



OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES/EXCURSION POLICY

Scriptural Context

*“God saw everything that he had made and it was good”
Genesis 1:31*

Rationale

Excursions and camps are an integral part of the teaching process. St Patrick’s Primary School is committed to the provision of educationally valid excursions and camps as part of the school curriculum. The standard of care required of the school on an educational excursion is higher than that required in the classroom due to the inherent higher risks involved and the unfamiliar environment. Therefore, excursions need to be prepared, managed, supervised and monitored in a way that ensures the health, safety and security of the participating students and staff, as well as others who may be affected by the conduct of the excursion.

Children’s experiences and learning occur both within the school setting and within the wider community and are:

- A means of using resources, venues, support personnel and facilities outside the school environment to enhance and enrich children’s learning
- Planned as a support to curriculum studies and will serve an educational purpose
- A way of providing opportunities to further develop essential Key Learning Areas

Aims

St Patrick’s School aims to provide opportunities for children to:

- Learn in and out of the school environment
- Live and work in groups, outside of home and school environment, over extended periods
- Further develop social skills such as cooperation, tolerance and communication with both individual and group interaction
- Extend their understanding of their physical and cultural environment, be involved with planning preparation and presentation processes associated with camps and excursions
- Develop an appreciation of their place in the broader community by interacting with various community groups, and with students from other schools.
- Develop an appreciation of the diversity and beauty of Australia

Definitions

- **Formal** out of school activities include excursion tours to places of entertainment or educational interest, camps, sporting and swimming fixtures, air or sea travel.
- **Informal** activities include local educational or entertainment trips which can be considered part of the normal teaching process.
- The “**Act**” referred to in this Policy is the Work Health and Safety Act (2011).

Implementation

1. Management

- The Principal should be satisfied that the legislative and regulatory requirements for the organisation and management of any out of school activity are complied with.

- Activities will be planned and conducted using risk management principles which require individual components of each activity to be assessed, and actions taken to reduce risks to participants and staff. Written records also provide a database to assist with planning of future excursions.
- When parents enrol their child into St Patrick's Primary School, they give their signed permission for their child to attend and participate in excursions and activities during and out of school hours as required, in accordance with the curriculum. Parent permission must be obtained for children to attend any planned overnight activity or camp.
- The parent ensures that the student is available, if requested to attend certain events, e.g. swimming, athletics and cross country carnivals.
- Teachers will carry a mobile phone with them on any excursion or camp.
- The parent consents to the school transporting the student off site as necessary for any school related activity when enrolling their child into St Patrick's Primary School.
- If the excursion or out of school activity involves sending money into school, there will be a return slip which parents will sign to indicate they agree to pay for that out of school activity.
- Written records shall be kept of the risk management process for each activity, identifying individual components of the activity including, but not limited to:
 - The people involved: teacher/leader qualifications and expertise, supervision ratios, accompanying adult volunteers, special needs of students;
 - The resources and equipment required: clothing, footwear, mobile phones etc;
 - Factors relating to the environment: weather, terrain, water, road safety;
 - Factors relating to travel to from the site: weather, terrain, time factors;
 - The venue: site inspection, safety, supervision, unfamiliar activities requiring additional training or student education prior;
 - Emergency procedures and contingency plans.

2. Planning

- All excursions and camps must be authorised by the Principal.
- The following arrangements for overnight camps apply: -
 - Year 4- local two-day camp
 - Year 5- Three-day camp to a North Coast NSW location
 - Year 6- Four or five day camp to a capital city
- When it has been determined there is an educational need for an overnight excursion, the person identified as the organiser planning the event must ensure all necessary requirements are met in relation to budget and number of supervising teachers to support the number of students attending.
- Costs shall be kept to a minimum, without compromising health, legal and safety considerations.
- If practical, the venue shall be visited by the organising staff member or delegate prior to the activity to check its educational potential, hazards and facilities.
- When planning how many staff will be necessary, factors to be considered include the age of the students, the size and composition of the group, the activities to be undertaken during the visit, the nature and location of the visit, and the additional needs of any individuals attending. Organising staff shall be guided by the Pupil/Teacher Ratios given in Appendix 1.
- Staff organising an excursion/camp are to fill in the Excursion Application Form, which is to be submitted to the Principal for approval. The form is to be submitted in the planning stage. See Appendix 3.

3. Documentation

- An **additional** parental/care giver permission form is required when one or more of the following apply:
 - An overnight stay is planned
 - Children will be transported by private car (whether a staff member or other person) See Appendix 4

- A separate Risk Management Form shall be completed for every excursion. As part of the process, teachers are to complete an evaluation following the excursion. The evaluation may include unforeseen problems, near misses, changes to planned activities and possible recommendations for future excursions.
- A note shall be sent home to parents of participating children giving the reason for the excursion, the date, venue, mode of transport, departure and arrival times, clothing and food requirements and any other relevant information.
- Students will be advised by the school on a separate form on the correct school protocol for the use of mobile phones and other personal digital devices. Students are able to bring digital devices to overnight camps but are not permitted to have a sim card installed.
- Minimum notice of one week for excursions should be given to allow parents to plan their family schedule.
- Parents will be informed of overnight camps at the beginning of the year by the homegroup teacher. This will enable parents to budget for camp costs. Camp costs will be billed out to parents with their annual school fees.
- A small deposit will be due in Term at least one term before for all camps.
- The school will advertise through the newsletter, Stage letters and Stage Facebook pages of upcoming school excursions and camps so that the whole school is kept informed of activities.

4. Child Protection

- All participating parents/guardians must:
 - Read and be familiar with the “Advice on child protection”, before being accepted as an accompanying adult on any excursion;
 - Have completed the mandatory Child Protection Forms, which are kept on the student’s file.
 - Be briefed on school protocols and expectations in relation to Duty of Care Issues by the organising staff member;
 - Sign on at the Administration Office if within school hours;
 - Wear a Visitor and Volunteer lanyard for the duration of the activity (to be collected prior to the activity, if commencing outside school hours).
- Mixed groups should be supervised by at least one male adult and one female adult for any overnight camp.
- Accommodation and bathroom arrangements are to be such that no staff member or adult is placed in a position where there is the potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. For co-educational student groups, it is a necessary requirement that both male and female teacher supervisors are in attendance. In circumstances where there are a small number of students, or the mix of gender is unbalanced and the age of the students permit, the principal may approve a parent or teacher aide as a supervisor under the direction of the teacher.
- A staff member or adult volunteer should avoid being alone with a child, this includes in any private vehicle which may be used to convey a student to or from a venue, unless the Principal or delegate has been notified.

5. First Aid arrangements

- At least one teacher member of the excursion group must have an appropriate qualification in CPR and all should have current First Aid certificates.
- For every other out of school activity First Aid supplies shall include First Aid Kit, Asthma Kit, Allergy cards, and any other items that may be specific to that activity (e.g. ice packs for tennis, Stingose for a bush excursion);
- The administration staff will arrange for any individual student medications to be included in the first aid supplies taken on the excursion or activity;
- Children will apply sunscreen prior to the start of any outdoor activity and reapply during the day, as per the guidelines in the Sunsmart Policy;

- Epipens – For students who may have a potential allergic reaction, their personal Epipens are taken on every excursion by the supervising teacher.
- Contact information of parents is included in the first aid kit.

6. Incident/ accidents

The action taken following an incident or accident shall be determined by its nature and severity:

1. For serious incidents – as defined in Appendix 2
 - The staff member in charge of the out of school activity shall immediately notify a Leadership Team member at school.
 - Principal or delegate shall contact parents, and then activate the crisis contact chart
 - The Principal or delegate shall notify Workcover NSW (phone 13 10 50) within 24 hours of its occurrence
 - The Principal shall notify the Catholic Schools Office of any serious incident within 24 hours of its occurrence.
2. For minor incidents
 - A staff member who witnessed the incident shall fill in the CSO My Safety online form once back at school.
3. For both serious and minor incidents, the following shall apply:
 - On return to the school, or as soon as practicable, the staff member who witnessed the incident shall make an entry in the Catholic Church Insurance Accident Report Book;
 - Teachers and parents shall be informed of any incidents involving children from their homegroups, by the Administration staff;
 - An injury to any staff member should also be reported to the Principal on return to school. The staff member must complete the CSO My Safety online form.
 - All staff to be aware that civil action over an accident is possible up to the age of 21 years, regardless of the age at which the incident occurred, so it is important that accurate and complete records be kept.

If there is any doubt as to the severity of an incident, advice should be sought from the Catholic Schools Office.

7. Roles and responsibilities of accompanying parents/volunteers

- The role of any unpaid additional adults is to assist with supervision, and not to replace a paid staff member who would normally accompany the out of school activity.
- Parents enlisted on excursions act in a para-professional role and may be allocated responsibility for a group of children and assist them to achieve the learning outcomes identified by the teacher.
- Supervisory roles and responsibilities shall be clearly communicated to all staff, parents and students by the organising staff member.
- The number of adults that are included in the initial costs of the out of school activity is determined by the management of the destination. Any parents accompanying the class additional to this number are expected to pay their own costs.
- Pre-school children are not able to attend excursions as they may interfere with the accompanying parents' ability to supervise students
- All participating parents must complete the mandatory child protection forms
- All participating parents must wear some form of identification
- Participating parents, staff and other adults may not consume alcohol or prohibited/illegal substances at any stage of the out of school activity

- Smoking – Parents/volunteers are prohibited from smoking in the presence of any child and are to comply with any regulations as stated by the relevant out of school activity/camp operators.
- Parents transporting other students in their own vehicles must supply for the school’s records a copy of their driver’s license and complete registration details. For child protection purposes, more than one child must be transported in the vehicle, including for any travel to a medical facility for emergency medical care (see also 4.3). For more information see CSO Private Transporting of Students Policy.

8. Refund of money

- Refunds for camps/tours/excursions will only be made for those elements within the cost for which the school is able to obtain a refund or reduction in cost from the facility visited or transport company policy.
- Transport component is not refundable if numbers affect overall cost for all students.
- Refunds are also dependent upon individual application, date of application and final dates for confirmed numbers. Applications are not retrospective. This is at the discretion of the Principal.

9. Inclusion/exclusion of students

- Excursions will be planned and executed in a way that allows every child to participate, regardless of the additional needs of any of the children. In such cases, the school will cover any additional costs to ensure that every child has equal involvement in the excursion.
- Arrangements need to be in place to facilitate the return to their families of any student who exhibits behaviour that seriously endangers themselves or others. The school reserves the right to exclude any child from participating in an excursion or camp where staff have concerns based on behaviour, health, safety or legal issues. This decision will be made by the organising staff person in consultation with the Principal and will be based on written records including records of any previous misdemeanours or incidents. Parents will be informed of the grounds for exclusion.
- All students have access to participation, regardless of whether or not parents are able to pay. In the case of financial hardship parents may make an appointment with the Principal to discuss other arrangements, where the school can seek other means of paying for the student’s costs.
- Parents have the right to withhold permission for their child to participate in activities involving overnight stays without them or their child incurring any form of discrimination.
- It is the responsibility of the organising teacher and other nominated staff to work collaboratively with the Additional Needs Teacher to ensure that a coordinated process is followed for each student with a disability. Consideration must be made regarding special transport arrangements, suitability of venue (access, toilets, showering), suitability of activities, medication, personal care, supervision requirements and behaviour management. As part of the planning process a meeting must be held between the family, additional needs teacher and organizing teacher.
- Due to exceptional circumstances some students may not be able to stay overnight. This decision is made in conjunction with the families, additional needs teacher, organising teacher and principal. The student may be able to attend the day activities for the excursion.

Reflective Materials

- St Patrick’s School, Staff Handbook
- St Patrick’s School, Parent Information Handbook
- St Patrick’s School, Sun Smart Policy, 2019
- St Patrick’s School, Work Health and Safety Policy 2016
- St Patrick’s School Enrolment Form
- CSO Transporting Students In Private Vehicles 2019
- CSO Excursions – Overnight Standard Operating Procedure 2019

This policy was last reviewed by St. Patrick’s School Advisory Council in....

December 2007
November 2012
November 2015
August 2021