# EXCURSION POLICY:

## POLICY STATEMENT:

We will plan excursions to extend the educational programming at the Service. Excursions are designed to allow children to explore their physical and social environment, including their local community, away from the Service’s premises (NQS 2.1). Parental permission will be sought for all excursions and each excursion will be carefully planned and the potential risks assessed. When planning excursions, Educators will take into consideration experiences that encourage children to investigate ideas, solve problems and use complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesising and to transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another (NQS 4).

## PROCEDURES:

**Planned excursions will take into account:**

* Children’s ages, abilities, and interests.
* Ways to maximise the children’s developmental experiences and opportunities to practice new skills.
* Suitability of the venue.
* Clothing and equipment required.
* Travel arrangements.
* Ability of all children to behave for the duration of the excursion, in a manner that ensures the safety and respectful treatment of all.

**(a) Risk Management**

A Risk Management Plan (RMP) must be prepared for each excursion. RMPs will include:

* The proposed route and destination for the excursion.
* Any water hazards.
* The transport to and from the proposed destination for the excursion.
* The number of adults and children involved in the excursion.
* The number of Educators or other responsible adults required to ensure appropriate supervision. This number will be determined by taking into consideration the risks posed by the excursion and whether any adults with specialised skills are required.
* The proposed activities.
* The likely length of time of the excursion.
* The items that should be taken on the excursion, for example, first aid kit, a mobile phone, and a list of emergency contact numbers.
* Verbal instructions to children on appropriate behavior expected while on excursions.
* Wet weather contingency plan.
* Plans to reduce the impact of negative or non-compliant behaviors from any child on the rest of the group. This may include discussion with the parents/guardians of the child before each outing, to come up with alternative plans should their child not be able to cope with the activity and not comply with instructions which may place themselves or others at risk and could result in the necessity for the child to be collected by the parents/guardians.

**(b) Policies**

The Service’s Health and Safety policies will be taken into consideration and implemented on excursions when necessary.

**(c) Permission**

Parents’ permission must be obtained before any child is taken outside of the Service boundaries and specific permission is required for swimming. By signing the excursion permission form, the parent is authorising their child to attend the activities stated.

Excursions to locations visited on a regular basis such as local parks may be undertaken without prior notice if parents of children in the group have given excursion permission via the enrollment form. If an excursion is a regular outing, the authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12-month period. Once an initial risk assessment has been carried out for regular outings, risk assessments are not required for subsequent outings to the same place unless there is a change to the place or venue.

**(e) Supervision**

Adequate numbers of Educators to effectively supervise the children must be rostered on for excursions. Numbers of Educators must take into consideration the ages and developmental stage of the children attending the excursion and be based on a risk assessment of the excursion.

Head counts must be conducted regularly throughout the duration of the excursion, including leaving the venues.

An Educator must inspect all public toilets before children use them. An Educator and at least one other child must accompany any child when using a public toilet.

When walking the children, one Educator must lead the group, another follow at the back, and the remaining Educators must be spaced along the group, walking on the road side of the footpath.

When crossing a road, a pedestrian crossing must be used if possible. If there is no pedestrian crossing, the safest way to cross the road must be determined. One Educator must step out onto the road, and if necessary, stop traffic from both directions. The remaining Educators must then lead children across the road.

**(f) Information and Equipment**

Information and equipment to be taken on excursions will include:

* A list of all children with relevant personal details and parent contact phone numbers.
* A list of emergency procedures and contact numbers.
* A first aid kit, including SPF 30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen.
* Any medication for children attending the excursion.
* A fully charged mobile phone.
* Other information/equipment noted on the Risk Management Plan.
* Appropriate car seats for children under 7 years of age to be supplied by the child’s parents/guardians.

**(g) Lost Child**

In the event that a child is lost during an excursion, the well-being and safety of the other children in the group will be considered, and at least one Educator will remain with the group. In this case, the senior Educator will:

* Inform other Educators in the group.
* Ask the children if they have seen the missing child recently.
* Reassure any child who may be upset.
* Search the premises.
* Check the meeting points.
* Ask the venue Staff to begin a search and make an announcement over a loudspeaker if possible.
* Once initial checks have been undertaken and if the lost child has not been found, the Nominated Supervisor or another Educator with a Supervisor Certificate will call the Police and the parents.

**(h) Transporting Children to/from an excursion:**

Children are only permitted to travel to an excursion on any form of transport with written permission from a parent.

If using public transport (such as bus, ferry, taxi, train, etc.), children will be effectively supervised at all times and never left unattended.

In some circumstances, where the site of the excursion is close to the Centre, it will be appropriate for children and the Staff to walk to the site.

The decision to walk should be preceded by a risk assessment, and the route should be determined consistent with the objective of ensuring the safety of Educators and children.

When using public or private transport, it is important that each journey is also risk-assessed, for example, when traveling by bus:

* Ensure all bus operators hold appropriate licenses and insurance.
* Ensure they provide correct facilities i.e. wheelchair access if applicable.
* Ensure adequate adult supervision.
* Ensure children display appropriate behaviour.

**(i) Water Safety**

The Service recognises the risks posed by bodies of water. The Service will ensure that every precaution is taken so that children are able to enjoy water-based activities safely. Risk assessments will be carried out for programmed water-based activities.

The Regulations do not specify a specific Educator to child ratio for activities where water is a feature. The number of Educators present is to be determined by a risk assessment of the proposed activity. It must also be noted that in sections 165, 167, and 169 of the National Law, there are clear statements about adequate supervision. A range of factors shall determine the adequacy of supervision, including:

* Numbers, ages, and abilities of the children.
* Number and positioning of Educators.
* Each child’s current activity.
* Areas where children are playing, in particular the visibility and accessibility of these areas.
* Risks in the environment and experiences provided to children.
* Educators’ knowledge of each child and each group of children, the experience, knowledge, and skill of each Educator.

**Definition of a body of water**

The Service recognises the following locations as bodies of water:

* Swimming pools and/or water fun parks.
* Wading pools.
* Lakes.
* Ponds.
* The sea/ocean.
* Creeks.
* Dams.
* Rivers.

Equipment used by the Service that could contain 5cm or more of water and would allow a child to submerge both nose and mouth at the same time

**Citations:**

* Education and Care Services National Law (ECSNL)
* Education and Care Services National Regulations (ECSNR)

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