

# Excursions Policy

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## 1. Policy statement

### Values

The Boroondara Preschool is committed to providing a varied and developmentally appropriate educational program with as many first-hand opportunities as possible. One method of providing such experiences is through excursions.

With all excursions, the service is committed to:

- Providing a high level of safety for children at all times, complying with the *Children's Services Regulations 1998* and the *Children's Services Act 1996*.
- Compliance with all regulatory requirements
- Providing activities that are developmentally appropriate and linked to the educational program.

### Purpose

This policy will provide guidelines for the committee/board, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and any other persons involved in the planning and conducting of an excursion for the [insert name of centre].

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, committee/board, parents/guardians, volunteers, students, and any other person who may be involved in planning and/or participating in excursions.

## 3. Background and legislation

- The *Children's Services Act 1996 (CSA)*
- The *Children's Services Regulations 1998 (CSR)*

## 4. Definitions

**DHS:** Department of Human Services

**Excursions:** Any occasion, other than a medical emergency, when children are removed from the premises of the children's centre by a staff member/members, with the written authorised permission of the person who has lawful authority to collect the child from the centre.

**Proprietor:** This includes the owner of the centre and any person who manages or controls the centre. The term proprietor is defined in the *Children's Services Act 1996* as including the licensee, primary nominee and the nominee(s) of a licensed centre. (Refer to the *Certificate of Names* displayed in the main entrance for the names of persons in these positions).

## 5. Procedures

The committee/board are responsible for:

- Approving an excursion. Items to be considered may include:
  - o The cost of the excursion to the centre and or families. If other siblings are able to attend will there be a charge for them.
  - o The number of children to participate in the excursion, also factoring in potential numbers of toddlers and other children.
  - o Deciding on the number of staff/adults required to attend. This may be influenced by such things as the need to cross a major road or to access public transport on the excursion.

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- o Ensuring the requirements of the Children's Services Regulations 1998 and the *Children's Services Act 1996* can be met for all children remaining at the centre. In particular CSR regulation 23 and 24 and *CSA section 27*.
  - o What impact the disruption to normal program times could have on the users of the centre.
  - o Any changes to the usual working arrangements of staff due to the excursion, in accordance with the appropriate awards or agreements.
  - o The provision of facilities at the proposed destination, including toileting, access to water, shade, safety considerations such as proximity to water, roads, bush or crowds.

**The staff are responsible for:**

- Submitting a written request for an excursion to the committee/board detailing:
  - o Date, time and destination
  - o How the excursion relates to the program provided for the children
  - o Objectives, proposed activities, and desired outcomes of the excursion
  - o Method of transport
  - o Proposed staff and adult/child ratio for the excursion
  - o Cost
  - o Effects, if any, on the children's current attendance times
  - o If any children with additional needs attend the program, will additional resources be required to ensure their participation in the excursion.

**Preparation for the excursion**

**The committee/board, in consultation with the qualified staff, are responsible for:**

- Assessing the requirements for the excursion.
- Booking the transport and venue(s).
- Informing parents/guardians, at least two weeks prior, of the details of the planned excursion as outlined in CSR regulation 31, and the cost. (Appendix 1).
- Requesting adult participation in the excursion, clearly stating if it is appropriate for other siblings to attend.
- Collecting completed permission forms and excursion fee, if required, for each child participating in the excursion.
- Arranging for a suitably equipped first aid kit, mobile phone and sunscreen (if required) to be taken on the excursion. Requirements of CSR regulation 31(2), 34(b).
- Notifying parents/guardians immediately of any change, or delay to the proposed excursion.
- Ensuring child/staff ratios, as per the requirements of CSR regulations 22,23, 24, 25 and 26 are met for children not participating in the excursion.

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**The staff are responsible for:**

*Qualified*

- Providing adults who have volunteered to participate in the excursion with the aims and objectives of the excursion and any other information necessary for the smooth operation of the excursion.
- Arranging for the details of the telephone number of any person who is to be notified of any accident, injury, trauma or illness involving the child and the child's medical details to be taken on the excursion. Information is to be carried by a qualified staff member at all times.
- Ensuring that the staff and adult/child ratio approved by the committee/board and notified to the parents/guardians is met prior to commencing the excursion.
- Cancelling the excursion if the staff and adult/child ratio is not met and notifying the committee/board and parents/guardians.
- Arranging for a staff member, parents/guardians or a committee/board member to be available, if the excursion is late returning, to advise parents/guardians collecting children at the centre of the estimated time of arrival back at the centre.
- Ensuring only those children whose parents/guardians have completed and returned the permission form attend the excursion.

*All staff*

- Discussing with the children, the aims and objectives of the excursion, and items of special interest to them.
- Informing parent/guardians of any items the children require for the excursion. For example hat, coat, and snack.

**Prior to and during the excursion**

**The staff responsible for the excursion will ensure that:**

*Qualified*

- Parents/guardians/volunteers are provided a written outline of the excursion to be carried with them at all times. This may include a list of children in attendance; a list of the names of staff in attendance, a telephone number to be used if they become separated from the group, timetable for the excursion, and any other information identified by the centre as relevant to the excursion.
- A list of those participating in the excursion is cross-referenced against the attendance book.
- Ensuring a qualified staff member is nominated to carry the first aid kit, emergency contact details for each child, mobile phone, sunscreen (if required), and medications for children (if required).
- Parents/guardians/volunteers assisting with supervision on the excursion who do not have a police records check are under the immediate supervision of a qualified staff member or licensee's representative.
- The number of children and adults participating is monitored at regular intervals, by checking children and adults against the list of those participating in the excursion.

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- The staff member, parent/guardian, or a committee/board member delegated to notify parents/guardians if the excursion has been delayed and will be late returning, is notified if this occurs.

*All staff*

- Children are provided the opportunity to use toileting facilities/or nappies changed by a staff member prior to departure.
- All children are signed out of the centre at the start of the excursion and are signed back in when they return.
- Parents/guardians/volunteers are informed prior to commencing the excursion that if a child indicates the need to use toilet facilities or needs a nappy changed that they are to notify a staff member. The staff member will attend to the toileting/nappy changing needs.
- Ensuring parents/guardians/volunteers participating in the program are aware of persons who are staff members, for example, staff members to wear name tags.
- All children are to be clearly identifiable and supervised at all times during the excursion, for example, centre labels, red hats etc. It is not recommended to use the child's name as an identifier as it informs strangers of their name.
- Parents/guardians/volunteers with other children who are not enrolled in the centre are informed that they are responsible for supervising and caring for their other child(ren) at all times.

**The parents/guardians/volunteers are responsible for:**

- Reading the excursion details provided by the centre and asking for additional information if required.
- Signing and completing the Boroondara Preschool Excursion Volunteer form prior to the excursion.
- Ensuring they remain under the immediate supervision of a qualified staff member or licensee representative if they do not have a current police records check recorded at the centre (refer to CSR regulation 27).
- Informing a staff member immediately if a child appears to be missing from the group.
- Informing a staff member if a child needs to use toilet facilities or needs a nappy changed. The staff member will attend to the toileting/nappy changing needs.
- Supervising and caring for other children in their care who are not enrolled in the program, for example siblings.
- Complying with all centre policies whilst participating in the excursion, for example, *Code of Conduct*, *Sun Protection Policy*.

**6. Related documents**

- DHS *Children's Services Guide*. [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood)
- Victorian Legal Aid and DHS, 1998, *Legal Aspects of Child Care*, available from Victorian Legal Aid or online at [www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/children](http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/children)

**Centre policies**

- Accident, Injury and Medical Emergency

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- Administration of Medication
  - Anaphylaxis
  - Code of Conduct (Parents/Guardians and Volunteers)
  - Delivery and Collection of Children
  - Emergency Management
  - Hygiene
  - Illness
  - Nutrition and Food Safety
  - Sun Protection

### **7. Authorisation**

This policy was adopted by the Boroondara Preschool committee/board, at the committee/board meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008.

### **8. Review date**

This policy shall be reviewed on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010.

### **9. Evaluation**

In order to assess whether the policy has achieved the values and purposes, the committee/board will:

- Assess whether issues/concerns raised in relation to excursions were resolved.
- If appropriate, conduct a survey in relation to this policy or incorporate relevant questions within the general parent/guardian survey.
- Take into account reports from staff and parents regarding the policy.

Excursions are planned to extend on the children's educational program. Centres need to clearly state the purpose and educational value of each excursion and have clear procedures to follow prior to and during an excursion. The procedures need to ensure that the health, safety and well being needs of the children are met and any relevant sections of the Children's Services Regulations 1998 and the *Children's Services Act 1996* are complied with.

When developing/reviewing an excursion policy centres need to consider a range of issues, such as:

### *Staffing requirements*

Regulations 23 and 24 of the Children's Services Regulations 1998 outline minimum staffing requirements and child/staff ratios. These requirements are the absolute minimum for a group of children on an excursion. In most cases, staffing levels over and above the minimum would be required on an excursion to ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times. Section 27 of the *Children's Services Act 1996* requires that children are adequately supervised at all times they are in the care of the centre.

### *Attendance of siblings*

A number of centres now include a statement in their policy that siblings are not able to attend as it may impact on the ability of the centre to meet regulatory requirements for adequate supervision. Siblings attendance at excursions has been encouraged in the past to ensure adult assistance with an excursion and is still common practice in many centres. Regulation 27 of the Children's Services Regulations 1998 requires adults to remain under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member or proprietor if that person does not have a current police check (within the past 6 months). This requirement impacts on the way an excursion is managed, for example, an excursion to the Melbourne Aquarium will require the group to stay together to ensure this regulation is met. Parents/adults assisting on the excursion are not able to wander off with children away from the qualified staff members/proprietors. If siblings are able to attend the group size could quickly increase to over 40 children and 20 adults, with a large proportion of under three-year-old children attending. The layout of the Melbourne Aquarium could impact on the ability of the centre to meet the requirements of Regulation 27 with such a large group to manage. In addition, the ability for parents to assist with the supervision requirements of the excursion is minimal if they need to supervise and attend to the individual needs of siblings in their care (for example nappy changes, feeding, active toddlers). Committees need to assess each excursion based on the ability of the centre to meet regulatory requirements.

Excursions are group orientated therefore centres need to consider the appropriate size of the 'group' for the proposed excursion. One method is to use the licensed capacity of a centre as a guide for appropriate numbers of children to attend an excursion. For example, the average licensed capacity of a stand-alone kindergarten is 30 children, with group sizes of 25 children. This allows some flexibility for a restricted number of siblings to attend if required to ensure adequate adult supervision.

### *Transport to the excursion*

KPV recommends centres do not organise excursions involving private cars as this raises issues about the centre's ability to meet a range of funding and statutory requirements and most importantly children's safety and well-being. Children, volunteers and staff leaving as a group from the centre are able to clearly meet all relevant regulatory and legislative requirements.

Centres will need to decide on appropriate transport. For example, if travelling by bus, will the bus have seats belts, who will cover the cost of the bus for the excursion? If an additional bus is required, how will the centre meet the staffing requirements of Regulation 23 and 24?

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Clear and thorough planning of excursions can enable children to participate in valuable learning opportunities available in the community. Regular review and application of an *Excursion Policy* will ensure good process and planning for centre excursions.

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## SAMPLE PERMISSION FORM FOR AN EXCURSION

[Insert centre's letterhead]

Date:

The [enter the name of the service] will be taking [specify who] on [Enter the day and date] an excursion to [enter the proposed destination, any stops on the way there or back] . We will be [the activities that will take place]

The excursion will leave from the [enter where] at [enter time] and return to [enter where] at [enter time] and the children and adults involved in the excursion will travel by [enter method of transport and if walking the route to be taken].

There will be [enter number] staff members participating in the excursion as well as adult/parent/guardian volunteers. The overall adult/child ratio will be [enter the ratio of adults to children].

Any adult/parent/guardian participating in the excursion, who has not had a police records check, in the past six months, will be under the direct supervision of a qualified staff member or a licensee representative while assisting in the supervision and care of children on the excursion. *(Please see a staff member if you have a current police records check that has not been considered by the centre).*

Siblings of children attending the centre will [enter whether they can or cannot participate]

The cost of the excursion is [enter the cost for children and adults participating]

I give permission for..... (name of child) to attend the excursion to [enter proposed destination] on [enter day and date] with [enter name of the service ]

I can/cannot assist with supervision of this excursion.

Print Name of Parents/Guardians; \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parents/Guardians; \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## EXCURSION VOLUNTEER FORM

### BOROONDARA PRESCHOOL

Dear Parent/Volunteer

Thank-you for offering to help with the “(insert name of event/excursion)” on “(insert date and time)”

During the excursion you will:

1. Remain under the immediate supervision of a qualified staff member or proprietor at all times.
2. Staff will provide you with information prior to the event about the educational objectives and your responsibilities in regard to the children participating in the excursion. You will be provided written details of information relevant for the excursion (for example, phone number if you become removed from the group, names of staff members, time table for the days events).
3. All parents/volunteers are expected to comply with the requirements of the centre policies such as *No Smoking*, *Sunsmart* and *Code of Conduct* during the excursion. If you have not seen these policies they can be viewed on the notice board in the main entrance or copies can be made available for you.
4. You will be asked to provide emergency details for yourself prior to the excursion and permission for the staff in charge to seek emergency medical treatment and or an ambulance service on your behalf if required.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ understand and accept the responsibilities and conditions as noted above, and agree to volunteer for the above event/excursion.

I understand that I will be under the immediate supervision of staff members in charge of the excursion and authorize the staff member in charge to seek emergency medical treatment or ambulance transport on my behalf if required.

My contact person to be notified in case of any emergency is:

**Name:**

**Relationship:**

**Contact phone number on this day:**

**Signed:**

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*The committee, staff and children of the Boroondara Preschool thank-you for assisting with our excursion*