Excursions, Camps and Travel Procedures

Document Number: 000300

St Joseph's Primary School Coleraine operates with the consent of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ballarat and is operated and governed by the Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL).

Procedures

These Procedures has been developed to assist in explaining to our school community the processes and procedures the school will use when planning and conducting camps, excursions (which may include adventure activities) and travel for students. Additionally, it also aims to assure the community that school staff who are planning excursions, camps, etc., will take reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent and reduce risks to students, in accordance with their duty of care obligations.

Context

Excursions, camps, and regular outings are an important part of educational programs delivered by the school. These offsite activities provide opportunities for the children to build connections with the local community and contribute to their sense of belonging and connection with the world around them. St Joseph's Primary School Coleraine is committed to ensuring the safety, health, and wellbeing of children during excursions, camps, and regular outings by conducting risk assessments and ensuring authorisations are obtained from families.

Scope

These Procedures applies to all camps and excursions organised by the school. The school environment extends beyond the school grounds when such activities occur, which broadens the focus for ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing of and inclusiveness for our students, staff, and volunteers.

Legislative Context

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)
- Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
- Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Victorian Data Sharing Act 2017
- VRQA Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)

Definitions

Refer to the *Excursions, Camps and Travel Policy and Procedure [DOBCEL]* for the list of definitions.

Excursion Documents

Offsite Activity Planning Checklist and Approval Form

The *Offsite Activity Planning Checklist and Approval Form* is completed by the school when planning any offsite activity to help ensure all staff are aware of and meet their responsibilities. This document assists the school to align camps, excursions and off-site activities plan with regulatory requirements and will be completed for all day and overnight excursions.

This *Offsite Activity Planning Checklist and Approval Form* includes detailed information that may be needed in an emergency such as:

- the exact location of the excursion participants always, including during travel
- the relevant contact number/s through which excursion staff may be reached in an emergency
- the names and family contact details of all students and staff.

Consent Forms

Parental Consent Form

The school will obtain written or electronic consent from parents or carers for any school excursions via the *Parent/Carer Excursion/Camp Consent Form* to confirm:

- awareness of financial costs of the excursion if not included in school fees
- knowledge of any adventure activities that may be undertaken during the excursion
- permission to take the student out of the school environment for a day excursion
- permission to have the student in the school's care after normal school hours on an overnight excursion
- if the student has any medical conditions or allergies
- permission to seek medical assistance if required.

Requirements for Informed Consent

The school must:

- give parents or carers providing consent sufficient information about the excursion to enable them to make an informed decision.
- inform the parent or carer of:
    - the nature of the proposed activity/activities. It is important that parents/carers are aware of the activities that students will be participating in on the excursion, especially if these activities carry a degree of risk of harm, such as swimming, bike riding or any other adventure activities.
    - the educational purpose of the activity
    - the location of the activity and any restrictions or barriers to accessing this location
    - the type of transport being utilised, if applicable
    - circumstances where the Principal has approved a small group of senior secondary age students to participate in an excursion without staff supervision. [delete if not applicable]

- the fact that students may be sent home from an excursion in the event of illness or serious misbehaviour and that any costs relating to the student's return will be the parent or carer's responsibility.
- the possibility that the Principal may need to cancel or alter excursions arrangements at short notice, which may lead to inconvenience or financial losses to parents. This would be required to ensure the safety of students and/or due to circumstances beyond the control of the school.
- other information deemed relevant by the school.

Consent for Local Excursions

- St Joseph's Primary School Coleraine may seek consent for local excursions on an annual basis using the *Local Excursion Consent Form*. For example, it is sufficient to notify parents/carers only at the beginning of the year that students will be walking to the local oval every week for a recurring sports activity.
- The form will be distributed to parents and carers at the beginning of each school year or upon enrolment if a student enrols during the school year. Once annual consent is obtained, the school is not required to obtain further consent before a local excursion.
- Parents and carers will be informed about the local excursion at least a week before (or earlier) if students are leaving the school grounds to visit a location nearby. This is to allow time for parents to inform staff of any medical or other issues that may be relevant to the local excursion.

Student Medical Information Forms

The student medical information forms will provide information to ensure the safety of students in the event of an emergency or incident during an excursion or field trip. This form allows students with medical conditions or who regularly take medications to notify the school of any pre-existing conditions and supports they may require.

The school will:

- provide parents or carers with the opportunity to update medical information previously given to the school before any excursion
- ensure that the teacher-in-charge has immediate access to either hard copy or electronic versions of the student medical information forms on the excursion
- ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations
- keep copies of the forms at the school.

Please note: Student Medical Information Forms are not required for local excursions or day excursions **not involving** adventure activities.

Student Medical Information Form: Day Excursions Involving Adventure Activities
The *Student Medical Information Form: Day Excursions Involving Adventure Activities* must be completed by parents or carers before any day excursion **involving** an adventure activity.

Student Medical Information Form – Camps and Overseas Excursions
The *Student Medical Information Form: Camps and Overseas Excursions* must be completed by parents or carers before any camp or overseas excursion.

The school may require additional medical information depending on the nature of any activities being undertaken.

Risk Management Planning

The school will assess risk for all excursions (including local excursions) and identify measures to reduce reasonably foreseeable risk to students wherever possible. The type and level of risk, and possible consequences, will differ depending on a range of factors including the location/environment, people, and equipment.

Responsibilities

The Risk Assessment will be completed by the Teacher in Charge (TIC) during the planning of the excursion, reviewed and approved by the Principal before the commencement of the excursion and where appropriate or required, during the excursion, by excursion staff.

Adventure Activities

Prior to any adventure activity, the TIC of the activity must complete an *Adventure Activities Pre-Activity Checklist*. The *Adventure Activities Pre-Activity Checklist* aims to identify any reasonably foreseeable issues regarding the safety of the participants and staff that could possibly affect the planned activity.

A decision to proceed with the activity, modify it, cancel it, or implement contingency plans should be made based on the pre-activity check and any issues that could reasonably be considered to negatively affect the activity and/or the health and wellbeing of the participants and staff.

Multiple Adventure Activities

If a camp involves multiple adventure activities, a risk assessment must be conducted for each adventure activity.

Risk Assessment for Overseas and Interstate Excursions

The school will complete the *Excursions, Camps & Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan Template* when travelling interstate or overseas.

Roles and Responsibilities

Excursion Staff

A teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and approved by the Principal must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity unless other arrangements have been approved by the Principal in accordance with the Supervision section in these Procedures.

Excursion staff must be approved by the Principal and may include:

- teachers employed by the school
- other adults on a volunteer or paid basis such as:
    - parents or carers
    - education support class officers
    - community members
    - trainee teachers
    - campsite staff
    - specialist instructors for excursion activities.

The school will ensure that all excursion staff comply with:

- DOBCEL policies in relation to the Child Safe Standards; and
- hold a current Working with Children Check or equivalent. For example, VIT registered teachers, Victoria Police officers and Australian Federal Police (AFP) officers.

Approved Excursion Staff (who are not teachers employed by the school)

Where approved excursion staff, who are not teachers employed by the school, are in attendance they can be included in the staff-student supervision ratio (as detailed in the Supervision section of these Procedures):

- for the duration of a specific activity for which they have a designated supervisory responsibility, or
- for the overall staff-student supervision ratio for the program, where they are on duty and available on the same basis as other staff (usually a 24-hour basis).

The specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member outlined below (teachers, instructors, campsite staff, volunteers and so on) must be documented and understood by all staff prior to the commencement of the excursion.

Refer to Specialist Instructors section of this document.

School Staff

All school staff participating in an excursion will:

- understand the purpose of the program and its connection to student learning
- be aware of their supervisory responsibilities throughout the excursion
- know which member of staff will provide first aid if required
- know the exact location of students for whom they are always responsible including during travel

Specialist Instructors

The school will:

- ensure that where specialist instructors are employed, they:
    - have the necessary skills or qualifications for the activity
    - have appropriate experience for the age and skill level of the students
    - hold appropriate public liability insurance
    - have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC), and Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Check (NCCHC)
- be aware that while specialist instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the teachers have overall responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students, even where the teachers do not directly provide the actual instruction.

Teacher Responsibility for Activities

Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher responsible for the activity will understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted. This teacher must confer with the designated instructor about their supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility. If this teacher is not the designated instructor, they are to act on the advice of the designated instructor on technical safety issues.

Minimum Supervision Requirements

This section outlines the 'best practice' minimum requirements for staff-student ratios. When planning the staff-student ratios for an excursion, schools:

- may need to enhance these measures with additional staff or volunteers to ensure student and staff safety
- must consider the likelihood of circumstances where a staff member may be unable to supervise actively the group (for example, staff illness, staff needing to support a particular student because of illness, behaviour and so on), and the time it will take for a replacement staff member to arrive at the excursion destination
- should apply the information in the Roles and Responsibilities section of these Procedures which sets out the range of adults that can be included in the excursion staff supervision ratios, including parent volunteers and specialist instructors
- should note the requirement that unless an exception applies, all excursions must be under the direct control of a member of teaching staff.

Except where otherwise indicated, all excursions and camps must have a minimum of two staff members.

Staff - Student Ratios

<table>
<tr><th>Excursion Type</th><th>Description</th></tr>
<tr><td>Local excursions</td><td>Regular class teacher-student ratios with an additional accompanying excursion staff (school employed or volunteers/parents) as required.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Day excursions</td><td>1:20 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff</td></tr>
<tr><td>Excursions that include adventure activities (including water activities)</td><td>Refer to the Department of Education's Adventure Activity Guidelines - https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities for the most current staff-student ratios.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overnight base camps</td><td>1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overnight study camps</td><td>1:15 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff</td></tr>
<tr><td>Interstate travel</td><td>1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff</td></tr>
<tr><td>Overseas travel</td><td>The following table indicates how staff numbers should be calculated, noting these ratios are the minimum required.
<table>
<tr><th>Number of students</th><th>Number of staff</th></tr>
<tr><td>1 to 10</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>11 to 20</td><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>21 to 30</td><td>4</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

Adventure Activities Staff-Student Ratio

The excursion must:

- be under the direct control of a teacher who is employed by the school, with at least one other excursion staff member present
- have enough teachers employed by the school to maintain appropriate control of the excursion and of each activity and to provide for the safety and wellbeing of participating students and staff
- have teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff**.**

Student Preparation and Behaviour

The school will ensure that:

- students are adequately prepared for excursions
- individual student risk assessments are completed for those students with identified special needs (medical or other)
- disciplinary measures for students on excursions are appropriate and consistent with the school and DOBCEL policies and procedures
- reasonable preparations are made for students with disabilities, including students with medical or health conditions and could include consideration of-:
    - medication and medical needs
    - personal care needs (e.g. does the child need help with teeth cleaning, tying shoes, etc.)
    - toileting (e.g. night-time pull-ups, prompting, constipation, bed wetting, Conni sheets, etc.)
    - travel sickness (e.g. what helps)
    - foods (e.g. what they do and don't eat … allergies?)
    - bedtime routines (e.g. time, calming routines, etc.)
    - fears or phobias (e.g. spiders, darkness, heights, etc.)
- reasonable adjustments are made for students with disabilities, including students with medical or health conditions that may have an impact on the student's ability to meet expected standards of behaviour. Adjustments for students to be considered include:
    - providing a social story
    - providing a detailed visual schedule
    - having a bus buddy and a dedicated seat on the bus
    - activities for a bus
    - being in a cabin with a small group
    - being in a cabin close to teachers
    - accessible activities – it's important to cover this in detail. Camps often focus on highly physical activities and significant changes may be needed so a child can participate

- being in a group with an Education Support Officer for activities
- having options for quiet time or a structured activity during breaks
- access to a device during break time
- taking their own food
- having a go-to person for any difficulties

- preparation also includes supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students.

Student and Parent/Carer Communication

In preparation for excursions, and in addition to the information required in the consent documentation, the school will advise students and parents/carers of:

- organisational arrangements
- roles of each staff member and volunteer supervising the activity or excursion
- risks involved in the activity or excursion
- relevant safety arrangements or emergency procedures (as appropriate)
- expected standards of behaviour
- prohibition of alcohol, drugs, and smoking/vaping for all students on all school camps and excursions, and the consequences of non-compliance with this instruction
- the possibility that in extreme cases, students may be sent home from an excursion at the cost of the parents.

In some cases, students may require specific skills or training before going on excursions, particularly when undertaking adventure activities. Staff should assess students' suitability to undertake the activity and what support they may need.

Returning a Student Home

In extreme cases the excursion staff, following consultation with and the approval of the school Principal, may request a parent/carer/guardian to collect a student from an excursion. Excursion staff should:

- advise the student's parent or carer of the:
  - circumstance associated with the decision to end the student's involvement in the activity
  - time and location for the parent or carer to collect their child from the excursion
- consider the age and maturity of the student when making travelling arrangements (secondary only). In some circumstances it may be appropriate for senior secondary students to return home unsupervised. This should be determined in consultation with the parent/s and consent confirmed in writing
- ensure access to an alternative mode of transport is available during the excursion.

First Aid

- Excursion staff must have first aid and emergency response knowledge appropriate to the excursion location, the students involved, and the activities undertaken by each group of students.
- Staff must also have a first aid kit appropriate to the excursion location, the activities undertaken and the specific needs of participating students with health or medical conditions.
- Staff must also carefully document first aid incidents and outcomes
- The extent of the first aid training required by staff will be determined by:
    - the environment in which the group will operate
    - the remoteness of the location
    - the length of time the staff are required to provide patient support before definitive medical help arrives
    - the resources available to support a patient in these conditions
    - the known medical history of students and staff
- The school will obtain written advice in the *Student Medical Information Forms* for all medication to be administered by excursion staff.

First Aid Officers

These will be excursion staff who have current qualifications covering all the school first aid requirements.

Relevant staff receive additional training, where required, to meet student health needs. These may include training for anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes management or extra training to cover excursions, specific educational programs, or activities.

For an overview of the minimum number of staff that must be first aid trained, based on the number of staff and students at the school go to: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/first-aid-students-and-staff/guidance/staff-first-aid-training.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

For excursions involving adventure activities or at locations without readily accessible medical support, at least one member of staff responsible for each group of students must hold, as a minimum, a level 2 current first aid qualification and a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) qualification.

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2010* and the *Code of Practice from Safe Work Australia*, all first aiders should hold nationally recognised Statement/s of Attainment issued by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for the relevant nationally endorsed unit/s of competency.

Automatic external defibrillators (AED) are not normally required as part of an excursions first aid kit. The Principal, in consultation with the health and safety representative (HSR) and the first aid officer, may determine that an AED be included as part of the first aid provision, particularly where the risk assessment indicates circumstances where life-threatening injuries could result and timely access to emergency services cannot be assured.

Communications

- For excursions with an overnight component, parents or carers should be advised of the telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) for the designated St Joseph's Primary School Coleraine contact person in the event of an emergency.
- A plan for communicating with parents in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion must be made.

Overseas travel: Additional Requirements

As well as the excursion requirements that have been detailed in these Procedures there are additional steps when planning and conducting overseas excursions.

When planning and conducting overseas excursions, the school will:

- comply with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel advice
- ensure all parents or carers have completed the *Student Medical information Form: Camps and Overseas Excursions*
- ensure all participants have appropriate travel insurance
- ensure copies of appropriate documentation are available on the excursion and at the school
- ensure staffing arrangements are sufficient in the event of an emergency, and be aware that a staff member may be required to accompany individual students
- ensure excursion planning and risk management planning considers the school's child safety responsibilities. This is especially important if there are any times where students are not under the direct supervision of school staff, such as with homestay arrangements

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Travel Advice

St Joseph's Primary School Coleraine will confirm that the locations and activities planned comply with any current DFAT travel advice. Risk and emergency management plans will be developed in consideration of the location, students, activities planned, types of travel undertaken and any relevant advice from DFAT.

Travel Insurance for Overseas Excursions

All students and staff must take out travel and medical insurance for the entire overseas trip.

It is recommended that staff and students:

- takeout insurance cover directly and not via a tour operator. This ensures that insurance coverage has been obtained as required
- are covered by the same insurance provider. This makes it easier to manage multiple claims within a group.

Before taking out any insurance cover, staff and families of student travellers should ensure they:

- consider whether the insurance cover excludes events that may disrupt travel plans such as pandemics, wars, storms, floods, and strikes
- make an independent assessment of whether the level of cover provided is appropriate for their needs.

Medical Information Form: Camps and Overseas Excursions

The Medical Information Form: Camps and Overseas Excursions must be completed by a parent or carer prior to their child going on camp or an overseas excursion. The information on this form will be used if a child requires medical assistance while on camp or overseas. The information on this form must be current at the time of the camp or overseas excursion.

Adventure Activity Guidelines

Guidance on Ratios and Supervision for Intra-School Swimming Carnivals

Supervision ratios for swimming activities must be calculated based on the maximum number of students in the water at any one time, using the ratios outlined in the Swimming and Water-Based Activities Guidelines (DOCX). When calculating supervision requirements for intra-school swimming carnivals, schools should refer to the supervision information within these Procedures.

Only students participating in a swimming event should be allowed to enter the water during that event. Standard excursion supervision ratios apply for students who are not participating in swimming activities/entering the water.

Schools must undertake a risk assessment for the student cohort (including students not entering the water) and the location, with consideration given to:

- environment/venue/water conditions
- rescue equipment on site
- ability and experience of students/swimmers prior to conducting any swimming/recreational activity
- swimming experience and qualifications (that is, first aid) of staff in attendance
- schools' confidence in meeting their minimum requirements for Duty of Care at Intra-School events.

Supporting Documentation

Forms and Templates

Parent/Carer Excursion/Camp Consent Form

Student Medical Information Form: Day Excursions Involving Adventure Activities

Student Medical Information Form: Camps and Overseas Excursions

Internal

Asthma Management Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]

Excursions, Camps and Travel Policy and Procedures (DOBCEL)

Privacy Policy [DOBCEL]

Student Behaviour Management Policy [DOBCEL

Student Behaviour Management Procedures [School

Supervision of Students Policy [DOBCEL]

Supervision of Students Procedures [School]

Student Care and Health Policy (First Aid) [DOBCEL]

School Volunteers Policy and Procedures [School]

Working with Children Check Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]

Policy Owner	School Principal
Approval Date	July 2025