case of a live show, the seats had to be booked and pre-paid. In this case this money could not be refunded.
- When buses are used to transport children the total cost of the bus is divided by the total number of children expected to attend. It is therefore not possible to give refunds on bus travel.
- However, some guest speakers charge on the basis of the children present on the day. Therefore, the school did not have to outlay any money and a refund may be possible.
- Each written request for a refund will be considered based on the circumstances of the activity with the Principal making the final decision.

RETENTION OF EXCURSION RECORDS

Records of all excursions are maintained. The record must include a copy of the risk management plan, any advice given to parents or caregivers, costs and approval letters and administrative, supervision and travel details.