



PATERSON PUBLIC SCHOOL

EXCURSION POLICY

Revised June 2018 after consultation with School Council

Rationale:

Paterson Public School is committed to providing a safe, secure, disciplined and quality learning environment in which students can develop their individual talents, interests and abilities through a curriculum that fosters the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of the student. Excursions are a valuable teaching and learning vehicle and are often integral to quality curriculum delivery.

Aims:

- To broaden students' understandings of their own and others' environments.
- To complement class work and meet identified needs.
- To supplement and support the school's other learning programs.
- To provide opportunities for students to develop their interpersonal and self-reliance skills.

Context:

- An excursion is a learning experience external to the school site, initiated, organised and supervised by a school or schools and approved by the Principal.
- The student group participating in the excursion may be a class or classes or students drawn from a number of classes. They may be, for example, a team, a performance group or an audience for a performance.
- An excursion can range from a brief visit of less than an hour to a local point of interest, to an extended journey occupying a number of days and requiring overnight accommodation.
- An excursion is an integral part of the school's curriculum and specifically of the students' learning program and must be justified on this basis.
- Since excursions offer enrichment to the planned curriculum, all students within the specific learning group should be given the opportunity to participate unless exceptional circumstances exist.

Policy Statement:

- While recognising the potential benefits of excursions, schools must also recognise that such activities may interrupt normal learning routines of students. Accordingly, principals must consider the educational value of a proposed excursion in relation to the total needs and resources of the school and in relation to the students' needs and total learning program.
- All excursions must have the approval of the principal and, when more than one school is involved, the principals of all participating schools.
- Excursions are inclusive, and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate.
- A duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions.

- The Department's duty of care owed to students for the duration of the excursion cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers, volunteers or employees of external organisations.
- The obligation to report suspected risk of harm to children and young people applies throughout all stages of an excursion, as it does in schools.
- A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before seeking approval for any excursion.
- Prior to any excursion taking place there must be consultation between the principal, the executive support and staff concerned with its organisation. Parents (which includes carers/guardians) should be informed of the full details of any planned excursion in writing, including details of all planned activities for the excursion.
- Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in excursions and up to date medical information are to be obtained from parents or caregivers as needed.
- If it is not possible to obtain a signed consent form from parents, oral approval may be sought. The principal or delegate must keep a record of any oral approvals given by parents.
- Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.
- Students must behave appropriately at all times while on excursions, including when animals are encountered.
- Expensive excursions should be avoided. Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation, schools must endeavour to provide financial assistance.
- If parents do not permit participation of a student in an excursion the school will make available a sound alternative educational experience.
- NB: any overnight excursion or any excursion which involves students being near water must have at least one teacher holding current CPR and Emergency Care qualifications.

Conduct of Excursions:

1. Transport

- When hiring buses for excursions, the principal should attempt to hire buses with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel. The number of passengers must not exceed the number the vehicle is licensed to carry.
- The transporting of students in the cars of staff members, parents, caregivers or volunteers should only occur in the circumstances where there is no feasible option available to provide alternative transportation. This may only occur under the following conditions:
 1. written permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained
 2. the driver is licensed
 3. the vehicle is registered
 4. the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number of seatbelts
 5. current driver's license and car registration details are sighted by the school prior to giving permission for students to be transported by vehicle.
- All parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars must complete a *Prohibited Employment Declaration* prior to the excursion, this only needs to be completed once per enrolment.

2. Student Behaviour

- Students must behave appropriately at all times on excursions.
 1. Students on excursions interact with the public and are representatives of their school and community. Prior to excursions, they should be reminded of expected standards of behaviour and the application of the school's discipline code.
 2. Students who exhibit 'repeated unsafe behaviour' prior to the excursion may lose the opportunity to participate in the excursion. This determination will be made following the procedures outlined in '*Excursion - Behaviour Procedures*'.
 3. Students should also be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals - refer to *Cruelty to Animals(96/169)* and *Animals in Schools: Animal Welfare*.
 4. Students should be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, about protective strategies and of avenues for support should concerns arise.

3. Supervision

- Before the planned excursion is undertaken principals are to ensure that precautions are taken in relation to the safety of the participants and that supervision will be adequate in relation to the number of students, their maturity, anticipated behaviour and the activities planned.
- Staff planning overnight or extended excursions should recognise their special duty of care for student safety and welfare in these circumstances. They therefore should take all necessary steps to provide sufficient numbers of appropriate, responsible adults to ensure adequate supervision, especially with coeducational groups. Staff should be aware that they retain the ultimate responsibility for supervision while on excursions and cannot transfer that responsibility to parents, other volunteers or employees of external organisations, such as motel staff.
- Principals should assure themselves of the bona fides of adults who are accompanying such excursions to assist with supervision. Depending on the circumstances, principals should:
 - Check the Department's not-to-be-employed list.
 - Consult referees.
 - Sight evidence of a satisfactory criminal record check by police.
 - Require the person to sign a declaration that they have no convictions that would preclude their working with children.
- On overnight and extended excursions, supervisory and accommodation arrangements are to be such that no staff member is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. In particular, sleeping arrangements should not place any adults in a situation where the propriety of their behaviour could be questioned. Likewise, sleeping and supervisory arrangements are to ensure that no student is placed in a situation where there is the likelihood of sexual contact between students.
- Principals are to ensure that any excursion involving swimming or water activities and or overnight stays are accompanied by a member of staff who possesses current training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and emergency care.
- All other excursions must be accompanied by a member of staff who has undertaken emergency care training.

- Staff will complete the Excursion Procedural Checklist which will be included in the package kept in the school office along with permission notes, risk assessment and other paperwork related to the excursion.

4. Parental Involvement

- Parents will frequently volunteer to assist in excursions. The number of parents who might be of assistance will vary according to circumstances.
- The school principal has the right to exclude parents where they feel the safe guard of students/duty of care may be compromised.

5. Unscheduled Activities

- Students participating in an excursion must not be permitted to engage in additional or alternative activities which were not originally scheduled in the program and for which parental approval would normally have been necessary (e.g., horse riding, water activities).

6. Special Requirements

- Where a particular excursion activity requires special equipment or apparel (e.g., hard hats), this must be used. Under no circumstances may safety requirements be compromised.
- Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, principals may encourage but not insist that parents provide any flotation devices considered necessary for students. Parents must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent for students to participate in excursions.
- If parents indicate students are poor or non-swimmers and no flotation devices are available for use by the students, principals will need to assess whether such students should participate in the swimming or water activities of the excursion. This assessment must take place irrespective of parental permission for the students to participate in the swimming or water activities.

7. Record of Excursions

- Principals must ensure that a record of all excursions is maintained.

Other Visits:

1. Privately Arranged Tours:

- A privately arranged tour is a tour undertaken by students and or adults as private citizens and arranged by an agency external to the school. It is not an integral part of the school curriculum. Privately arranged tours are not school activities.
- Neither the school nor the Department will accept any responsibility in respect of students or teachers who may choose to become involved in privately arranged tours.

2. Other Visits Outside the School Grounds:

- In addition to excursions and other visits, occasions for leaving the school grounds for brief, local, spontaneous educational activities will arise from time to time, particularly in primary

schools. The value of such visits is recognised and on many occasions it is not possible to obtain the permission of parents prior to the visit.

- Such visits may take place at the discretion of the principal, who must ensure as far as possible the safety and welfare of students and be satisfied as to the value of the visit as an integral part of the school curriculum.
- A general permission note at the beginning of the year will provide parental consent for many of these occasions such as attending sports fields located in close proximity to the school, visiting the local preschool next to the school and any other walking excursions within the local community.

Evaluation:

- Evaluation of each excursion will be conducted to ensure effectiveness of outcomes.

References:

- DET Excursion Policy PD/2004/0010
- Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Education PD/2002/0012/V001

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