

EXCURSIONS AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES POLICY

*The Currajong School takes a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is fully committed to ensuring that its strategies, policies, procedures, and practices meet all **Child Safety Standards as specified in Ministerial Order No. 1359 (2022)***

RATIONALE

An excursion is an activity organised by the School during which the students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities, including sport. Excursions enable students to further their learning and social skills in a variety of settings. Students develop an understanding that learning is not limited to School, that valuable learning also takes place in other environments.

Excursions are an invaluable way of stimulating the children's interest and are usually preceded and followed up by schoolwork relating to the activity. Occasionally there are all-day excursions which include one or more class groups. As well as the more formally organised excursions, the children also enjoy such activities as visits to various local parks and playgrounds and other places of interest to enhance community access and build on social and emotional learning.

EXCURSION CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration must be given to the following factors:

- planning and approvals
- venue selection
- safety, emergency and risk management
- informed consent from parents
- medical information
- appropriate staffing and supervision
- transportation
- student preparation and behaviour
- requirements for any adventure activities

- Child Safe Standard risk management
- Covid safe practices
- Occupational health and safety

PLANNING AND APPROVALS

All excursions need prior approval in writing by the Principal and dates checked. Risk assessment plans and estimated expenditure need to be submitted to the Principal with the proposal on The Currajong School templates. All must be approved **prior** to confirming any bookings. Excursion planning should take into consideration the educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum. Any excursion planned must meet the requirements of any school-level policy or procedures.

Teachers organising an excursion are required to use The Currajong School Risk Assessment Matrix, considering the task/activity, risk description, risk consequence, risk likelihood, risk assessment and risk treatment. The matrix must be used to identify potential risks. Any identified risks with a number of 1 or 2 will be considered extreme risk with the elimination of that activity if control measures are unable to minimise the risk. The risk assessment must be checked by another member of the teaching staff prior to approval by the Principal or Assistant Principal.

All excursion and off-site activity proposals must be submitted, well in advance. If no bookings are required, the proposal should be submitted a minimum of three weeks before the scheduled date.

VENUE SELECTION

Excursion venues must be assessed and selected on the basis of their safety and suitability for the activities proposed. It is recommended that venues are selected based on the recent and first-hand knowledge (for example, through an inspection of the site by at least one member of the planning and supervising staff). The teacher in charge must check the excursion venue to assess apparent dangers and hazards and prepare contingency plans as required.

FIRE DANGER OR BAN

The Principal may need to cancel excursions at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. If there is a possibility of a bushfire at an activity location, the excursion is to be postponed or cancelled. On such days the school will communicate with fire authorities to obtain information on areas affected by wildfire. Staff can contact the Victorian Bushfire Information Line 1800 240 667, the CFA website, or the Department of Sustainability and Environment website for further information. Staff are to contact the venue, where applicable, for information on the venue's bushfire contingency plan.

In the unexpected event of a bushfire, staff should refer to *The Currajong School Critical Incident Management Policy* and follow the advice of emergency services.

SAFETY, EMERGENCY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk assessments are to be completed for every activity outside of the school grounds. Risk assessments must be completed by the teacher organising the excursion, and at least one other member of the teaching staff prior to approval by the Principal or Assistant Principal (see Planning and Approval).

Emergency procedures should include the effects of an emergency on student supervision in the event of excursion staff being required to assist injured students or to go for help.

Excursions may need to be cancelled at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. On such days the school will obtain up to date information from fire authorities and emergency services websites.

A first aid kit, including the asthma kit and mobile phone, and the folder containing all relevant student information (including medical consent) is taken on all excursions.

At least one staff member responsible for each group of students will have first aid qualifications.

In the event of an emergency, accident or injury the staff on the excursion should take emergency action and immediately notify the Principal.

Staff should refer to *The Currajong School Critical Incident Management Policy* in the event of a critical incident.

PARENT OR CARER CONSENT

All excursions require a permission form to be signed by parents. Permission forms need to be distributed to parents/carers two weeks in advance for full day excursions. Unreturned forms need to be followed up by the teacher planning the excursion or by a teaching assistant nominated by him/her.

Medical consent forms containing the relevant information for students are to be taken on all excursions.

STUDENT MEDICAL INFORMATION

The teacher-in-charge of an excursion must ensure the folder containing all relevant student information (including medical consent) is taken on all excursions. These forms must be available to other excursion staff in emergency situations. Copies of the forms will also be kept at the school.

STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

Excursions must be appropriately staffed. Generally, excursions will have one staff member per four students, though we recognise that students with special needs may require additional supervision. As such, the staff-student ratios may be enhanced on various activities to ensure student safety.

To ensure appropriate and effective levels of supervision, excursion planning should take into account:

- the experience, qualifications and skills of staff
- the age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of students
- the ability and experience of the students
- the size of the group
- the nature and location of the excursion
- the activities to be undertaken
- any other relevant factors

When walking to or from an activity, staff should not walk together, but 'spread out' so as to better supervise students. There should always be a staff member at the front of the group and another at the back of the group.

New students, as well as younger and less predictable students, must be 'tagged' for the day by a nominated staff member and held by the hand when getting in and out of a vehicle, crossing streets, moving from one area to another, and in any situation of perceived danger.

If students need to be taken to the toilet a teaching assistant should accompany them. The teacher should remain with the larger group.

TRANSPORTATION

Staff licensed to drive the school vehicles are required to be familiar with *The Currajong School Vehicle Policy*.

The teacher organising the excursion must ensure that adequate transport is available, including an additional car if necessary, and a transport list given to the Principal.

At no time should one staff member take a group of children out in a van as the driver cannot be considered able to supervise as well as to drive. Students travelling in a car with a staff member must be carefully chosen i.e. younger and less predictable students, as well as those new to the school, should travel in a van.

The following guidelines need to be followed:

- Students should get into and out of vehicles in the safest possible places.
- One staff member should sit near the door of the van and a second staff member at the back of the van.
- The doorways of the van should be kept clear in the event of exit in an emergency.
- New students, as well as younger and less predictable students, should not sit in the front seat of the van.
- Booster seat must be used in staff vehicles according to guidelines.

STUDENT PREPARATION AND BEHAVIOUR

In preparation for excursions, the teacher should advise the students of the arrangements and relevant safety arrangements or emergency procedures. Students will be made aware of the expected standards of behaviour.

If one or more students need to be returned to School early because of disruptive behaviour, the school should be contacted, and advice/assistance requested.

Younger students, or those who may have difficulty in communicating in an emergency, should wear identity tags on excursions identifying the school contact details, but **not** the student's name.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

See: *Adventure Activities Policy*

Adventure excursions require a permission form to be signed by parents. Permission forms need to be distributed to parents/carers two weeks in advance for adventure activities. Unreturned forms need to be followed up by the teacher planning the excursion or by a teaching assistant nominated by him/her.

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every three-years or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Approval date:	Approved by:	Next Review:
October 2021	School Board	October 2024



The Currajong School acknowledges the traditional owners of this country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the Elders past, present and emerging.