



MacKillop College

Excursions Policy

Introduction

As a Catholic School, MacKillop is committed to supporting the wellbeing and safety of all members of our community and to the education of the whole person. Excursions support such development and are an important aspect of the school curriculum. As a recognised part of school activities staff can reasonably expect to be required by the school to conduct an excursion as part of their normal work duties. As excursions necessarily involve both staff and students leaving school premises, there may be increased risks to their health and safety. The health and safety of students on excursion is managed in a similar manner to how it is on school grounds. The increased risks may arise from either or both factors of the nature of the excursion itself and a less controlled environment.

Purpose

A teacher has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students from any injury that the teacher may have reasonably foreseen.

Because excursions are conducted off College premises, away from the usual protections of the College environment, they have the potential to present unique risks for MacKillop College, our students, our teachers and others involved.

The purpose of this Policy is to manage the risks associated with College excursions and to make excursions as safe as possible. All Occupational Health and Safety and Student Duty of Care policies and procedures continue to apply on excursions unless it is impractical for them to do so.

Definitions

An excursion is any activity organised by MacKillop College whereby students leave the College grounds for the purpose of engaging in educational activities.

Different Types of Excursions

During the course of the school year, a number of different types of excursions may be offered including:

- **Regular Off-Campus Activities:** an activity that is conducted regularly throughout the school year and requires students to, either travel between campuses, or to travel from school to an off campus location to attend an event, a lesson or an activity. An example of a Regular Off Campus Activity is where a student is enrolled in TAFE course and is required to travel between the College and the TAFE campus on a weekly basis, or where a student is required to attend training for representative sport.
- **Single Day Excursions:** a one off excursion that does not involve an overnight stay. A single day excursion can range from an excursion which takes a few hours (eg a visit to a restaurant) through to a whole day trip.
- **Overnight Excursions:** an excursion that involves one or more nights away.
- **Recreation and Outdoor Activities:** may be either a single day excursion (such as a bush walk), or an overnight excursion (such as a College camp), which involves any, but not limited to, the following activities:

- abseiling and climbing
 - bushwalking
 - caving
 - climbing walls and ropes courses
 - cycling and cycle touring
 - horse riding
 - orienteering, rogaining and cross-country navigation
 - paddling activities
 - power boating
 - sailing and sailboarding
 - scuba diving
 - snorkelling
 - surfboard riding and surf activities
 - skiing
 - swimming and water safety programs
- International Excursions: an excursion likely to last at least 3 days, may involve one or more recreation and outdoor activities, and may require approval from the College's governing body.

General Principles to be Followed

When planning an excursion, the following general principles should be followed:

- excursions should relate to the College's educational program
- excursions must be age/stage appropriate
- excursions must provide valuable outcomes for students
- excursions are inclusive and all students within a specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate
- excursions should be planned to not interfere with exams
- excursions are to be costed in the most cost beneficial way possible

Proposing an Excursion

A teacher who wishes to put forward a proposal for an excursion may do so by completing the Excursion Application Form and submitting it to the Excursions Coordinator prior to the proposed excursion as follows:

- 4 weeks prior - Regular Off-Campus Activities
- 4 weeks prior – Regular Single Day Excursions, Recreation and Outdoor Activities
- One term prior - Overnight Excursions
- One year prior - International Excursions

Applications received outside of these time frames will be accommodated where possible.

Excursion Management Plan

In the event the proposed excursion receives preliminary approval, the teacher will need to prepare the Excursion Management Plan which will then need to be submitted to the Excursions Coordinator final approval.

The Excursion Management Plan is a written document which is used to identify risks posed by an excursion, and to assess those risks having regard to mitigation strategies that have been developed.

Where similar excursions have been conducted in the past previous Excursion Management Plans should be reviewed and if suitable, used as a starting point for planning the new excursion.

Final Approval for Excursions

Final approval for an excursion may only be given by the Principal or their delegate upon satisfaction that the risks posed by the excursion have been appropriately identified and appropriate risk mitigation strategies have been developed which will be implemented effectively.

The Principal or their delegate will notify the staff member once the excursion has been approved, or alternatively will provide reasons if approval has not been granted.

Risk Management Procedures for Excursions

Whilst the length, nature and activities involved in every excursion will be different there are several standard procedures that the College employs in order to minimise the risk of harm to students, staff and others.

These strategies are addressed in the Excursion Management Plan. They include ensuring:

Consultation

- all key stakeholders including students, staff, parents, and where appropriate external providers, are consulted as to the nature of the excursion, and any potential hazards which may be associated with the excursion
- staff and students are briefed prior to any excursion; parents are also briefed on overnight, international and high risk excursions

Informed Consent

- details of the excursion have been provided to each student and their parents/carers
- all students attending the excursion have received written permission from their parents/carers to attend

Clothing and Equipment

- all students attending the excursion have been provided with details of excursion requirements such as suitable clothing and equipment

Venue Selection

- the appropriate nature and location of the selected venue/s
- consideration of the risk of bushfire in the location of the selected venue/s

Transport Arrangements

- appropriate transportation arrangements
- appropriate drop off and pick up arrangements
- the use of teachers' private vehicles is not permitted; teachers may book a College vehicle where needed

Known Medical Issues

- all parents are requested, prior to the excursion, to provide up-to-date details of any medical conditions which, if not known to supervising staff, may present a heightened risk to their child
- where a child is considered at higher risk, because of an existing medical condition, appropriate mitigation strategies are implemented

Student's Capacity

- that any required skills have been identified and the planned activities are appropriate for the student's capacity
- where a student is identified as not having the necessary capacity, appropriate risk management strategies are implemented for that child
- needs of vulnerable students are taken into account, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with physical and/or emotional needs and younger students

Supervision

- the availability of supervisors with appropriate competencies, skills and experience (including first aid)
- an appropriate supervisor-student ratio having regard to the nature and length of the excursion
- consideration of the supervision requirements for activities undertaken on excursions, having regard to:
 - the nature and risks of the activity, such as swimming and other water-based activities
 - the risks presented by the activity venue and its location, such as bushfires and other environmental hazards
- appropriate care is taken in selecting non-teaching staff to perform a supervisory role during the excursion (including the conduct of Working with Children Checks)
- where possible, all supervisors are briefed on the Excursion Management Plan
- regular head counts to ensure all students and staff are accounted for

External Providers

- due diligence is conducted on all external providers involved in the excursion to ensure their competency, their compliance with workplace safety laws and other relevant legislation
- where possible, the College will conduct a physical inspection prior to the excursion

Critical Incident (Emergency Situations) Response

- appropriate emergency response procedures are in place
- First Aid staff are available to provide support
- the excursion is entered into Student Activity Locator at least three weeks prior to the excursion
- any overseas excursions are registered with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Communication Strategies

- appropriate communication strategies are in place

Insurance

- appropriate insurance coverage is in place

Additional requirements for international excursions

- comply with any travel advisory current for the proposed location
- subscribe to receive automatic travel advice updates both prior to the excursion and whilst overseas; and
- review our risk assessment if there are any changes to the DFAT travel advice.

Additional Risk Assessments

- Because the risks associated with each type of excursion vary, in addition to this Policy which outlines general procedures, MacKillop College may develop specific procedures and risk assessments for particular types of excursions and particular types of activities.
- Where the need for additional risk assessments have been identified these must be included in the Excursion Management Plan.

Incident Notification

If during the course of an excursion an incident occurs (eg a lost child), whether or not the incident results in injury to a student, the incident must be immediately reported to the Principal or their delegate. All incidents must be recorded in the College's incident management procedure.

Similarly, any incidents involving staff or volunteers must also be reported and recorded.

Excursion Debrief

At the conclusion of every excursion, the Teacher in Charge is required to complete the Excursion Debrief which is contained in the Excursion Management Plan.

Debriefs following excursions provide an excellent opportunity to identify successful practice, areas of risk not previously considered, as well as areas for improvement.

Record Keeping

Refer to the College's Record Keeping Procedures.

Implementation

Principal commitment

The principal is responsible for ensuring that the objectives of this policy are integrated into practice.

Staff commitment

Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- they integrate all aspects of this policy into their excursion planning
- are compliant with this policy and associated procedures and guidelines

Related Policies and Documents

- OHS Policies
- DET Excursion Guidelines
- MacKillop College Excursion Application Form
- MacKillop College Excursion Checklist & Risk Assessment Matrix
- MacKillop College Critical Incident Guidelines

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