

# Excursion Policy

## Overview

Waterfall Public School (WPS) is committed to providing students with authentic learning experiences that prepare them for life beyond the school gates. This policy sets out clearly the organisation of excursions and incursions (performances and school-based activities) outside normal routine; including the safety considerations, legal requirements, impact on school timetables, expectations of behaviour and the use of excursion experiences back in the classroom. This document should be read in consultation with the [Department of Education's Excursion Policy](#).

## 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 students' experiences
- Broadening students' 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 school 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.

**Incursion**- An educational visit initiated, organised and supervised by the school for a specific educational purpose. The venue is within the school grounds. For example, visiting performances.

**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, integrated unit culmination activities, sport.

**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 all students 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.

## Planning Procedures

For the learning opportunities of an excursion to be optimised, the planning process must be thorough and comprehensive. The following steps are a recommended sequence:

- Excursions should be planned well in advance to allow for sufficient time to carry out all administration procedures.
- Determine the educational value of event, taking into account the needs and resources of the school, the needs of the students and the value/impact of the event on the total learning program.
- Determine whether the event can be inclusive of all students. "Excursions are inclusive, and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate, including students with disabilities." (DoE Policy). However, in some cases students who have demonstrated unsatisfactory behaviour may be prevented from attending an event. Exclusion of a student must be communicated with the relevant staff, executive and the student's family.
- Consult with the venue/service provider and school calendar regarding suitable dates. Request the terms and conditions of the venue/service provider, for example student-adult ratio.
- Consult with the relevant staff, executive and Principal to check the suitability of the event, present proposed dates, and outline staff requirements.
- Put agreed date on calendar in Principal's office.
- Consult with the office to get bus quotes and student costings. SAM is responsible for booking and confirming buses and costs.
- Consult with and identify the staff required to ensure the event can be conducted safely.
- Identify all the costs involved in conducting the excursion, including 'incidental' for example, special equipment or casual relief (in some cases, an excursion will involve the employment of a casual teacher to ensure the student-teacher ratio. The cost of this casual teacher may need to be included in the total cost of the excursion).
- Complete the School Bytes Event. This will automatically trigger the workflow (teacher → SAM → Principal). Events with payment require at least 2 pay cycles.
- Organiser of the event to communicate all information to relevant staff via WhatsApp and/or email prior to the event.
- SLSO/First Aid Officer responsible for ensuring student medical requirements and First Aid Kit are collected prior to event and administered on the day if required.
- Once deadline of permission notes and payment has passed, SAM to follow up with any students who have not yet paid/given permission. Any leftover students need to be catered for. Consultation with staff and Principal needs to occur at this point.

## Permission Notes

Parents are sent a comprehensive information note regarding the planned excursion. The permission note is done through School Bytes. Information should include date, why/how it relates to the curriculum, expectations of behaviour and dress, time expected at school and time expected to return, due dates of permission notes and any additional relevant information. Incursions that align with normal school activities and attainment of outcomes do not require permission from parents.

At times, it may be necessary for teachers and/or SAM to phone parents to obtain verbal permission for a child to attend an activity. In such circumstances, the details of the call – date, time, person contacted must be recorded into School Bytes under ‘notes – parent contact’. The excursion information must also be updated through the ‘events’ and verbal permission obtained section.

## Sport and Physical Activity

When organising an event related to sport or physical activity the Student health and wellbeing policy (Sport and Physical Activity DoE) should be consulted. Regular weekly school sport is not regarded as an excursion but is subject to operational and consent procedures.

Teachers and instructors (including external providers) who coach teams should possess the relevant competencies to manage the proposed activity safely and effectively, as specified in the DoE Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines on the School Sport website.

Staff will comply with the DoE’s First Aid Procedures on the Health and Safety website and not allow students to play or continue to play if they are injured or visibly distressed.

Well-equipped first aid kits including an asthma emergency kit (containing a blue reliever puffer and spacer) and general use epi-pen kit (General use injector epi-pen and general use ASCIA plan) must be readily available at all sport and physical activities conducted on school grounds and at community venues and locations. Ice packs should be available. In the case where a student is bleeding they are to leave the play area until the bleeding has stopped and the wound is dressed. All contaminated clothing and equipment must be replaced before play resumes.

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. 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 1999 \(99/490\)](#), should be included in all sport notes.

Concussion acknowledgement must be included in all sport activities:

- “I acknowledge that if my child has sustained a concussion in the lead-up to the event, I must provide medical clearance to the school or the supervising teacher prior to commencing competition.”

- “I understand that if my child sustains a concussion or suspected concussion during a NSW Department of Education sporting event, they will be removed from competition until medical clearance is provided to the supervising teacher.”

## Volunteers

The Department’s duty of care for students on excursions rests solely with the school and cannot be delegated to parents, caregivers, volunteers, or employees of external organisations. For this reason, parents and caregivers are not permitted to attend school excursions.

All excursions will be supervised exclusively by school staff, ensuring that appropriate teacher-to-student ratios are maintained for student safety and supervision.

If external expertise is required for an excursion (e.g., specialist instructors for activities), these individuals must be qualified, approved, and engaged through the school in accordance with departmental policies and risk management procedures.

This policy is in place to maintain the highest level of student safety, supervision, and consistency in the implementation of school-based procedures.

## Supervision and Student Behaviour

The number of teachers to accompany the students for each excursion is to be determined by the principal in consultation with the organising teacher. Decisions about the number of students and teachers should consider 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. Particular aquatic and outdoor recreation activities have specific teacher/instructor to student ratios. Consult the [Guidelines for Specific Activities in Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools policy](#). There must be enough appropriate, responsible adults, including support teachers and teachers’ aides, to ensure and assist with adequate supervision.

## Student Behaviour

Students will be briefed by their class teacher before an event on the behaviour expectations. Any issues will be dealt with in alignment with the [WPS Student Behaviour Policy](#).

## Day or Overnight Excursions

On overnight and extended excursions, supervisory and accommodation arrangements are to be such that no staff member or accompanying adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. In particular, sleeping and washing arrangements should not place any adults in a situation where the propriety of their behaviour could be questioned.

### **MEDICATION:**

Students requiring medication while away at an overnight excursion need to supply the school with a completed 'Request for support of a student's health condition' form. All medication, with the exception of asthma puffers, should be given to the accompanying teachers prior to boarding the buses. Where appropriate this must be accompanied by the child's Health Care Management Plan. The medication should be labelled clearly with;

- Child's name
- The dosage to be given
- The time the medication should be administered
- Any additional information regarding occasional medication

### **VALUABLES:**

Due to the difficulties ensuring the security and safety of valuable items, such as mobile phones and hand held games, students are not permitted to bring such items with them on the excursion. Money, unless collected by the supervising staff, is the responsibility of the child. All purses or wallets should be clearly named.

### **FIRST AID/MEDICAL INTERVENTION:**

In the event a student presents with an injury the supervising staff member will seek the necessary treatment using either a first aid kit from the venue or from a mobile kit. Where injury or illness is more serious, our staff will follow the procedures of the venue. If injury or illness is of a concern to the accompanying staff, the school is contacted immediately and the student's parents will be informed. Depending on the circumstances this may occur before, during or after medical attention is sought. In both incidences it is the responsibility of the student to communicate to staff that they need attention. It is the responsibility of the supervising staff to record the treatment given to students.

### **CONTACT WITH PARENTS:**

Accompanying staff will carry a mobile. If a situation arises, of which parents need to be aware, the staff, or the school, will contact them. All correspondence with the students will be through our school staff. Due to concerns about student privacy and inappropriate content (for example, social networking sites that are restricted for children aged 13+) students are not permitted to bring their own mobile phone. If students are found to have a mobile phone it may be confiscated by staff and/or parents will be called to pick up a student.

### **LUGGAGE AND CLOTHING:**

For each excursion a list of requirements is provided. This gives the students information of all that should be needed for the time they are away including clothing requirements and suggestions. Parents should ensure that this list is adhered to when packing the bag (including the items that are not permitted). Parents need also to ensure that the students can manage their own luggage because children will need to carry their own bag/s.

### **RECORD KEEPING:**

Any incident on the excursion will be recorded by our staff, in the same way as if we were at school, through School Bytes. This includes both medical and behaviour issues. At the conclusion of each day's activities accompanying staff will record any incidents that occurred that day. This information will be relayed to the parent when the child is collected at the conclusion of the excursion unless it is an emergency, then the parent will be notified as soon as possible.

## **VENUE/ACCOMMODATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

School groups must follow the procedures and policies of the venue where they are staying. We, as visitors, follow their timetable and rules. Our staff always maintains supervision of our students.

### Transport

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. The SAM 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.

When organising an excursion by rail, organising teachers should contact their local railway station concerning excursion concessions and other arrangements. If students with disabilities are participating in an excursion alternative accessible transport may be required.

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:

- ✓ Permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained.
- ✓ The driver holds a full license.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete an ID submission and a Prohibited Employment Declaration, prior to the excursion.

Comprehensive insurance is not generally required. Nevertheless, comprehensive insurance is required if a member of staff is authorised to use his or her vehicle for official business.

All parents must sign additional permission for their child to travel in a private motor vehicle and know who the driver is.

### Swimming and 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.

Parents must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent for students to participate in excursions involving water activities. 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.

Principals and teachers organising excursions involving swimming and water activities should particularly consult the [Swimming and Water Safety section of Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools \(99/490\)](#).

## Response to serious behaviours of concern

- The NSW Department of Education [Student Behaviour policy](#) and [Suspension and Expulsion procedures](#) apply to all NSW public schools.
- Responses to all behaviours of concern apply to student behaviour that occurs:
  - at school
  - on the way to and from school
  - on school-endorsed activities that are off-site
  - outside school hours and off school premises where there is a clear and close connection between the school and students' conduct
  - when using social media, mobile devices and/or other technology involving another student or staff member.

## Reporting and recording behaviours of concern

Staff will comply with reporting and responding processes outlined in the:

- [Incident Notification and Response Policy](#)
- [Incident Notification and Response Procedures](#)
- [Student Behaviour policy](#) and [Suspension and Expulsion procedures](#).

## Refunds

Teachers plan a number of excursions, guest speakers and various activities which enhance the educational programs being offered in classrooms. These events usually have a cost associated with them. Occasionally children are disappointed when they are unable to participate in the event 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 event? If the school has already had to pay for the event 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 can 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.

In most cases a refund cannot be issued however we can place a credit on the child's account to be used towards future payments and excursions. Each request for a credit/refund will be considered based on the circumstances of the activity with the Principal making the final decision.

### Change of date

On occasion unforeseen events or undesirable weather can force the venue, service provider or school to postpone the event. Families will be informed as soon as possible, through School Bytes, Facebook and/or email. In this case, permission will be transferred from the original permission note and instead of a second permission note being sent home to be signed and returned, a change of date notification will be sent. If families have any issue with the new date they are to respond in writing to the school email address and the Principal will address the matter.

### Risk Management

Risk Management Plans are conducted prior to an event and are completed by the organising teacher(s) in consultation with the service provider and/or venue. Risk Management Plans are approved by the Principal and communicated with all relevant staff.

### Review dates

Current review: Term 1 2025

Next review: Term 1 2026

Principal Name: Yvette Hopper