EXCURSIONS POLICY GUIDELINES

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, an approved provider must ensure that policies and procedures are in place for managing excursions and regular outings (Regulation 168). This will help to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children while at the service.

The policy and procedures must include the following:

- conducting a risk assessment before each excursion to identify any risks that might affect the health, safety and wellbeing of children, as well as how the risks will be managed (Regulations 100, 101)
- conducting periodic new risk assessments for regular outings
- obtaining authorisation from families or authorised nominees (Regulation 102).

The policy and procedures should clearly identify the roles of everyone involved, including nominated supervisors, educators, staff, volunteers and families.

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, education and care services must have policies and procedures in place for excursions. These guidelines are part of a series and are intended to assist in the development of your *Excursions policy.* They have been designed to guide you in the development of your policy and are not an exact format.

1. Title

Excursions policy

---

2. Policy statement

The policy statement will reflect your service's philosophy about including excursions and regular outings in your planning and program.

For example:

Excursions and regular outings are an important part of our educational program, providing opportunities for the children to build connections with the local community and contributing to their sense of belonging and connection with the world around them. We are committed to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children during excursions and regular outings by conducting risk assessments and ensuring authorisations are obtained from families.

---

3. Background

Your policy needs to include a statement of why this requirement is in place.

For example, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* require policies and procedures to be in place for managing excursions.

4. Legislative requirements

Your policy must be consistent with and refer to legislative requirements for managing excursions. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Section 165	Offence to inadequately supervise children
Reg 89	First aid kits
Reg 90	Medical conditions policy
Reg 99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
Reg 100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
Reg 101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
Reg 102	Authorisations for excursion
Reg 122	Educators must be working directly with children to be included in ratios
Reg 123	Educator to child ratios - centre-based services
Reg 123A	Family day care co-ordinator to educator ratios - family day care service
Reg 124	Number of children who can be educated and cared for - family day care educator
Reg 136	First aid qualifications
Reg 168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Reg 169	Additional policies and procedures – family day care service
Reg 170	Policies and procedures to be followed
Reg 171	Policies and procedures to be kept available
Reg 172	Notification of change to policies or procedures

When writing your policy, you will need to break down what is required under each Regulation and how your service will meet these requirements. How these work in practice will be contained in your procedures.

As you reflect on your service's *Excursions policy,* it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different policies and procedures that can be readily accessed by all educators and staff to follow in relation to the service's philosophy and their roles and responsibilities. For example, you may wish to have separate policies for *Planning for an excursion* and *Regular outings.*

5. Principles to inform your policy

All decision-making should be carried out in accordance with the principles of your service's *Excursions policy*. Examples of principles could include, but are not limited to:

- Children's connection with the world around them contributes to their sense of belonging. Therefore, our educational program includes excursions and regular outings to promote opportunities for the children to build connections with the local community.
- Children's health, safety, and wellbeing is paramount, and all experiences undertaken by the service, including excursions and regular outings, will be conducted in a way that minimises and addresses any risks identified.
- Clear roles and responsibilities will ensure management, educators and staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to excursions and regular outings.

General consideration

A change in circumstance will require the service to update risk assessments and authorisation forms. In a family day care (FDC) service for example, this could be when additional children attend, there is a change in the location, or there are changes to the route taken to and from regular outings.

6. Key terms

To make it easier for your audience, provide definitions of key terms that may not be used every day. For example:

Term	Meaning	Source
ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority	The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including the provision of guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children.	
Authorised person	A parent or family member of a child who is being educated and cared for by the service or the family day care educator, or their authorised nominee.	Guide to the NQF (Glossary)
Excursion	An outing organised by an education and care service or family day care educator, but does not include an outing organised by an education and care service provided on a school site if: (a) the child or children leave the education and care service premises in the company of an educator; and (b) the child or children do not leave the school site.	National Regulations (Definitions)
Regular outing	In relation to an education and care service, means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination: (a) that the service visits regularly as part of its educational program; and (b) where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same on each outing.	National Regulations (Definitions)
Risk assessment	Assessing the risk means working out how likely it is that a hazard will harm someone and how serious the harm could be.	https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/students/beyond/Pages/hazidentify.aspx

7. Links to other policies

Refer to related policies and procedures, for example:

- Incident, injury, trauma and illness
- Dealing with medical conditions in children
- Emergency and evacuation
- Safe transportation of children
- Providing a child safe environment
- Nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements
- Sun protection
- Water safety
- Sleep and rest for children
- Acceptance and refusal of authorisations
- Delivery of children to, and collection of children from, education and care service premises

8. Induction and ongoing training

State information about induction training and frequency of ongoing training and information sharing to assist managers, coordinators, educators and staff to fulfil their roles effectively.

9. Policy created/reviewed

Include the date the policy was created, reviewed or changes were made.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

State when the policy will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

11. Checklist

- ☐ Have you referenced the relevant Regulations and are these reflected in the policy?
- ☐ Does the title provide a clear and concise statement identifying the intent of the policy?
- ☐ Have you checked the policy requirements and referenced related legislation that applies to your service type?
- ☐ Does your policy statement provide a framework for decision-making and ensure consistent practice?
- ☐ Does your policy statement reflect your service philosophy?
- ☐ Is it clear why this policy exists?

EXCURSIONS PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

The approved provider must ensure the service has procedures in place in relation to excursions.

The steps and guidelines you document will not only guide your practice, but also inform regulatory authorities of educator and staff expectations and responsibilities.

Your procedures should be written in clear and concise language, making it easy to read and understand.

When thinking about your procedures, they need to be practical and achievable. For example, if your procedures state that you carry out a site visit two weeks before your excursion, you will need to make sure steps are in place to make this happen.

Under the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, education and care services must have policies and procedures in place for excursions. These guidelines are part of a series and are intended to assist in the development of your *Excursions procedures.* They have been designed to guide you in the development of your procedures and are not an exact format.

1. Title

Excursions procedures

2. Reference to policy and philosophy

Here you refer to the *Excursions policy* as seen in your policy documents. You can reference where you will find the policy to help those looking for it.

Your procedures will also reflect your service's overall philosophy, the *Excursions policy,* and supervision and ratio plans.

3. Procedures

This is where you detail the way you will implement your service's *Excursions policy.*

Some areas that will be outlined here will include:

- where the procedures will be kept
- when they were last reviewed
- templates and documents that may be used as a part of the procedures (e.g. excursion risk assessment template, register of children attending, emergency contact information)
- systems and resources required to monitor the implementation of procedures.

It is the 'How to' in your service and includes specific step-by-step procedures for managing excursions and regular outings.

When developing your procedures you will need to consider any risks associated with children of differing ages, physical capabilities and developmental stages. This is particularly relevant in family day care and outside school hours care services where there is commonly a mixed age group.

You will also need to consider:

- the type of information you will need to collect for both regular and one-off excursions
- what information needs to be included in your authorisation for an excursion form
- educator to child ratios for excursions may need to be greater than the minimum requirements, depending on the type of excursions, any risks identified, the number of children, their ages, and individual needs
- not exceeding your service's maximum number of approved places for children, which includes children both at the service premises and on an excursion
- when and how risk assessments will be conducted for each excursion to ensure consideration of all relevant risks and how they are minimised
- qualifications of educators and staff at the excursion and the service premises. For example, if some children are on an excursion and others remain at the service premises, at least one educator holding appropriate qualifications (including first aid) must be in both groups
- other procedures and whether they should be adjusted.

As you reflect on your *Excursions policy*, it might highlight the need to split its various areas into different procedures, which will be displayed or accessed by educators and staff (including casuals) to follow in relation to their actions. For example, you may wish to have separate procedures for *Regular outings* and *Planned excursions.*

4. Roles and responsibilities

This is where you will designate specific roles and responsibilities for the different people within the service. This needs to align with the Regulations.

It is important to note that it is the legal responsibility of approved providers to ensure systems are in place to minimise risk and ensure health and safety procedures are implemented by the responsible people in services and, if applicable, in family day care residences. Ultimate responsibility lies with the approved provider to ensure their service/s are meeting the requirements under the National Quality Framework.

When developing this section consider:

- What are the roles and responsibilities of the approved provider, responsible person, nominated supervisor, coordinators, educators or other staff in your service in relation to managing excursions?
- How will you clearly define these roles and expectations and where will it be documented?
- What information will you need from families to ensure their authorisation has been granted and they are aware of the details and purpose of the excursion, including: transportation, expected duration of the excursion, the type of experience the children will be engaged in, potential risks and how they will be managed?
- How will you ensure that the necessary tools are available so educators and staff can follow the excursion procedures? How will educators and staff be made aware of the procedures?
- Do the roles and responsibilities reflect your service type?

An example of roles and responsibilities could include, but is not limited to:

Roles	Responsibilities
Approved provider	• ensure that obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *National Regulations* are met • ensure the appropriate risk assessments are completed and all relevant actions are undertaken prior to the excursion • ensure all children have appropriate authorisation from families to leave the service on an excursion • ensure educator to child ratios are maintained during the excursion and address the risks identified (if applicable) • ensure family members and volunteers attending the excursion are not left alone with any child or group of children • take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures • ensure copies of the policy and procedures are readily accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers, and available for inspection • notify families at least 14 days before changing the policy or procedures if the changes will: - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected or - significantly impact the service's education and care of children or - significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service
Nominated supervisor/ Responsible person	• conduct a risk assessment for an excursion, ensuring any risks are managed (prior to obtaining written authorisation from families) • ensure all children attending the excursion have written authorisation from families to attend prior to the excursion • ensure volunteers understand the details of the excursion, the expectations, and their supervision responsibilities • verify that all the required equipment and/or items are taken on the excursion (first aid kit, personal medication, medical management plans, mobile phone, emergency contact lists, etc.)
Educators	• ensure the excursion is carried out in line with the *Excursion policy and procedures* • ensure all children attending the excursion have written authorisation from families to attend prior to the excursion • conduct a risk assessment for an excursion, ensuring any risks are managed (prior to obtaining written authorisation from families) • ensure a new risk assessment is completed when circumstances change for regular outings • ensure the required educator to child ratios are in place and children are supervised at all times • undertake regular attendance checks to account for all children • ensure family members and volunteers attending the excursion understand the expectations and are not left alone with any child or group of children • ensure all children's health and medical needs are taken on the excursion (first aid kit, personal medication, medical management plans, etc.)

Roles	Responsibilities
Families	• sign the authorisation forms for their child to attend the excursion and ensure all information required is up-to-date • provide written authorisation for their child to leave the service premises on regular outings • be aware of all the information about the excursion – ask questions if needed • if volunteering on excursions, understand the details of the excursion and the expectations and supervision responsibilities • ensure required medication for their child is in date and available to take on an excursion

The following table will assist you in developing procedures specific to your needs and context. Referring to the Regulations when you are writing your procedures will assist you to ensure that you are meeting your obligations.

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area (this will be specific to the context of your service)	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
Plans for before the excursion **Reg:** 89, 90, 99, 100, 101, 102, 168, 170, 171, 172 **QA2** **QA3:** 3.2.1 **QA4:** 4.1 **QA5** **QA6** **QA7:** 7.1.2	• How you intend to meet the Regulations related to excursions • The information required to plan your excursion • Undertaking risk assessments that will identify potential risks of the excursion, travel requirements and destination • Implement systems to reflect on supervision plans/ratio checks • How the children will be transitioned from the service to the excursion, including to and from any vehicles • The grouping of children and supervision plans, including considering children with specific behavioural, social, emotional or physical needs • What specific children need, e.g. medical management plans and medication • How you will inform all educators, staff and volunteers of their responsibilities on the excursion • How you will inform families about your excursion • Who you will contact in the event of an emergency and how you contact them • Ensuring written authorisation is received for children to participate in the excursion	• Make sure your policy and procedures are available for all to access • Consider creating an excursion checklist of all tasks/items needed throughout the process • Ensure risk assessments are carried out and reviewed as required • Regularly reflect on supervision plans and ratio checks • Create an excursion run sheet and ensure each adult has a copy • Ensure all educators, staff and volunteers understand each step of the procedures • Undertake an excursion supervision induction for volunteers • Ensure the policy and procedures are part of educator and staff induction training, and regularly reviewed at team meetings	Providing a child safe environment Dealing with medical conditions Enrolment and orientation Incident, injury, trauma and illness Water safety Sun protection Acceptance and refusal of authorisations Safe transportation of children

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area *(this will be specific to the context of your service)*	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
Plans for during the excursion **Reg:** 89, 90, 99, 100, 101, 102 **QA2** **QA3:** 3.2.1 **QA4:** 4.1 **QA5** **QA6** **QA7:** 7.1.2	• The step-by-step actions and items that need to happen prior to, during and on return from the excursion. This includes documentation that will need to be ready on the day, bags, spare clothes, food, hygiene equipment, contact lists, phone, first aid kits, etc. • How children are accounted for and actions to be taken in the event there are unaccounted for children • How you will reinforce clear expectations with all attending the excursion on the day	• Excursion timeline, outline or checklist • Clearly defined roles and responsibility statements, e.g. assigning certain educators and staff to check first aid kits, ensure medication required by children attending is taken and stored appropriately, check protective equipment, supervision	Sun protection Water safety Administration of first aid Incident, injury, trauma and illness Emergency and evacuation Providing a child safe environment Dealing with medical conditions Delivery of children to, and collection of children from, education and care service premises Safe transportation of children

Areas to include in your procedures	Things to consider and outline in each area *(this will be specific to the context of your service)*	Strategies for monitoring and implementing procedures	Related policy and/or procedures
Plans for after the excursion **Reg:** 89, 99, 100, 101, 102 **QA1** **QA2** **QA7:** 7.1.2	• How the children will be transitioned from the excursion back to the service, including to and from any vehicles • The process for a family member or authorised nominee to collect a child directly from the excursion • How to review any actions taken by the educator during the excursion, e.g. first aid given, if a medical professional was contacted, if a family member was contacted • How you will evaluate the value of the excursion and document any issues that need to be noted for the future • Ensure any consumables are replenished, e.g. excursion bag, first aid kits, hygiene equipment	• Consider creating an Excursion Review template that reflects the educational value and the health and safety issues that need to be noted for future excursions • Develop systems to report items that need to be purchased to replenish consumables	Incident, injury, trauma and illness Governance and management of the service, including confidentiality of records

5. Procedures created/reviewed

Include the date the procedures were created or reviewed.

6. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Your service, in consultation with educators, staff, families and other stakeholders, should review the effectiveness of these procedures within a set timeframe or earlier if there is a change in relevant legislation.

State when the procedures will be reviewed and who will be responsible for this.

7. Checklist

- ☐ Do the procedures align with your *Excursions policy?*
- ☐ Have your procedures been written in plain English and can they be easily implemented by an educator or staff member new to your service?
- ☐ Is it clear who is responsible for the implementation of the procedures?
- ☐ Are all educators and staff aware of the procedures and can implement them if required?
- ☐ Do you need to develop any resources to monitor and record the procedures?

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES ACT

Excursion risk assessment

(S54 of the *Education and Care Services Act 2013*)

Excursion details			
Date(s) of excursion		Excursion destination	
Departure and arrival times			
Proposed activities		Water hazards? Yes/No If yes, detail in risk assessment below.	
Method of transport, including proposed route			
Name of excursion co-ordinator			
Contact number of excursion co-ordinator	(BH)	(M)	
Number of children attending excursion		Number of educators/parents/volunteers	
Educator to child ratio, including whether this excursion warrants a higher ratio? Please provide details.			

Excursion checklist	
☐ First aid kit	☐ List of adults participating in the excursion
☐ List of children attending the excursion	☐ Contact information for each adult
☐ Contact information for each child	☐ Mobile phone / other means of communicating with the service & emergency services
☐ Medical information for each child	☐ Other items, please list

Great state. Great opportunity.

Queensland Government

Risk assessment

Activity	Hazard identified	Risk assessment (use matrix)	Elimination/control measures	Who	When

Plan prepared by	
Prepared in consultation with:	
Communicated to:	
Venue and safety information reviewed and attached	Yes / No Comment if needed:

Reminder: Monitor the effectiveness of controls and change if necessary. Review the risk assessment if an incident or significant change occurs.

Risk Matrix

		Consequence				
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Likelihood	Almost certain	Moderate	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Likely	Moderate	Moderate	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Possible	Low	Moderate	High	High	Extreme
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Rare	Low	Low	Low	Moderate	High

Useful Resources

Include links to useful resources that have helped inform the development of your policy. In addition, be mindful of the existence of any state- or territory-specific content.

Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- Excursions and regular outings – https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislationAndGuidelines/PPORresources/Fact%20sheets/excursions-regular-outings-NQF.docx
- Guide to the National Quality Framework – https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide
- Plan your adventure – https://www.acecqa.gov.au/newsletters/acecqa-newsletter-issue-1-2015
- Risk assessment and management - https://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/29421
- Template excursion risk assessment (Queensland) - https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/legislationAndGuidelines/ECSactresources/Templates/ecs-excursion.doc
- Template excursion risk management plan – https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-12/Excursionriskmanagementplan.docx

Children's health and safety
Excursions resources