



## Policy Statement

The Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education Limited (DOBCEL) and the schools it governs strive to provide inclusive and enriching educational experiences for students. DOBCEL recognises that excursions, camps, interstate, and international travel can provide important learning and growth for young people, and is committed to providing a safe, caring, and nurturing environment for all students.

DOBCEL will ensure that:

- school excursions and camps are diligently planned, managed, supervised, and monitored in a manner that ensures the health, safety, and wellbeing of participating students and staff, as well as others who may be affected by the conduct of the activity
- this policy will comply with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and the suite of policies and supporting documents related to the care, safety, and wellbeing of students as well as policies relating to the Victorian Child Safe Standards
- all students are encouraged to participate in all aspects of excursions and camps as part of the school curriculum in accordance with the school's duty of care obligations, school staff will take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of any foreseeable harm to a student
- as part of the school communication process, parents and students are fully informed of their obligations and responsibilities prior to parental consent being obtained.

## Context

Camps, excursions, and travel are offered to students throughout the year as off-site activities that relate to the curriculum and co-curriculum requirements which further enhance the learning outcomes and social skills development of students.

During excursions, camps, and interstate and international travel, the care, safety, and wellbeing of students are assigned to DOBCEL and the supervising school staff who are legally in loco parentis.

The Victorian Child Safe Standards apply when traveling interstate and internationally. The venues, transport, and accommodation on all trips are an extension of the school environment as defined within Ministerial Order 1359. Therefore, schools must comply with Child Safe Standards when planning and conducting these activities/events and all efforts must be made to ensure the duty of care, safety, and wellbeing of students is prioritised.

Excursions, camps, and travel require adequate planning to prevent and mitigate any incidents that might pose a risk to students. While the degree of planning involved will depend on the nature and likelihood of the risks involved, the conduct of any excursion or activity must consider the following:

- ensuring offsite activities have educational, cultural, spiritual and/or personal development purpose and value
- a systematic and transparent approach to the planning, approval, and implementation of all offsite activities
- suitability of the venue and/or environment for the excursion
- obtaining informed consent from parents or carers
- adequate student preparation and clear behaviour expectations
- importance of providing an inclusive excursion experience for all students, including students with disabilities and additional needs
- the need for school staff to meet their responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards.
- requirements of any adventure activities, including skill level of required by students to safely undertake the activity
- assessment of excursion risks and appropriate risk minimization strategies, including appropriate supervision arrangements
- maintenance of excursion records, including clear documentation of the planning process.

## Scope

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

This policy excludes off site activities related to Vocational Education and Training Courses.

## 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 \(Cth\)](#)

## Duty of Care

As the governing authority, DOBCEL is required to ensure DOBCEL schools uphold a duty of care to students in all school environments. All excursions, camps, and travel, taking place either during or outside of school hours, are included within the definition of 'school environment' within *Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards (MO 1359)*. Therefore, schools need to comply with *Child Safe Standards* when planning and conducting these activities/events.

DOBCEL and its schools are required to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that they can reasonably foresee would be likely to result in harm or injury to the student, and to work for the positive wellbeing of each child. In accordance with the *Education Training and Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.) (sch 4 cl 12)* schools have a responsibility to ensure that the care, safety, and wellbeing of all students attending the school complies with any applicable State or Commonwealth laws.

## Educational Purpose

School staff are required to ensure that there is an educational purpose for the program and that it is relevant to the school's curriculum, taking into consideration the location and environment, activities, people, equipment needed and assessed risks.

## Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Adventure Activities	Activities that involve greater than normal risk which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• physical activities beyond the scope of the regular physical education curriculum</li><li>• travel into a relatively undeveloped area of the country in which vehicle access is difficult and/or uncertain</li><li>• exposure to natural environmental challenges requiring greater reliance upon personal resources than would normally be required in day-to-day life</li><li>• exposure to the natural elements with less than the normal physical protection provided in day-to-day life</li><li>• the use and operation of amusement rides, attractions or fireworks via engagement of a third-party operator at non-public (that is, enrolled students only) events on non-school sites (for example, hiring a jumping castle to be operated at a local park).</li></ul>
Camps	Camps are excursions involving at least one night's accommodation (including school sleepovers on school grounds). Retreats are included in the definition of camps.
Excursions	Activities organised by the school where the students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are taken out of the school grounds (eg. a camp, day excursion, school sports including after-school sports)</li></ul>

TERM	DEFINITION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertake adventure activities, regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds.</li> </ul>
Excursion Staff	Are adults who provide the supervisory, instructional and educational elements of an activity.
In Loco Parentis	Latin for "in the place of a parent", refers to the legal responsibility of a person or organization to take on some of the functions and responsibilities of a parent.
Local Excursion	Any activity beyond the school grounds, within walking distance of the school which does not involve adventure activities.
Residential Campsites	Campsites that have permanent facilities such as; cooking and eating facilities, beds, amenities block and adventure recreation options. This definition does not include caravan parks, hotels/motels, ski lodges or residential schools.
Swimming Pool	Any structure containing water to a depth greater than 300mm and used primarily for swimming, wading, paddling or similar, including bathing or wading or spa pool. This definition includes all public, private, school, body corporate, hotel and natural swimming pools.
Waterways	<p><a href="#">Transport Safety Victoria – Maritime Safety</a> provide the following definitions of waters in Victoria.</p> <p><b>Inland waters</b> – rivers (inside the seaward entrance), creeks, canals, lakes, reservoirs, and any similar waters either naturally formed or man-made and which are either publicly or privately owned but does not include any navigable rivers, creeks or streams within declared port waters.</p> <p><b>Swift waterways</b> - flowing river water which may be categorised according to the international river classifications system. This covers water commonly known as ‘moving water’ or ‘white water’ but also refers to flowing water which may not look either ‘swift’ or ‘white’ to an observer.</p> <p><b>Enclosed waters</b> – any declared port waters inside the seaward entrance. See the <a href="#">Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook</a> for all listed port waters.</p> <p><b>Coastal waters</b> – all waters other than inland waters or enclosed waters and extending 3 nautical miles seaward.</p>

Responsible Directorate member	Deputy Director: Catholic Education
Policy Owner	Leader: Learning and Teaching
Assigned Board Committee	Learning and Teaching
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# Excursions, Camps and Travel Procedures

Document No. 000193

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BALLARAT  
CATHOLIC  
EDUCATION  
LIMITED



## Procedures Statement

These Procedures have been developed to support staff who are planning excursions, camps, etc., to take reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent and reduce risks to students, in accordance with their duty of care obligations. Excursion planning and conduct may be reviewed subsequently to injury or damage to property, and/or a legal claim related to an excursion.

## Context

Excursions, camps, and regular outings are an important part of educational programs delivered by DOBCEL schools. 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. DOBCEL 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 apply to all camps and excursions organised by DOBCEL schools. 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.

These Procedures exclude off site activities related to Vocational Education and Training Courses.

## Excursion Documents

### Offsite Activity Planning Checklist and Approval Form

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

**The *Offsite Activity Planning Checklist and Approval Form* is made up of the following sections:**

**Part 1: Initial application to the Principal**

**Part 2: Offsite activity details**

**Part 3: Offsite activity checklist**

**Part 4: Swimming and Water-based Activity Checklist**

Schools to complete *Part 4 Swimming and Water-based Activity Checklist* for all swimming activities, including instructional swimming, life-saving programs and recreational swimming pool, inland waterway, enclosed waterways, coastal waterways, and beaches.

**Part 5: Excursion Submission and Approval Form**

Once the *Offsite Activity Planning Checklist and Approval Form* is completed, it is submitted to the approver.

## Checklists

The following checklist have been developed to assist with the planning an offsite activity:

- Excursions & Camps External Provider Checklist
- Assessing Criteria of Venues such as Campsites or Overnight Accommodation Checklist
- Overseas Travel Documentation Checklist.

## Consent Forms

### Parental Consent Form

Schools must obtain written or electronic consent from parents or carers for 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

Schools 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. (Secondary schools only)
  - 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

- Schools 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 is distributed to parents and carers at the beginning of each school year or upon enrolment if a student enrolls during the school year. Once annual consent is obtained, schools are not required to obtain further consent before a local excursion.
- Parents and carers must 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.

## Risk Warnings & Waivers

As part of obtaining parents or carers consent for a student to participate in an activity, schools must include warnings on any associated risks. These warnings must provide an explanation as to the activity being undertaken and the risks.

Schools must identify all risks associated with an excursion / activities (including local excursions) that are reasonably foreseeable wherever possible. All stated risks must be specific and in clear language.

Parents / carers should acknowledge the risk warning included in the consent with their signature.

The *Parent/Carer Excursion/Camp Consent Form* must include a waiver acknowledging that parents / carers have been provided with all relevant information and agree to the terms within the form, allowing their child to participate in an excursion / activity.

## Student Medical Information Forms

**Please note:** *If a school does not use the Parent Access Module in SIMON, Student Medical Form Templates in eSORT are available to be completed. The storage and disposal of these forms are to comply with the current [Public Record Office Victoria \(PROV\) – PROS 22/06 Schools: Student Support, Health and Wellbeing](#).*

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.

Schools must:

- 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.

Schools may require additional medical information depending on the nature of the activities undertaken.

## Travel Approvals

Approval Type	Steps	Approver
a. <u>Excursions (National)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overnight</li> <li>• Adventure activities</li> <li>• Interstate</li> <li>• Air or water travel</li> </ul>	School staff to complete and submit the following documents for approval prior to the commencement of the excursion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Offsite Activity Planning Checklist &amp; Approval Form</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Parent/Carer Excursion/Camp Consent Form</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Student Medical Information Forms</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excursions, Camps &amp; Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan Template</i></li> </ul>	Principal
b. Overseas Excursions	School staff to complete and submit the following documents for approval prior to the commencement of the excursion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Offsite Activity Planning Checklist &amp; Approval Form</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Parent/Carer Excursion/Camp Consent Form</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Student Medical Information Forms</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <i>Excursions, Camps &amp; Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan Template</i></li> </ul>	Executive Director
c. Excursion Operational Requirements	The Principal is responsible for the approval of all operational requirements, including the risk register, for all excursions.	Principal
d. Staff Travel (including Principals) involving accompanying students on excursions	All interstate and overseas travel for school staff and Principal  <b>Approval of international travel must be obtained at least three (3) weeks in advance.</b>  <a href="#">Refer to Overseas Travel section of these Procedures</a>	Executive Director
e. Excursion Cancellations or Alterations	The Principal must approve any cancellations or alterations to excursion arrangements.	Principal
f. Unsupervised Excursions	Refer to <a href="#">Unsupervised Excursions</a> section of these Procedures	Principal

## Student Activity Locator (SAL)

All DOBCEL schools are required to enter the details of their offsite school activities in the [CEVN Student Activity Locator](#) (staff login required).

Offsite activities include camps, excursions (including local, interstate, and overseas trips), day trips, sporting activities, school closures, pupil free days and all overnight activities.

By centrally recording offsite activities in the SAL, Emergency Services can quickly be notified of student locations in the event of an emergency or critical incident, such as a bushfire, hostage situation or chemical spill.

## Risk Management Planning

Schools must 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. Refer to the: *Risk Management Framework* and *Risk Management Policy* for further information.

### Risk Assessment

The type of excursion will determine the type of risk assessment required. Refer to the *Excursions, Camps & Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan Template*.

### Risk Assessment Process

The Risk Assessment will inform the planning of the event and help decide what resources, staff and equipment will be required. The assessment should cover the entire excursion including:

- all activities to be undertaken.
- excursion location or venue (including environment)
- people (student behaviour, student/teacher safety or illness or other specific needs)
- equipment
- transportation (for example, public transport cancellations, travelling in hazardous areas, student behaviour, travel sickness).

Where appropriate, the Risk Assessment should also address:

- risk to intended educational objectives.
- any significant financial risks to the school and/or parents (for example if an excursion needs to be cancelled)
- the risk that the general community might lose confidence or trust in the school or DOBCEL if a reasonably foreseeable risk is not identified or if insufficient steps are taken to minimise that risk and this results in injury, loss, or damage.

### Responsibilities

The Risk Assessment must 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.

The TIC is responsible for communicating the responsibilities and processes for treating all risks by Excursion Staff before departing and while on the excursion.

## Recording Risk Assessments

Documenting risk is important for several reasons:

- It provides staff with a clear record of risks identified and measures put in place
- It assists with identifying any possible gaps in their risk assessment that need to be addressed
- It is a useful way of communicating risk-related roles and responsibilities
- It can become important evidence if someone is injured during the excursion and the school's actions regarding risk planning and management are reviewed.

## Storage of Risk Assessments

Schools are to comply with their local school record management processes for storage of risk assessments and their associated documents.

## 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 pre-activity check must establish the:

- current weather, warnings and forecast conditions
- fire danger rating and current fire conditions and warnings
- conditions and nature of the environment in which the activity is being undertaken and the impact on the activity
- psychological and physical health and wellbeing of participants and staff on the activity
- condition of the activity specific and safety equipment being used in conducting of the activity, for example, helmets, life jackets, bikes.

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. Schools may choose to place all risks associated with each activity on the one camp risk assessment or complete a risk assessment for each activity.

For further information refer to the [Adventure Activity Guidelines](#) section of this document.

## Consultation with External Providers

Schools need to consider whether to consult with external providers during the preparation of the Excursion Risk Assessment. Schools need also to consider whether using an accredited provider and/or appropriately trained staff to lead activities (such as adventure activities) is sufficient

mitigation for some activity specific risks. If so, the Excursion Risk Assessment should not focus on treating risks relating to technical aspects of an activity (for example, ropes or harnesses used in abseiling). Instead, these risks should be identified and include 'the use of external provider' as a control.

Refer to *Excursions and Camps External Provider Checklist*.

## **Risk Assessment for Overseas and Interstate Excursions**

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

Refer to the *Overseas Travel Documentation Checklist*.

For Information on Overseas Excursions refer to the [Overseas travel: Additional Requirements](#) section of this document.

## **Emergency or Critical Incident Management**

### **Excursion Emergency Management Plan**

Excursions must have an *Excursion Emergency Management Plan*, which is part of the *Excursions, Camps & Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Plan Template*. This must be developed for any excursions which involve the following:

- overnight stays
- interstate travel
- overseas travel
- adventure activities
- travel via sea or air
- weekends or school holidays.

Refer to the *Excursions, Camps and Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan Template*.

A school's *Excursion Emergency Management Plan* must have clearly written emergency response procedures that:

- address the consequences (rated moderate or above) of all risks identified in the Risk Assessment.
- are understood by those involved in the program (this may, where appropriate, include a trial evacuation exercise carried out at the venue to ensure that procedures are appropriate, and staff and students are familiar with them).
- include:
  - rescue, resuscitation and first aid procedures
  - how to contact a doctor, ambulance, or emergency service
  - how to maintain always situational awareness (for example, weather forecasts for outdoors activities)
  - 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

- support for students who may have difficulty communicating in an emergency because of age or disability and ways to manage any specific risks to these students in an emergency.
- advise of the steps in the event of the cancellation, rescheduling or alternation of an excursion (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions, changes to Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade travel advice or an emergency). This should include arrangements for communicating with parents/carers. (Refer to [Travel Approvals](#): Item e)
- where relevant, are consistent with the procedures used by venue owners, managers or rescue and life-saving patrols.

The nominated teacher in charge is responsible for implementation of the emergency response procedures, which may include the involvement of others who have more experience in dealing with emergencies.

To support the development of the *Excursion Emergency Management Plan*, schools should refer to the *Emergency Management Plan Template and the Emergency Management Plan Guide* for schools and the *Critical Incident Management Policy*, which outlines key actions in a variety of emergency situations (such as bushfire, flood, hypothermia, hyperthermia).

### External Provider Risk Assessments and Emergency Management Plans

It is best practice to obtain copies and include the external provider's risk assessments and emergency management plans with your *Offsite Activity Planning Checklist and Approval Form* submission where applicable.

### In the Event of an Emergency, Accident, or Injury

- staff on the excursion should:
  - take emergency action to establish safety for all involved as per the *Excursion Emergency Management Plan* (refer to the *Emergency Management and Critical Incident Policy and Procedures* and the *Emergency Management Plan and Guide and the Critical Incident Management Plan*)
  - immediately notify emergency services (if required), the school Principal or designated school contact.
- the Principal or designated school should:
  - contact the relevant DOBCEL staff - Education Consultant, Executive Director etc.
  - obtain further information, such as statements from witnesses, where required to provide appropriate support to affected students or to properly document the incident and retain these on file
  - ensure that details of accidents or incidents are recorded.

## 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.

***School students cannot be used as excursion staff, including students on work experience/VCE – Vocational Major Programs.***

Schools must 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

School staff participating in an excursion should:

- 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
- ensure that have submitted and received approval for their *Time in Lieu plan* before the commencement of the excursion. Refer to the [CECV Implementation Guide: Teacher Time in Lieu](#).

The nominated TIC must:

- ensure that a notification of school activity using the [CEVN Student Activity Locator](#) (staff login required) is submitted at least 3 weeks prior to the excursion
- ensure risk assessments have been completed and treatments are communicated to all staff involved in the excursion and/or activity
- always know the exact location of all primary students including during travel. With regard to secondary students, the TIC must be aware of all students' locations within given boundaries
- maintain a record of telephone contacts for the supervising staff accompanying the excursion
- know details of the school contact person and their phone number
- have immediate access to the names of family contacts for all students and staff on the excursion
- have immediate access to copies of medical advice forms for all students on the excursion
- maintain a copy of the completed *Excursions Approval Form* and accompanying documents submitted to the Principal for approval. Refer to the [Approvals](#) section of these Procedures
- have immediate access to medications for students and staff.

## Specialist Instructors

Schools must:

- 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 should 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.

## Supervision

To ensure appropriate and effective levels of supervision, the Risk Assessment should consider:

- the experience, qualifications, and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors and so on)
- 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
- communication access (phone coverage, access to more than one communication device)
- the activities to be undertaken
- known or anticipated weather conditions
- requirements outlined in the information for specific adventure activities
- emergency response and critical incident planning
- whether inclusive practices are in place for all students including students with disabilities and complex needs
- any other relevant factors.

## 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

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

## Adventure Activities Staff-Student Ratio

The excursion must:

- be under the direct control of a teacher who is employed by DOBCEL, 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.

## How to Apply the Ratios

A minimum of 2 excursion staff must accompany students on all excursions.

For example:

- if a day excursion involves 16 students, a minimum of 2 excursion staff must accompany the group
- if a day excursion involves 60 students, a minimum of 3 excursion staff must accompany the group.

This meets both the 1:20 staff-student ratio and the requirement that a minimum of 2 staff accompany students on all excursions.

The need for further staff should be identified through appropriate risk management planning.

## Mixed Gender Groups

For overnight stays for mixed gender groups the excursion must include staff of diverse genders as required. In primary schools this requirement may be waived, where staff of each gender are not available. For advice on the waiving of this requirement, refer to the relevant Education Consultant.

## Exceptions to Minimum Supervision Requirements

### Excursions in the Local Area

For small group excursions (16 students or less) in the local area, a teacher must be responsible for the excursion. However, with the approval of the Principal, a small group can be supervised by one or more excursion staff employed by the school who are not teachers (for example, education support class officers such as integration aides and teacher assistants).

Non-school personnel excursion staff (parents or volunteers) can assist with local excursions only if a VIT registered teacher or an approved excursion staff employed by the school is leading the excursion.

## Day Excursions for Senior Secondary Students

Schools can consider having less than the minimum supervision ratios for senior secondary students attending local or day excursions, only when the appropriate risk assessment has been conducted and it is deemed that student safety will not be compromised.

Consideration should be given to the age, number, and individual needs of the students as well as any relevant factors relating to attending staff.

## Unsupervised Excursions (Secondary Only: Year 11 and 12)

Unsupervised excursions occur when students are required to travel to third party locations as part of their learning/curriculum.

For unsupervised excursions, the excursion must:

- be approved by the Principal only:
  - in a small number of instances
  - for senior secondary-aged students in Year 11 and 12
  - for activities involving small groups of students.
- maintain a formal record of the following by the TIC:
  - a description of the activity, including locations
  - the names and ages of students involved
  - the time of leaving and returning to school.

The teacher responsible for the activity must ensure that students have appropriate methods of communication in the event of an emergency.

## Transport to and from Excursions

Schools can consider having less than the minimum supervision ratios when transporting students to and from the excursion venue.

Consideration should be given to:

- distance travelled
- type of transportation
- the age, number, and individual needs of the students.

The decision to alter the supervision ratios for transportation to and from the venue should be documented in the risk assessment and controls enacted accordingly.

**Please note: Minimum of 2 excursion staff (1 VIT Registered) to stay always with the student group.**

## Student Preparation and Behaviour

Schools must 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 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, schools should 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.

## Waivers of Liability

Providers will frequently seek a '*waiver and indemnity of liability*' as a condition of hire of a venue or participation in a planned activity.

NB

- Schools must not agree to give a 'waiver and indemnity' where the provider seeks to absolve itself and its personnel from liability for negligence.
- Schools cannot, and must not, sign a 'waiver and indemnity' on behalf of a student nor permit a student to sign a 'waiver and indemnity'.

- Schools must not ask parents and carers to sign a 'waiver and indemnity' on behalf of a student if the waiver and indemnity seek to absolve the provider and its personnel from liability for negligence.

## External Providers

- External providers may be engaged to deliver specific activities (such as adventure activities) or a whole program. They may provide expertise in a certain activity and can be a valuable addition to a program.
- Clear and open communication undertaken well in advance of the planned program is the key to an effective and well-informed relationship between a school and an external provider.
- Schools must be aware that school staff still have duty of care for the students, even when they are using external providers.
- Before an external provider is selected to assist with the delivery of a program, the school should complete a thorough check to ensure that the provider is appropriate for the program and has experience working with groups of children and/or young people.
- Risk assessments must be obtained for any activities to be undertaken.
- Schools should referee check an external provider with other schools.

## 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
- Schools must obtain written advice in the *Student Medical Information Forms* for all medication to be administered by excursion staff.



## First Aid Officers

These must be excursion staff who have current qualifications covering all the school's first aid requirements. First Aid Officers must have completed a recognised first aid training course that meets the requirements of *HLTAID011 – Provide First Aid (Release 1)* and *HLTAID009 – Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (Release 1)*. *Basic First Aid training (HLTAID011)* must be completed every 3 years, while a refresher course in *CPR (HLTAID009)* must be completed annually.

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.

Excursion staff can locate a defibrillator/s via [Ambulance Victoria's website](#). By clicking on 'Locating an AED', it will automatically generate locations of publicly accessible AEDs the area.

## Venue Selection

Excursion venues must be assessed and selected based on their safety and suitability for the activities proposed. This includes outdoor locations.

## Residential Campsites

Schools using residential campsites for overnight camping must use accredited campsites, to ensure these venues meet minimum criteria regarding safety and suitability.

A list of accredited camps can be found at:

Name	Website
Australian Camps Association (Find a camp)	<a href="https://auscamps.asn.au/">https://auscamps.asn.au/</a>
National Accommodation, Recreation and Tourism Accreditation Program (NARTA).	<a href="https://www.narta.org.au/home.html">https://www.narta.org.au/home.html</a>

Information regarding camp and adventure activity accreditation is provided at the [Quality Tourism Framework module: Camps and Adventure Accreditation](#).

## Other Venues

Other venues may include:

- overnight campsites and venues that provide accommodation only such as caravan parks, hotels/motels or ski lodges
- interstate camps or excursions
- overseas venues.

## Outdoor Locations

- Environmental factors must be considered when planning outdoor activities as unfamiliar settings for students can present hazards. Outdoor activities may be affected by, yet are not limited to, environmental conditions such as surrounding landscape and vegetation, prevailing weather, and microclimates.
- Outdoor environments are extremely variable by nature. Conditions need to be planned for and monitored regularly in the lead up to, and during, the activity.
- When preparing for outdoor activities, staff should consider ways to minimise the environmental impact of the activity by including environmental considerations during the development of the risk assessment.

## Activities conducted on land operated by Parks Victoria

Schools conducting excursions on land operated by Parks Victoria must complete an *Education Group Activity Form* via [ParkConnect](#) at least one month before any visit. This will assist Parks Victoria to alert schools to any park closures, storm damage or management activities that may affect the visit, such as planned burns or pest animal programs.

For more information refer to the [User Guide for ParkConnect Education: Primary and Secondary School Teachers](#).

## Environmental Considerations

To ensure safe conduct of the excursion, schools should consider whether there are any environmental factors, or access or permit requirements that they need to be aware of.

This information may be obtained from other relevant authorities such as:

Organisation	Website
Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	<a href="https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/">https://www.deeca.vic.gov.au/</a>
Transport Safety Victoria	<a href="https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/">https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/</a>
Vic Emergency	<a href="https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/">https://www.emergency.vic.gov.au/respond/</a>
Vic Forests	<a href="https://www.vicforests.com.au/">https://www.vicforests.com.au/</a>
Local Councils	<a href="https://www.viccouncils.asn.au/find-your-council/council-contacts-list">https://www.viccouncils.asn.au/find-your-council/council-contacts-list</a>

## Factors to Consider When Assessing the Suitability of Outdoor Locations

- Staff experience and qualifications required for the activity and location (including first aid).
- Level of access to resources, services and facilities that may be needed, such as campsites, water, walking trails, toilets, shelter from extreme weather, or interpretive information.
- Level of access to communication equipment and networks for routine and emergency use.
- Evacuation points and routes including alternative routes in the event of an emergency.
- External assistance available in the event of an emergency or extreme weather conditions. The more remote the location, the more self-contained and self-reliant the group must be. This must be considered in the planning of the activity.
- Potential exposure to environmental hazards and difficulties.
- Ability and fitness levels of students.

## Weather and Emergency Warnings

Staff must check weather forecasts and emergency warnings for the location in the days leading up to the excursion and on the day the excursion commences. If the activity extends overnight, staff must access weather forecasts and warnings daily and monitor and assess the weather throughout, and must cancel, modify, or relocate at any time if a severe weather warning is issued for the area.

## Weather Warning Telephone Services

The telephone numbers below may be useful to have available during the activity.

Service	Phone Number
Coastal, Land Weather and Flood Warnings	1300 659 217
Full State Telephone Weather Service	1900 955 363 (call charge applies)

Coastal Waters Telephone Service	1900 969 930 (call charge applies)
Australian Tsunami Threat Information (1300 TSUNAMI)	1300 878 626
VicEmergency Hotline (Includes bushfire information)	1800 226 226

Location specific numbers are available at [Bureau of Meteorology – Telephone Weather Services Directory](#).

## Weather Warning Online Services

Weather and warning forecasts should be obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology. Staff using mobile apps to obtain this information are responsible for checking the source of the apps data.

- [Bureau of Meteorology](#) and [MetEye](#)
- [Marine and Ocean](#) for coastal waters forecast and observations
- [VicEmergency](#)
- [National Warnings Summary](#)
- [Victorian Weather and Warnings](#)

## Fire Danger or Ban

When planning excursions in bushfire prone areas or in areas surrounded by grassland, schools are advised to regularly monitor forecast fire danger ratings for that fire weather district.

- On days of forecasted Catastrophic fire danger rating (FDR), all excursions in the fire weather district of the Catastrophic FDR forecast must be cancelled.
- In the days leading up to activities in or around bushfire prone areas, schools must regularly check the forecast fire danger rating. If the forecast fire danger rating is identified as extreme, or a total fire ban has been declared, Principals must reassess the excursion risk assessment and can seek advice from their Education Consultant about whether the excursion should be cancelled.
- If an excursion is not cancelled, alternative lower risk activities may be substituted , depending on the location.
- Schools must ensure they consider the risk of bushfire or grassfire at the excursion location when conducting their risk assessment and developing their *Emergency Management Plan*. Schools should be guided by the DOBCEL's *Emergency Management Plan for Schools Template and Guide*.
- For more information:

Service	Contact
Country Fire Authority (CFA)	<a href="https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/">https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/</a>
Vic Emergency Hotline	1800 226 226

## Transport

The transportation of groups to and from activity locations must be carefully considered and planned, considering the following:

- If using public transport, transport authorities should be consulted on appropriate travel times, fares and at least a fortnight's notice of travel provided to the relevant transport authority. Contact [Public Transport Victoria](#) (PTV) for further information
- Groups of 12 or more can get a concession discount for travel on public transport with a [Group Travel Authority](#), while Victorian preschool, kindergarten or primary school excursion groups of 12 to 35 people can travel for free during the school day and on weekends. For details refer to [PTV Group Travel webpage](#)
- Excursions that run late, failing to meet times agreed to with private bus operators, are likely to incur significant costs
- Vehicles used to transport students must comply with VicRoads registration requirements
- Drivers must comply with all licensing requirements
- Students must be instructed to wear seat belts where available
- Occupational Health and Safety laws require employers and employees to take all reasonably practicable steps to manage driver fatigue. For more information refer to [VicRoads Fatigue and Road Safety](#) webpage
- Equipment carried inside vehicles must be securely stowed and not create a risk of injury or damage. Equipment and luggage should be carried and secured as appropriate in trailers, roof racks or behind luggage barriers. For more information refer to [VicRoads Securing Your Load](#) webpage
- Private Vehicle Considerations

When transporting a small number of students to a school activity in a private vehicle is unavoidable, the Principal must ensure that:

1. if the driver is a staff member they are a member of the supervising staff
2. if the driver is not a staff member:
  - the current and valid registration certificate for the vehicle and driver's licence of the driver have been sighted
  - compliance with child seat belt/restraint laws is ensured
  - the school's volunteer checks policy has been applied. Refer to school Volunteers and Visitors Policy / Procedures
3. parents and/or carers are advised that their child will be transported in a private vehicle and by whom
4. the school keeps accurate records of the students travelling in each vehicle, in case of an accident.

## 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 school 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.

## Remote Locations

If conducting an activity in a remote location with limited access to technology and emergency services, a documented communication plan must be developed prior to the activity. This can be incorporated into the Risk Assessment Plan. The plan must:

- be developed specifically for the location based on current information about the area and other relevant information such as mobile phone coverage maps
- enable staff to receive weather/fire danger forecasts, updates, and warnings
- identify equipment to be used, based on current communication technology and the location of the activity
- be clear to all staff involved in the program, including its limitations
- include a communication strategy for the group during the program that also enables communication with outside parties including the school and emergency services
- enable staff to receive weather forecasts, updates, and warnings
- not rely on a single communication device

## Overseas travel: Additional Requirements

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

When planning and conducting overseas excursions, schools are required to:

- 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 the appropriate request for school staff travel has been completed and approved within the correct timelines
- 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

- ensure staff have appropriate physical capacity to undertake required duties
- ensure teachers have an approved Time in Lieu plan before the commencement of the excursion.

Refer to the [CECV Implementation Guide: Teacher Time in Lieu](#).

Schools should also:

- ensure there are appropriate contingency funds available for staff on the excursion to access in the event of an emergency
- develop a communications plan, including assigning a designated school contact
- conduct a pre-trip briefing for staff, students and the parents/carers of students attending the excursion.

## Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Travel Advice

Schools must confirm that the locations and activities planned comply with any current DFAT travel advice. Risk and emergency management plans must be developed in consideration of the location, students, activities planned, types of travel undertaken and any relevant advice from DFAT.

The [Smartraveller website](#) is the DFAT travel advisory and consular assistance service. This site also provides useful travel information and tips. Before travelling overseas, schools should check the [Smartraveller website](#) to ensure that they have the most up-to-date travel advice for the proposed countries and locations to be visited.

Schools planning and conducting overseas excursions must ensure that they:

- comply with any DFAT travel advice current for the proposed location
- subscribe to receive automatic travel advice updates from the [Smartraveller website](#) both prior to the excursion and when overseas
- review their Risk Assessment if there are any changes to the DFAT travel advice. This will require the Principal to consider whether there is a need to cancel, recall or alter excursion arrangements.

## Travel Advice Levels

DFAT assign each overseas destination an official advice level of 1, 2, 3 or 4. These levels reflect the risk for average Australian travellers to this country.



Travel Advice Level	Description
Level 1	'Exercise normal safety precautions'
Level 2	'Exercise a high degree of caution' – requires additional attention to planning and assessment of risk.
Level 3:	<p>'Reconsider your need to travel' Excursions should be postponed or cancelled as the educational goals are unlikely to justify the risks.</p> <p>Any decision to continue would require consultation with the <i>Security and Emergency Management Division</i> and the submission of a detailed risk assessment and treatment plan together with detailed contingency planning.</p> <p><u>Security and Emergency Management Division</u> Email: <a href="mailto:emergency.management@education.vic.gov.au">emergency.management@education.vic.gov.au</a></p>
Level 4	'Do not travel' – Principals must cancel or postpone the excursion.

For more information go to [SmartTraveller: Travel Advice Explained](#) webpage.



## 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.

## Contingency Funds

Teachers accompanying students on overseas excursions should have access to sufficient contingency funds provided by the school to be used in the event of an emergency.

## Travel Application Process

Schools must ensure that staff who are participating an overseas excursion have the appropriate approval in accordance with the DOBCEL Delegations Instrument. Refer to the [Travel Approvals](#) section of these Procedures. It may be appropriate to ensure physical fitness to travel.

## Communications

When conducting an overseas excursion, a communications plan should be developed. This should consider the type of communication, the responsible party, timing of communication in response to a variety of situations (including emergencies).

Any overseas excursion must have a teacher in charge, who is the central point of contact for the group on the excursion. It is also recommended that schools assign a designated school contact. This should be a senior staff member who is not travelling with the group and can be contacted in the event of an emergency. The designated school contact should be used as a key liaison between the travelling group and the school, parents/carers, the school community, and DOBCEL.

## Pre-trip Briefing

Schools should undertake a pre-trip briefing for students attending the overseas excursion and their parents/carers.

Attention should be given to the following topics:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educational purpose     | <input type="checkbox"/> Code of conduct for students while on the trip                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics               | <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency response procedures (including communications)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Risks associated with specific activities                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel SIM Cards        | <input type="checkbox"/> Passports/visas and security measures                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Considerations | <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended packing lists (including weather considerations). |

## Using Third-Party Providers

Many schools engage third party providers (tour operators) to organise and facilitate overseas experiences for students. These tour operators provide unique travel experiences and manage many of the logistics and administrative burdens that would otherwise be placed on schools.

It is important to remember that engaging a tour operator does not fully transfer duty of care and schools will still need to take reasonable steps to reduce foreseeable risk by following all relevant aspects of these Procedures. Schools should obtain risk assessments from their provider before travel.

## Staffing and Supervision

The supervision requirements set out in these Procedures apply to overseas excursions. School staff should read this information carefully to ensure the staffing arrangements meet the policy requirements.

Tour operator or activity operator staff (external staff) can only be included in the overall staffing numbers for the excursion when they are on duty and available on the same basis as school staff. This means that when the external staff are 'off duty' or will not be with the school group (including flights), they cannot be included in the overall staff-student supervision requirements.

## Risk Assessment

Many tour operators who conduct overseas travel experiences for schools will complete and provide risk assessments to the school. However, the school must complete their own Risk Assessment for the excursion as part of the approval process and as set out in these Procedures.

It is important that schools complete their own Risk Assessment (refer to *Excursions, Camps and Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan Template*) to:

- ensure that all risks are clearly identified
- ensure that measures in place to manage the risks (controls and treatments) are consistent with relevant DOBCEL policies
- ensure that specific risks to students and staff (including but not limited to risks associated with having external staff supervising the excursion) are addressed.

Schools should consider drawing upon the advice in the tour operator risk assessment when identifying controls or treatments for specific risks.

Staff should also familiarise themselves with the emergency management procedures of the tour operator to ensure they complement the school's excursion emergency management plan.

## 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.

## Designated School Contact

Some tour operators may have a dedicated emergency support hotline or contact person. However, the school must still have a designated contact person in the event of an emergency as per the requirements set out in these Procedures.

## Billeting/Homestay Requirements

As a school's duty of care extends into all activities while a student is undertaking an excursion, camp or travel, the school must ensure in every situation where a child or young person is billeted or accommodated for an overnight travel activity that risk assessments and safe practices are used.

The use of billets or homestays as accommodation poses a risk to children and young people and should be carefully assessed and actions implemented to reduce risk. It is the responsibility of the organising school to ensure the host families that provide accommodation for children and young people provide a safe environment for them to live in and pose no risk to their safety.

The risk posed by billeting and home staying children and young people is related to them going unaccompanied by a staff member or volunteer into households which may be unsafe or inappropriate, potentially exposing them to abuse, unacceptable health and safety risks, upsetting or dangerous situations.

As the people in households that billet, or homestay children or young people are placed in a position of trust they must be vetted to the same standard as school staff or volunteers before accommodating children.

Prior to billeting or homestay arrangements being agreed to the following should be undertaken and confirmed:

- Copies of working with children checks (or equivalent) and police check to be obtained for any adults residing in the potential accommodation. **Any potential host who refuses or challenges this requirement should not be considered**
- If no working with children check is available (or equivalent), the matter should be referred to Education Consultants for alternatives
- The address, names and date of birth of all people within the billeting/homestay household to be obtained
- A Risk Assessment should be undertaken to ensure the safety and appropriateness of the property
- Ensure that at least two children or young people will be billeted at a time. Children and young people are not to be billeted alone
- Ensure that host families have the appropriate insurance policy cover for residing students
- The following sleeping arrangements are in place:
  - no sharing of a room with an adult
  - no bed sharing
  - no mixed-gender room sharing
  - privacy is ensured for changing clothes and using the bathroom
- All students involved in billeting / homestay are made aware of these requirements
- Hosts, parents/caregivers are made aware of these requirements
- Students have access to a teacher from both the organising school and the host school
- Parents/caregivers are informed of all the details of the billet / homestay, including:
  - Who is in the household
  - Address
  - Contact number of the host
  - Contact number of the school contact.

Throughout the billet/homestay, the school must keep in regular contact with the student, as well as the host.

If there are any concerns at any time during the stay, for the safety and wellbeing of the student, they should be immediately removed and placed in alternative accommodation. Parents/caregivers must be informed of any changes to the original plans.

## Adventure Activity Guidelines

The safe conduct of outdoor and adventure activities requires:

- appropriate planning
- the identification of potential risks and difficulties
- active decision making.

The Department of Education has developed [adventure activity guidelines](#) to aid in the development of a risk assessment specific to the location, activity and group participating.

<a href="#">Abseiling (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Orienteering (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Sea kayaking (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Artificial climbing &amp; abseiling walls (DOCX)</a>
<a href="#">Bushwalking (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Rafting (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Snorkelling (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Challenge ropes courses (DOCX)</a>
<a href="#">Camping (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Rock climbing (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Snow activities (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Cycling (including Bicycle Education) (DOCX)</a>
<a href="#">Canoeing/kayaking (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Sailing (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Water skiing (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Surfing and stand-up paddle boarding (DOCX)</a>
<a href="#">Horse riding (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Scuba diving (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Windsurfing (DOCX)</a>	<a href="#">Swimming and water-based activities (DOCX)</a>

These [adventure activity guidelines](#) are agreed minimum activity standards for adventure operators, and they do not necessarily reflect the greater duty of care owed to students.

If an excursion has an overnight camping component, the camping section of these Procedures should be applied in addition to any planned specific activities. The length and difficulty of an overnight route should be selected so that groups generally arrive at the camp well before dark, with sufficient energy left to make camp and prepare a meal. This may not, however, be appropriate in all situations, for example, when it is preferable to walk at cooler times of the day.

## 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.

## **Adventure Activities without Guidelines**

Schools may consider adventure-based activities for which specific guidelines are not available. A thorough risk assessment is critical when undertaking an activity for which there are no guidelines.

For these activities schools need to comply with the [Australian Adventure Activity Standards](#) and consider the Duty of Care that is required for students.

Before undertaking these activities, Principals must satisfy themselves that the activities:

- are of educational value
- are supervised and instructed by appropriately experienced and/or qualified staff
- have appropriate insurance cover, including when they are offered by an external provider.

Further information and advice should be gathered from more than one source such as:

- peak bodies
- professional associations
- colleagues with experience instructing the activity with students.

## **Unsuitable activities**

These activities are unsuitable for school students because of the potential risks involved:

- bungee jumping
- hang gliding or other gliding activities
- parachuting or skydiving
- flying ultra-light aircraft.

## Supporting Documentation

*Forms, templates, and internal documents listed below are available to download from Policy Central – SharePoint for DOBCEL offices and eSORT for Schools.*

### Forms and Templates

Parent/Carer Excursion/Camp Consent Form

Offsite Activity Planning and Approval Checklist

Local Excursion Consent Form

Student Medical Information Form: Day Excursions Involving Adventure Activities

Student Medical Information Form: Camps and Overseas Excursions

Excursions, Camps and Activities Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan Template

Excursions and Camps External Provider Checklist

Assessing Criteria of Venues such as Campsites or Overnight Accommodation Checklist

Overseas Travel Documentation Checklist

Adventure Activities Pre-Activity Checklist

### Internal

Asthma Management Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]

Student Behaviour Management Policy [DOBCEL]

Student Behaviour Management Procedures [School]

Emergency and Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]

Delegations Policy and Instrument [DOBCEL]

Emergency Management Plan Template [School]

Emergency Management Plan Guide [DOBCEL]

Excursions, Camps and Travel Procedures [School]

First Aid and Infection Control Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]

Privacy Policy [DOBCEL]

Risk Management Framework [DOBCEL]

Risk Management Policy [DOBCEL]

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

Supervision of Students Policy [DOBCEL]

Supervision of Students Procedures [School]

Suspension and Expulsion of Students Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]

School Volunteers Policy and Procedures [School]

Working with Children Check Policy and Procedures [DOBCEL]

## External

[Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy \(DoE\)](#)

[CECV Implementation Guide: Teacher Time in Lieu](#)

[Public Record Office Victoria \(PROV\) – PROS 22/06 Schools: Student Support, Health and Wellbeing.](#)

[Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook](#)

## Related Links

<https://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/>

## DOBCEL Principles of Governance

All DOBCEL policies are founded on and reflect the Principles of Governance stated in the Document: [DOBCEL Principles of Governance](#)