

National Quality Framework
Fact sheet for approved providers



Excursions and regular outings

The *Education and Care Services National Law* (National Law) and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* (National Regulations) prescribe a number of requirements for services when educators take children outside the service premises on excursions or regular outings.

An **excursion** is an outing organised by an education and care service. This does not include an outing organised by a service located on a school site if the child/ren leave in the company of an educator and remain on the school grounds (regulation 4, National Regulations).

A **regular outing** is an excursion undertaken regularly. It is a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination that a service visits frequently as part of its educational

program and where the circumstances outlined in the risk assessment are the same (regulation 4, National Regulations). Regular outings include kindergarten programs delivered off site such as bush, beach or rainforest kindy.

Before taking a child off site, the approved provider must ensure they have the written authorisation of the parent or person named in the enrolment record (regulation 99 (4) National Regulations).

Excursions, including regular outings, enable children to explore the wider community and are valuable learning and development opportunities. Approved providers, however, must consider the potential additional risks to children's safety, health and wellbeing.



During an excursion or regular outing, the service must continue to operate in a way that:

- ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of the children
- meets the educational and developmental needs of the children (section 51, National Law).

The following information outlines the requirements for excursions and regular outings under the National Law and National Regulations.

Read more about the additional requirements and considerations for bush, beach or rainforest kindergarten in the *Regular outings - 'bush' kindy* fact sheet.

Policies and procedures

A service must have in place the following policies and procedures for excursions and regular outings (regulation 168 (2) (g), National Regulations):

- procedures complying with the requirements for conducting risk assessments (regulation 100 and 101, National Regulations)
- procedures complying with the requirements for seeking authorisation for excursions (regulation 102, National Regulations).

Those procedures may be linked to or considered in relation to the service's other policies and procedures required under regulation 168, National Regulations, including:

- incident, injury, trauma and illness procedures complying with regulation 85, National Regulations
- dealing with medical conditions in children, including the matters set out in regulation 90, National Regulations
- dealing with emergencies, including matters set out in regulation 97, National Regulations
- delivering children to, and collection of children from, education and care service premises, including procedures complying with regulation 99, National Regulations
- health and safety, including nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements, sun protection, water safety, sleep and rest, and first-aid administration.

Services must ensure their policies and procedures include strategies for supervising children, including monitoring to ensure they are accounted for at all times. Services must ensure children's presence is always checked against an accurate attendance record. This record must be signed by a parent or authorised nominee at the time the child arrives at the premises and when the child departs.



The approved provider must take reasonable steps to ensure policies and procedures are followed by and available to service staff and volunteers (regulations 170 and 171, National Regulations).

Risk assessments

Service staff must take every reasonable precaution to protect children from any harm or hazard likely to cause injury (section 167, National Law).

Before seeking authorisation for an excursion, staff must complete a risk assessment to identify possible harm to children's health, safety and wellbeing (regulation 100, National Regulations).

Identifying risk

The following considerations for an excursion or regular outing assist in identifying and documenting risks and hazards for the required risk assessment. This is not an exhaustive list. Depending on the circumstances there may be other considerations the approved provider needs to take into account.

Under regulation 101, National Regulations, a risk assessment must consider:

- any risks to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child, such as unexpected incidents, harm and hazards, emergencies or extreme weather
- how the identified risks will be managed or minimised
- the proposed route and destination for the excursion
- any water hazards
- any risks associated with water-based activities
- the method of transport to and from the proposed destination
- the number of adults and children involved in the excursion
- given the risks posed, the number of educators or other responsible adults necessary to provide adequate supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required to ensure children's safety
- the proposed activities
- the proposed duration of the excursion
- strategies for accounting for all children
- items required for the excursion, such as mobile phone, list of emergency contact numbers, spare clothes, first-aid kit, food and water.



Table One summarises the key considerations in developing a risk assessment.

The degree of planning required for an excursion or regular outing is influenced by the nature of the excursion, the level of risk and the children and adults who are participating.

Under regulation 100 (4), National Regulations, a risk assessment is not required if:

- the excursion is a regular outing; and
- a risk assessment for the excursion has been conducted previously within 12 months prior to the excursion.

Evaluating risk

Once risks are identified, the approved provider should categorise them as high, medium or low and then decide how to manage them. Removing some risks or introducing strategies will reduce children's exposure to harm (risk mitigation). Many potential risks can be managed by increasing the number of educators and/or adults accompanying and supervising children during the excursion.

It is important to make a final check for risks before departing.

Approved providers are also expected to review and revise risk assessments if there are any changes to, or additional, risks associated with an excursion or regular outing. For example, if there is a change in route to the destination, this must be reflected and any associated risk strategies included. Approved providers must advise parents and carers that the risk assessment was updated and ask if they would like to see it. Approved providers must also seek new written authorisation for each child.

Table 1: Developing a risk assessment

There are many ways of developing a plan which includes a risk assessment for an excursion. The approved provider will need to develop one that works for everyone taking part in the excursion, including educators, responsible adults and children.

1. State the purpose of the excursion	Identify how the excursion fits into the educational program.
2. Note the length of the excursion	Indicate how long the children will be away from the service and any considerations for this length of time.
3. List the activities of the excursion	List the activities of the excursion, breaking them down into parts. For example, leaving the service, travelling to the location, the environment at the location, each activity that will be done at the location, food and drink requirements and returning to the service.
4. Identify risks and hazards	Identify risks, hazards and other considerations for each stage of the excursion. This may involve educators going to the location beforehand. Be mindful of issues such as travel method, equipment, and the environment. Consider the individual needs of children, including physical or medical and any behavioural or emotional support.
5. Evaluate the level of risk and decide on precautions	Once you have identified the risks, categorise them as high, medium or low. Decide how to manage each risk. You may be able to remove a risk or reduce the children's exposure. Determining the number of adults needed to supervise the children is a large factor in managing identified risks. Occasionally, after completing a risk assessment, you may decide the risks for the children are too high to undertake the excursion.
6. Record your findings	Document what you have found and what you intend to do about each identified risk to ensure precautions are taken to protect children from harm or hazard likely to cause injury.
7. Implement any plans you have to reduce or remove the risk	If it is possible to remove or reduce any risks or hazards, do this before the excursion.
8. Communicate your plans	Communicate your plans to educators, staff and other responsible adults going on the excursion, and to parents and carers of the children involved.
9. Monitor and review your plans	Always check your plans are effective. Monitor and revise them as necessary during the excursion.
10. Strategies for accounting for all children	Services must ensure the risk assessment includes strategies for monitoring children to ensure they are accounted for at all times. Services must ensure children's presence is always checked against an accurate attendance record.

Download an example excursion risk management plan template from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority website at www.acecqa.gov.au.

Authorisation for excursions and regular outings

A child must not leave the education and care premises for an excursion with educators without the written authorisation of the parent or other person named in the enrolment record.

Before obtaining authorisation for a child's participation, approved providers must complete a risk assessment.

Under regulation 102(4), National Regulations the authorisation must state:

- the child's name
- the reason the child is to be taken outside the premises
- the date of the excursion
- a description of the proposed destination
- the method of transport
- the proposed activities the child will undertake
- the period the child will be away from the premises
- the anticipated number of children likely to participate
- the anticipated ratio of educators to the anticipated number of children
- the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children
- the risk assessment is available at the service.

If an excursion is a regular outing, the authorisation is only required once every 12 months (regulation 102(5), National Regulations). However, seek a new authorisation if the nature of the regular outing changes. Authorisation for excursions and regular outings may be kept in each child's enrolment record (regulation 161(1)(b) and regulation 161(2)(b), National Regulations).

Maintaining day-to-day operation

Services must not exceed their maximum number of approved places for children (section 52(g) National Law). This means the service will need to consider all the children they are educating and caring for at any one time, including children at the service premises and those on an excursion.

If some children go on an excursion or regular outing while some remain at the service, at least one educator holding appropriate qualifications, including first aid, must accompany both groups.

Delivering and collecting children

If a parent or authorised nominee is collecting children directly from the excursion site, the policies and procedures for collecting children (regulation 168(2)(f), National Regulations) must provide for this practice and comply with the requirements for children being collected (regulation 99 (4)(c), National Regulations).

Content of policies and procedures should refer to:

- ensuring children's safety
- keeping an attendance record
- recording children's departure times
- ensuring the attendance record is signed by the person collecting the child or the nominated supervisor or educator (regulation 158).

Further information

The Department of Education is the Regulatory Authority in Queensland.

- Email the department at ecis@qed.qld.gov.au
- Contact your regional office (visit the department's website at www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au and search for 'regional offices')
- Phone the Regulation, Assessment and Service Quality team on (07) 3328 6780.

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