

# Excursions Policy

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## 1. Policy statement

### Values

This centre recognises the opportunity for excursions to provide opportunities for children to explore the wider community and extend the educational program provided at the centre.

The centre is committed to excursions which are conducted in a safe manner and which comply with the Children's Services Regulations 2009 and the *Children's Services Act 1996*.

### Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for the committee/board, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and any other persons involved in the planning and conducting of an excursion for the [insert name of centre].

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, committee/board, parents/guardians, volunteers, students, and any other person who may be involved in planning and/or participating in excursions.

## 3. Background and legislation

- The *Children's Services Act 1996 (CSA)*
- The Children's Services Regulations 2009 (CSR)

## 4. Definitions

DHS: Department of Human Services

**Excursions:** Any occasion, other than a medical emergency, when children are removed from the premises of the children's centre by a staff member/members, with the written authorised permission of the person who has lawful authority to collect the child from the centre.

## 5. Procedures

The committee/board are responsible for:

- Approving new excursions. Items to be considered may include:
  - o The cost of the excursion to the centre and or families. If other siblings are able to attend will there be a charge for them.
  - o The number of children to participate in the excursion, also factoring in potential numbers of toddlers and other children.
  - o Deciding on the number of staff/adults required to attend. This may be influenced by such things as the need to cross a major road or to access public transport on the excursion.
  - o Ensuring the requirements of the Children's Services Regulations 2009 and the *Children's Services Act 1996* can be met for all children remaining at the centre. In particular CSR regulations 53,57,58 and 59 and *CSA section 27*.
  - o What impact the disruption to normal program times could have on the users of the centre.
  - o Any changes to the usual working arrangements of staff due to the excursion, in accordance with the appropriate awards or agreements.
  - o The provision of facilities at the proposed destination, including toileting, access to water, shade, safety considerations such as proximity to water, roads, bush or crowds.

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**The staff are responsible for:**

- Submitting a written request for an excursion to the committee/board detailing:
  - o Date, time and destination
  - o How the excursion relates to the program provided for the children
  - o Objectives, proposed activities, and desired outcomes of the excursion
  - o Method of transport
  - o Proposed staff and adult/child ratio for the excursion
  - o Cost
  - o Effects, if any, on the children's current attendance times
  - o If any children with additional needs attend the program, will additional resources be required to ensure their participation in the excursion.

**Preparation for the excursion**

**The staff are also responsible for :**

- Assessing the requirements for the excursion.
- Booking the transport and venue(s).
- Informing parents/guardians, at least two weeks prior, of the details of the planned excursion , and the cost. (Appendix 1).
- Requesting adult participation in the excursion, clearly stating if it is appropriate for other siblings to attend.
- Collecting completed permission forms and excursion fee, if required, for each child participating in the excursion.
- Arranging for a suitably equipped first aid kit, mobile phone and sunscreen (if required) to be taken on the excursion. .
- Notifying parents/guardians immediately of any change, or delay to the proposed excursion.
- Ensuring child/staff ratios, as per the requirements of CSR regulations 53 - 59 are met for children not participating in the excursion.

**The staff are responsible for:**

*Qualified*

- Providing adults who have volunteered to participate in the excursion with the aims and objectives of the excursion and any other information necessary for the smooth operation of the excursion.
- Arranging for the details of the telephone number of any person who is to be notified of any accident, injury, trauma or illness involving the child and the child's medical details to be taken on the excursion. Information is to be carried by a qualified staff member at all times.
- Ensuring that the staff and adult/child ratio approved by the committee/board and notified to the parents/guardians is met prior to commencing the excursion.
- Cancelling the excursion if the staff and adult/child ratio is not met and notifying the committee/board and parents/guardians.

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- Arranging for a staff member, parents/guardians or a committee/board member to be available, if the excursion is late returning, to advise parents/guardians collecting children at the centre of the estimated time of arrival back at the centre.
  - Ensuring only those children whose parents/guardians have completed and returned the permission form attend the excursion.

*All staff*

- Discussing with the children, the aims and objectives of the excursion, and items of special interest to them.
- Informing parent/guardians of any items the children require for the excursion. For example hat, coat, and snack.

**Prior to and during the excursion**

**The staff responsible for the excursion will ensure that:**

*Qualified*

- Parents/guardians/volunteers are provided a written outline of the excursion to be carried with them at all times. This may include a list of children in attendance; a list of the names of staff in attendance, a telephone number to be used if they become separated from the group, timetable for the excursion, and any other information identified by the centre as relevant to the excursion.
- A list of those participating in the excursion is cross-referenced against the attendance book.
- Ensuring a qualified staff member is nominated to carry the first aid kit, emergency contact details for each child, mobile phone, sunscreen (if required), and medications for children (if required).
- Parents/guardians/volunteers assisting with supervision on the excursion who do not have a police records check are under the immediate supervision of a qualified staff member or licensee's representative.
- The number of children and adults participating is monitored at regular intervals, by checking children and adults against the list of those participating in the excursion.
- The staff member, parent/guardian, or a committee/board member delegated to notify parents/guardians if the excursion has been delayed and will be late returning, is notified if this occurs.

*All staff*

- Children are provided the opportunity to use toileting facilities/or nappies changed by a staff member prior to departure.
- All children are signed out of the centre at the start of the excursion and are signed back in when they return.
- Parents/guardians/volunteers are informed prior to commencing the excursion that if a child indicates the need to use toilet facilities or needs a nappy changed that they are to notify a staff member. The staff member will attend to the toileting/nappy changing needs.
- Ensuring parents/guardians/volunteers participating in the program are aware of persons who are staff members, for example, staff members to wear name tags.

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- All children are to be clearly identifiable and supervised at all times during the excursion, for example, centre labels, red hats etc. It is not recommended to use the child's name as an identifier as it informs strangers of their name.
  - Parents/guardians/volunteers with other children who are not enrolled in the centre are informed that they are responsible for supervising and caring for their other child(ren) at all times.

**The parents/guardians/volunteers are responsible for:**

- Reading the excursion details provided by the centre and asking for additional information if required.
- Ensuring they remain under the immediate supervision of a qualified staff member or licensee representative if they do not have a current police records check recorded at the centre .
- Informing a staff member immediately if a child appears to be missing from the group.
- Informing a staff member if a child needs to use toilet facilities or needs a nappy changed. The staff member will attend to the toileting/nappy changing needs.
- Supervising and caring for other children in their care who are not enrolled in the program, for example siblings.

**6. Related documents**

- DHS *Children's Services Guide*. [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood)
- Victorian Legal Aid and DHS, 1998, *Legal Aspects of Child Care*, available from Victorian Legal Aid or online at [www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/children](http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/children)

**Centre policies**

- Accident, Injury and Medical Emergency
- Administration of Medication
- Anaphylaxis
- Code of Conduct (Parents/Guardians and Volunteers)
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Emergency Management
- Hygiene
- Illness
- Nutrition and Food Safety
- Sun Protection

**7. Authorisation**

This policy was adopted by the Parkdale Preschool committee/board, at the committee/board meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009.

**8. Review date**

This policy shall be reviewed in 2011.

**9. Evaluation**

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee/board will:

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- Assess whether issues/concerns raised in relation to excursions were resolved.
  - If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parent/guardian survey.
  - Take into account reports from staff and parents regarding the policy.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Excursions are planned to extend on the educational program. Excursions require planning and preparation to ensure adequate care and safety of the children attending, whilst complying with all legislative and regulatory requirements.

Regulations 53 to 59 of the Children's Services Regulations 2009 outline minimum staffing requirements and child/staff ratios. These requirements are the absolute minimum for a group of children on an excursion. In most cases, staffing levels over and above the minimum would be required on an excursion to ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times.

In addition volunteers involved in caring for or educating children on an excursion, and who are not under the immediate supervision of the proprietor or a qualified staff member are required to have a current police check (in the previous six months).

A centre may choose to include in the policy adult:child ratio for excursions which they believe are the minimum required for their centre to participate in an excursion. For example:

*The minimum adult:child ratio for excursions from the Parkdale Preschool is 1:2 for under 3 year olds and 1:4 for over three year olds. In addition all other staffing requirements outlined in the Children's Services Regulations 2009 will be complied with at all times. The outlined ratios will be reviewed based on the proposed details of each excursion.*

A sample permission form for an excursion is provided in Appendix 1.

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# SAMPLE PERMISSION FORM FOR AN EXCURSION

## Parkdale Preschhol

Date:

The *[enter the name of the service]* will be taking *[specify who]* on *[Enter the day and date]* an excursion to *[enter the proposed destination, any stops on the way there or back]* . The *[the activities that will take place]*

The excursion will leave from the *[enter where]* at *[enter time]* and return to *[enter where]* at *[enter time]* and the children and adults involved in the excursion will travel by *[enter method of transprt and if walking the route to be taken]*.

There will be *[enter number]* staff members participating in the excursion as well as adult/parent/guardian volunteers. The overall adult/child ratio will be *[enter the ratio of adults to children]*.

Any adult/parent/guardian participating in the excursion, who has not had a police records check, in the past six months, will be under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member or a licensee representative while assisting in the supervision and care of children on the excursion. *(Please see a staff member if you have a current police records check that has not been considered by the centre).*

Siblings of children attending the centre will *[enter whether they can or cannot participate]*

The cost of the excursion is *[enter the cost for children and adults participating]*

I give permission for..... (name of child) to attend the excursion to *[enter proposed destination]* on *[enter day and date]* with *[enter name of the service ]*

I can/cannot assist with supervision of this excursion.

**Print Name of Parents/Guardians;** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Parents/Guardians;** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_