



1002	Camp and Excursion Policy
Purpose	This policy outlines school camp and excursion stipulations.
Authority	Occupational Health and Safety Act (1984) Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (1996) School Education Act (1999) ss 61(1)(b), 63(i)(c)(ii), 64(1)(e) Child Car Restraint Legislation, Road Traffic Act
Policy	The School is to ensure that off-campus activities are well planned, integrated with School learning programs and promote the safety and welfare of all participants.
Delegation	Principal
Related Policies	Screening Staff and Volunteers (CP005) Child Protection Policy (CP001)
Date approved	September 2015; March 2018; April 2019
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Review Authority	Management
Keywords	Camp; excursion; outdoor education; off-campus; water-based activities; bushwalking
Authorised by: Board Chairman	
Date:	
Author/Reviewer:	Jolanda Mulder – October 2018



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Camp and Excursion Procedure

Rationale

Off-campus environmental exposure and experiences in the wider community are commonly acknowledged as contributing significantly to the development of students and their understandings, skills and attitudes. Excursions are therefore an important means of providing such opportunities.

Excursions - General

- The Principal must approve all excursions (see Appendix 3 for a copy of the Excursion Request Form)
- Parents / caregivers of students must receive comprehensive details of any excursion
- Consent for the participation of students must be obtained from parents before the excursion
- The Principal must ensure that the management plan for an excursion addresses sufficient risk factors that may exist for both students and supervisors
- Appendices regulate water-based (Appendix 1) and bush-walking (Appendix 2) activities
- The presence of alcohol will not be permitted on any school excursion.

Staff and volunteers accompanying students on camps and excursions will take all reasonable care while the students are in their charge to protect them from injury and to control and supervise their behaviour and activities.

Parents must be aware that the school and staff members are not responsible for injuries or damage to property which may occur on an excursion where staff have not been negligent. In case of an injury that occurred during a school organised activity, the parents or guardians of a student may claim medical expenses that were not covered by Medicare or their private health cover.

Parents are required to inform the organisers well before the scheduled excursion departure of any change to their child's health and fitness so that appropriate supervision may be arranged.

Teacher-in-charge

Each excursion must have a teacher-in-charge. For all camps and excursions, the principal must authorise a teacher to be in charge and approve the management plan for such outings.

The teacher-in-charge must ensure the presence of a supervisor or supervisory team with appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during an excursion. The teacher-in-charge is to determine the number of supervisors and the supervisory strategies. Supervision strategies must ensure that the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times.

The teacher-in-charge must present the Principal with an Excursion or Camp Management Plan detailing intended destinations, camp sites, possible risks and how these have been allowed for relevant to:

- the environment
- transport arrangements
- student ability to participate in planned activities
- capabilities of the supervisor/supervisory team
- involvement of external providers

Where an external provider or manager of a venue to be visited is involved, the teacher-in-charge must clearly establish the respective responsibilities of such individuals and their staff.



For interstate excursions, the teacher-in-charge must inquire whether the selected external provider has the appropriate level of public liability insurance.

Excursions may involve use of the services of government agencies or private companies. In such cases staff must **NEVER** sign indemnities, disclaimers or other documents provided by the agencies or companies which absolve them from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions.

The teacher-in-charge must be aware of student health care maintenance and/or intensive health care needs. A reassessment of students' capacity must be undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the excursion activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the environment, or in the medical fitness (e.g. conditions such as asthma or epilepsy) or capacity of the students to undertake the activity in question.

For excursions involving an overnight stay, the teacher-in-charge must ensure that a copy of the planning documents, including all Student Health Forms and Health Care Authorisations, are taken on the excursion, with a further copy being provided to the principal.

Transport

The teacher-in-charge must ensure that arrangements for the safe transport of all excursion participants have been made. The parent consent form must describe details for transporting students to and from the school, and all other means of transport to be used during the excursion or camp.

The use of private and commercial vehicles must comply with the requirements of the current Road Traffic Act (See <http://www.ors.wa.gov.au/Documents/Seat-Belts/ors-child-car-restraints-faq.aspx>).

- Children aged from four years up to the age of seven years are to be restrained in either a forward facing child restraint or booster seat restrained by a correctly adjusted and fastened seat belt or child safety harness
- Children aged four years and less than seven years must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has a back row or rows of seats unless all the other back seats are occupied by children who are also under 7 years
- If you are in a car or small bus with 12 seats or less you will only be able to transport children under seven years in an appropriate child restraint or booster seat
- For a bus, which seats over 12 adults (including the driver), child restraints are not required
- If the vehicle involved is designed to carry 12 adults or less (including the driver) it is not classed as a bus and the driver is required to ensure that all passengers are restrained in the appropriate type of restraint for their age.

Use of private vehicles:

- Staff or volunteers/parents using their own private vehicle for school organised activities (swimming lessons, excursions etc.) are to be notified that they are responsible for personal injuries and damage to their vehicle that occur on such occasions. They should seek advice from their own insurer as they cannot claim damages from the school. (**NOTE:** The driver's private vehicle is covered under their own insurance arrangements as well as third party insurance provided by the vehicle's annual registration fees. The school's insurance policy is only there to cover damages (if any) beyond what the driver's insurance will cover or in the event that their insurer may turn to the school for damages for whatever reason.)
- The school's duty of care extends to all private vehicles used by parents and staff on school excursions. Consequently, the principal must ensure:
 - That the driver has sufficient experience and competence. No L- or P-plate drivers are to transport students.
 - That the vehicle is roadworthy, licensed and comprehensively insured



- That the number of children permitted in the car plus the driver does not exceed the allowable legal number of occupants
- That written permission has been obtained by parents for their child to be driven in a private vehicle
- That children aged seven years and under have the appropriate seat restraints
- Volunteers and/or parents using their own vehicle must provide proof that they hold a current driver's license. The completed Private Vehicle Use Declaration form is to be kept on file.
- Teachers/excursion organisers must be convinced that volunteers and/or members of staff using own vehicles have sufficient insurance cover.

Transport by air must be confined to recognised commercial operators.

Emergency Planning

The teacher-in-charge must develop or obtain an emergency response plan that will ensure access to emergency support without compromising the safety and welfare of the group or of a casualty. Specific procedures should be established in case of injury, medical emergencies, changes in conditions (e.g. bush fire, heavy rain while on a bushwalking excursion), equipment failure and other foreseeable situations requiring immediate decisions and evacuation procedures. This plan must be understood by all teaching and supervising staff.

During an excursion, the teacher-in-charge must have ready access to:

- a list of the names of participating students and their parent/guardian contact telephone numbers
- The phone numbers of the school contact person, local police and ambulance
- the Student Health Forms and Health Care Authorisations of those students who are known to have particular health requirements; and relevant health information of supervisors. A copy of all planning documents must remain with the school.
- Parents or caregivers must be reminded to provide information about any changes to their children's health or fitness prior to the commencement of an excursion.
- Emergency equipment, including mobile phones, vehicles or transport casualty or access to an ambulance, first aid kit and current first aid knowledge
- In regional and remote locations, mobile phones should not be relied on as the sole method of communication. Consideration should be given to GPS and means of emergency communication such as Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or a satellite phone.
- Ability to monitor weather/fire conditions carefully before and during the excursion (e.g. internet, email, local radio)

For excursions to remote or rural locations, the emergency response plan must include:

- a map of the areas to be visited, showing e.g. the nearest telephone, ranger's or other residence, hospital, nursing station;
- a list of the resources the group will have with it (i.e., first aid kits, number of staff and external providers with first aid qualifications, number and type of vehicles, and other camping equipment);



Supervision

Supervisory requirements for an excursion must be considered in accordance with the:

- age of the students
- experience and ability of the students
- student medical conditions or disabilities
- supervisors' competence and experience
- type of activity to be undertaken
- nature of the environment
- location of the activity
- weather conditions.

Supervision ratios:

- Closed water excursions: 1 qualified supervisor per 32 students; 1 additional supervisor per 12 students
- Open water excursions: 1 qualified supervisor per 16 students; 1 additional supervisor per 8 students
- General: 1 supervisor per 12 students; minimum of 2 adult supervisors regardless of size of the group.
- Additional supervisors may be required depending on the nature of the activity or students (see Appendices 1 & 2 for further information)

Supervision strategies must address the circumstance where students are not in clear view of the supervisor(s).

For overnight camps and extended excursions, accommodation and supervisory arrangements must be such that all potential for allegations of improper conduct by supervisors and by students is avoided. In particular, sleeping and ablution arrangements must not place any supervisor in situations where the propriety of their behaviour could be questioned.

Collectively, the supervisory team must have the skills to:

- identify and establish a safe activity environment
- effect a rescue and render emergency care
- monitor and respond to weather and environmental conditions before and during excursion activities
- monitor and assess the physical well being of the students.

Areas with known health hazards are to be avoided.

Camps, buildings or other structures used for overnight stays must have clean food preparation areas and well ventilated sleeping areas.

A sufficient number of well-maintained toilet facilities must be available.

If a student is required to leave an excursion prior to the scheduled time, a nominated member of the supervisory team must be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the student to safely reach their destination.

Students participating in an excursion must not be allowed to engage in additional or alternative activities for which parental approval has not been gained.

The use of alcohol or prescribed and over-the-counter drugs capable of impairing the vigilance or judgement of supervisors during an excursion is prohibited. The guidelines for smoking during an excursion are consistent with those in the school setting.



Where other adults are required to supervise students, the teacher-in-charge is to consider the suitability and competence of that adult for the task being assigned and the student-teacher ratios.

All staff members are required by law to have a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC). Volunteers who have children at school are not required to have a WWCC, with the exception of overnight camps. However, volunteers without children at school and who frequently have contact with children are to have a WWCC. External providers (and their staff) involved in activities with students are to have a current WWCC. For further information about WWCC see CP005 Working With Children Check Policy and Procedure.

Information and Consent

Parent or caregiver's consent is required for all excursions. Information must be provided to parents or caregivers to enable them to make informed decisions about their children's participation in an excursion.

Parents or caregivers must receive information about any proposed excursion well before the date of the excursion. This information must include details of:

- the purpose of the excursion
- relevant dates
- activities to be undertaken
- duration of activities
- location of activities (including alternative venues)
- student contact arrangements during the excursion
- transport arrangements
- all costs involved
- supervision to be provided (number of supervisors and number of students)
- staff action in case of student accident or illness on the excursion
- liability for loss or damage to student property and medical costs incurred in case of an accident or illness
- special clothing or a school uniform may be required for safety reasons; (uniforms can be loaned to students; where parents refuse to accept a school uniform requirement, this may result in the non-participation of a student).

Interstate and International excursions

For both interstate and International excursions, the documentation provided must include:

- a brief description and purpose of the excursion
- an itinerary including accommodation details
- funding details
- names, addresses and contact details of students and supervisors
- relevant medical action plans for students and supervisors

Travel arrangements must include medical and other insurances for all excursion participants.

The teacher-in-charge must forward a detailed plan (regarding the travel, accommodation and supervisory arrangements) to the Principal.



Insurance

Appropriate insurance cover needs to be thoroughly investigated, particularly whether the school's current insurance policies are adequate for the purposes of the excursion. Issues to be considered include:

- whether the school's insurance policies cover the risks associated with travelling:
 - local/intrastate
 - Interstate
- Whether the teachers/supervisors will be covered by the school's insurance whilst on the excursion
- Whether volunteers will be covered by the school's insurance whilst on the excursion
- Whether the activities being undertaken on the excursion fall within the scope of the school's insurance policies
- What the situation is if the excursion is organised by an external agency
- If the excursion is arranged by an external agency but is supervised by teachers from the school, who is responsible for the insurance cover of students and teachers



Appendix 1 | Water-based Activities

When planning a water-based activity, where practical, the teacher-in-charge is to have first-hand knowledge of the venue. Potential dangers in aquatic environments may include immersion in deep water, impact injuries from dumping waves or from diving into shallow water, cuts and abrasions from rocks or snags, sunburn, hypothermia, marine stings and the presence of marine craft.

'Closed water' is an environment where the water is controlled (still or slow moving), or sheltered water with a low swell, such as a swimming pool, sheltered coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body or where swimmers swim between the flags in an area patrolled by lifesavers.

'Open water' is an open (uncontrolled) water environment (fast moving or turbulent), such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, or tidal coastal waters.

Supervisors should recognise that each water-based environment is unique and that open-water environments are more hazardous than closed-water environments. The effects of current, wind, waves, tide and land formations are less predictable and more difficult to control and should be continuously monitored.

It is recommended that the length of shoreline defined for use in an open-water environment not exceed 100 metres. The selected activity area should be defined. Where possible, board/ski riders should be engaged to provide additional water safety.

The teacher-in-charge

The teacher-in-charge must consider the:

- required level of supervision
- risks relevant to the:
 - environment
 - students' capacity
 - activities to be conducted
 - capabilities of the supervisory team
 - involvement of external providers
- supervision strategies
- means of identifying participants
- information to be provided to parents/guardians for their consent
- communication strategies
- emergency response planning
- briefing for participants

Where diving is allowed, consideration must be given to diving competence, depth of water and under-water hazards.

A reassessment must be undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, or in the medical fitness, e.g. conditions such as asthma, epilepsy, fatigue or capacity of the students to undertake the activity.

Depending on the venue, emergency rescue equipment such as surfboards, rescue tubes, wave skis, body boards or swim fins and a first aid kit (including a sleeping bag or thermo blanket) must be readily accessible. The teacher-in-charge must ensure that equipment to be used is checked to ensure that it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order.



The supervisory team

The teacher-in-charge must ensure that there is a supervisory team with appropriate experience, knowledge and skills. All supervisors must have the skills to:

- be able to swim the length of the area they are supervising
- identify and establish a safe activity environment
- effect a rescue and render emergency care
- monitor and assess the physical well being of the students

At least one member of the supervisory team must hold a recognised qualification (see details of qualifications and minimum level of supervision below).

External providers

Where external providers such as pool management teams are engaged, the teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that these providers are competent.

External providers must have a current national police clearance certificate.

The teacher-in-charge and the manager of the venue/external provider must clearly establish the respective responsibilities of their staff.

If external providers are used, JCSA staff must not sign indemnities, disclaimers or other documents presented by these providers which absolve them from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions.

Supervision

For all water-based activities there is a minimum level of supervision for students in the water, i.e.:

- at no time will there be less than two supervisors
- one of these supervisors must be appropriately qualified

It is essential that students both in and out the water are actively supervised (the supervisory team has a clear view of all students) by the appropriate number of supervisors at all times.

Closed water

Number of Students	Number of Qualified Supervisors Required	Total Supervisory Team
1-12	1	2
13-24	1	2
25-32	1	3
33-36	2	3
37-48	2	4
49-60	2	5
61-64	2	6
65-72	3	6



Open water

Number of Students	Number of Qualified Supervisors Required	Total Supervisory Team
1-8	1	2
9-16	1	2
17-24	2	3
25-32	2	4
33-40	3	5
40-48	3	6

An increased number of supervisors for younger students can be considered

Qualifications

A qualified supervisor must hold one of the following qualifications:

For **closed-water** environments:

- Aquatic Rescue Qualification¹
- RLSSA² Bronze Medallion
- SLSWA³ Bronze Medallion
- SLSWA Surf Rescue Certificate
- AUSTSWIM Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety Certificate (recognised as being appropriate for swimming pools only)
- RLSSA WA Swimming Instructors Certificate (recognised as being appropriate for swimming pools only)

For **open-water** environments:

- Aquatic Rescue Qualification
- SLSWA Bronze Medallion
- SLSWA Surf Rescue Certificate
- RLSSA Bronze Medallion (is suitable for a flowing river or waterway)

Communication strategies

Communication strategies that enable regular communication amongst all members of the group may include public address systems, megaphones, air horns, whistles, flags, pennants, lights or hand signals.

It is suggested that the teacher-in-charge adopt commonly used emergency signals of whistles or horn blasts:

- One blast – stop, look and listen
- Short blasts in succession and arms waved above head – emergency. Clear the water immediately and assemble in a safe area nominated by the supervisor.

An alternative mode of communication must be available in case of the failure of the primary communication method. Mobile phones should not be relied upon as the sole method of communication. In regional and remote locations, consideration should be given to other means of emergency communication such as EPIRB or satellite telephone.

¹ Enrolments through Royal Life Saving Society of Australia

² Royal Life Saving Society of Australia

³ Surf Life Saving Western Australia



Appendix 2

Bushwalking

Bushwalking is conducted in a variety of contexts such as outdoor education, a short day walk or part of an overnight hike.

Short night walks should be avoided unless very well organised. Such walks have the greatest potential for individual students or groups to become lost, to indulge in mischief or for someone to go unnoticed when injured.

Planning

In planning a bushwalking activity, the teacher-in-charge must consider the risks relevant to the:

- environment
- students' capacity
- activities to be conducted
- equipment
- capabilities of the supervisor/supervisory team
- involvement of external providers
- required level of supervision
- supervision strategies
- means of identifying participants
- information to be provided to parents for their consent
- communication strategies
- emergency response planning
- briefing for participants

The environment

The teacher-in-charge must determine the suitability of the venue relative to the students' skills and experience, the planned activities, and the supervision required.

Consideration must be given to the potential risk of snake bites or other injuries.

Students must not be exposed to environments e.g. bushland, walk-trails, roads, river crossings or any locations that have not been assessed and considered safe for the students.

Where practical, the teacher-in-charge is to have first-hand knowledge of the venue and potential hazards. Other sources of information may include:

- the police
- Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPAW)
- Department for Planning, Lands and Heritage
- local rangers or land managers
- experienced bushwalkers with knowledge of the area
- articles, maps, guides and references published of the area to be visited
- weather forecasts and climatic history of area
- St John Ambulance on first aid, especially on snake bites



Many venues have access restrictions and permission should be gained from the relevant authority. The relevant DPAW regional office, the local land management body, lease holders or private property owners should be contacted for further information.

Such organisations should be consulted for information on:

- route planning
- alternative routes in the event of restricted access
- aerial prescribed burns
- the risk of storms, bushfires and other changes to the environment and the procedures to follow
- climatic history of area from the Bureau of Meteorology

Supervisors should be aware of the management of dehydration, hyperthermia (too hot) and hypothermia (too cold) and the factors that contribute to these problems (including geographical position and weather patterns).

River crossings can be extremely hazardous, particularly during periods of flooding. Groups should not attempt a river crossing if a location is considered dangerous by any of the authorities above.

Minimal impact practices should be observed at all times, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas. Some walking areas cannot sustain frequent usage by groups (e.g. dunes, caving areas). Dieback quarantine areas may not be entered unless prior permission has been sought from DPAW.

Fires should only be lit in approved areas at existing fireplaces, when there are no fire restrictions. Fuel stoves should be used wherever possible.

Camping

For overnight or multi-day walks, the selection of venues should take into account the:

- campsite availability
- weather conditions
- bushfire danger
- access to communication
- age, fitness and medical conditions of students
- advice from local rangers, land managers and other sources

It is recommended that when available and convenient, serviced campsites be used for inexperienced students.

Students' capacity

Prior to participation in any bushwalking activity, the-teacher-in-charge must be aware of student health care maintenance and/or intensive health care needs and ensure that students are physically capable and have the required skills to participate safely.

A reassessment of students' capacity must be undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the bushwalking environment, or in the medical fitness, e.g. conditions such as asthma, epilepsy or fatigue, or the capacity of the students to undertake the activity.

Teachers are to plan bushwalks considering the speed and strength of the weakest member. The group should be constantly monitored for fatigue and hydration.

It is recommended that extra time be allocated at the beginning of the walk to make adjustments to clothing, footwear and backpacks.



River and creek crossings require careful planning and assessment of factors such as:

- access points
- nature of the bottom
- depth
- current
- swimming abilities of the group
- visibility to supervisors
- weather
- obstructions/obstacles
- time of day
- group energy/capabilities

The decision to cross and how the crossing might be made, should take all of the above into consideration.

Equipment to be used

The teacher-in-charge must ensure that equipment to be used is checked to make certain that it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order.

Prior to the commencement of the activity, the teacher-in-charge must ensure that students wear appropriate clothing, hat, footwear and sun protection.

Adequate food and water must be available. Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. First aid kits must contain items appropriate to the activity, environment, size of party, and duration of the activity. Sufficient GPS units, maps, compasses, hand-held two-way radios for each leader, and emergency equipment must be carried, e.g. whistles, torches.

For overnight and multi-day walks, special attention should be given to:

- protective clothing against wind, rain, cold, and heat
- sun protection
- first aid
- food and water
- shelter

Appropriate woollen or synthetic thermal clothing should be worn or carried if bushwalking is taking place under cold conditions. At least one supervisor should carry a first aid kit, preferably at the rear of the group.

Where backpacks are used they should be as light as possible. Ideally the weight of a pack will not exceed one third of the body weight for adults, and one quarter of the body weight of children.

The supervisor/supervisory team

The teacher-in-charge must ensure that there is a supervisor/supervisory team with appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during bushwalking.

Collectively, the supervisor/supervisory team must have the skills to:

- identify and establish a safe activity environment
- effect a rescue and render emergency care
- monitor and respond to weather and environmental conditions before and during activities
- monitor and assess the physical well-being of the students



For overnight and multi-day walks the supervisory team must have experience in lightweight camping and be experienced and competent bush walkers.

Where a member of the non-teaching staff, external providers or volunteers agree to perform tasks that require them to personally care for students in the absence of a member of the teaching staff, the teacher-in-charge must consider the suitability of that adult for the task being assigned taking into account the:

- number of students involved
- age, experience and capabilities of the students
- activities to be undertaken
- characteristics of the venue
- health status, skills, and experience of the adult

The role of supervisors will be determined by the teacher-in-charge.

Activities may involve the use of the services of agencies or private companies. In such cases JCSA staff must **not** sign indemnities, disclaimers or other documents provided by the agencies or companies which absolve them from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions.

Minimum level of supervision

For all bushwalks there is a minimum level of supervision, i.e.:

- at no time must there be less than two supervisors
- one of these supervisors must be a qualified and experienced supervisor

Day walks

There must be a minimum of:

- one qualified supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof

Overnight walks - Students in years K - 7

There must be a minimum of:

- one qualified supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof
- two supervisors for every 11 students or part thereof

Overnight walks - Students in years 8 - 10

There must be a minimum of:

- one qualified supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof

Fragile, remote and/or physically demanding environments (e.g. designated wilderness areas, untracked areas) must have higher levels of planning, student preparation and staff supervision. In such environments groups must be organised into subgroups of up to eight students with at least one qualified supervisor per group, provided that the skills of each supervisor and the contingency plans for this strategy are properly documented beforehand.

Supervision should reflect the gender balance of the student group.



Qualifications

A qualified supervisor must hold a current first aid certificate, including current Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) accreditation.

For all walks it is recommended that the supervisory team have first-hand knowledge of the walking area, experience in the terrain to be covered and possess skills in navigation and bushcraft.

In the case where the group is in an isolated or remote area, a member of the supervisory team should have advanced first aid qualifications. Remote or isolated areas may include any location where outside assistance might be more than 1 hour away.

It is recommended that supervisors leading walks into fragile, remote and/or physically demanding environment (e.g. designated wilderness areas, untracked areas) hold a recognised bushwalking qualification or a relevant nationally agreed set of competencies registered through the National Outdoors Leader Registration Scheme (NOLRS).

Further information about NOLRS can be found at: <http://www.outdoorswa.org/nolrs/nolrs.html>

Supervision strategies

The teacher-in-charge must establish supervision strategies that ensure the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times.

The teacher-in-charge is to determine roles of supervisors, the number of supervisors and the method of supervision.

Supervision strategies must address the circumstance when students are not in clear view of the supervisors.

It is recommended that rules be established to ensure that all students remain in close proximity to the supervisors whilst walking. The distance may vary with student experience, terrain and weather.

It is recommended that a lead walker is designated. The lead walker should be aware of the planned route and be able to direct the group to scheduled stops.

A 'whip' system of travel is recommended (i.e. a leader and a tail end in sight of each other).

It is recommended that a 'buddy system' be established where students monitor and check the safety and welfare of their partner.

Supervisors should make a regular head count of the number in the group, particularly at track junctions and in difficult conditions.

Supervisors should arrange predetermined stops en route, so that the participants can be provided with feedback.

Each walker should be able to see the person in front and behind at all times.

To assist smaller, less-able participants when crossing a river or creek the following strategies should be considered:

- the formation of a human chain across the river
- using stronger participants to carry backpacks and other equipment
- placing stronger students at strategic points across the river
- buddying less able participants with those that are more capable, in groups of two or three
- establishing a safety rope
- finding another crossing



Communication strategies

Planning for bushwalking activities must include the development of a strategy that enables regular communication among all members of the group. The strategy must clearly identify a signal for gaining the full group's attention.

An emergency signal must be selected and explained to all participants.

The communication strategy must enable contact with on-site and off-site support services. An alternative mode of communication must be available in case of the failure of the primary communication method.

Communication strategies that enable regular communication among all members of the group may include radio, mobile phone, hand signals, flags, pennants, lights, mirrors, or whistles.

It is suggested that the supervisor use a uniform system of whistle signals:

- One blast – stop, look and listen.
- Three long blasts – activity finished.
- Continuous blasts in succession, and arms waved above head – emergency, clear the activity immediately and assemble in a safe area nominated by the teacher-in-charge.

Emergency response planning

The teacher-in-charge must prepare a response plan that will ensure access to emergency support without compromising the safety and welfare of the group or of a casualty.

The teacher-in-charge must be familiar with the action to be taken when either the group or an individual participant becomes lost.

The teacher-in-charge is to ensure that emergency procedures, including emergency signals, are clearly understood by all students and supervisors.

All supervisors must be familiar with evacuation procedures and the location of emergency equipment.

Supervisors must be appropriately attired to provide assistance during the activity.

The teacher-in-charge must be familiar with the action to be taken when either the group or an individual participant becomes lost.

The teacher-in-charge must develop an emergency plan to be used in this situation. The teacher-in-charge must ensure that all participants are aware of the plan.

A nominated supervisor must have ready access to:

- a list of names of participating students and their parent/guardian contact telephone numbers
- the Student Health Forms and the relevant Health Care Authorisation Plans of those students who are known to have particular health requirements
- relevant health information of supervisors

An emergency response plan may include:

- a list of all participants and their contact and medical details, including the number of staff and external providers, their first aid qualifications and expertise
- the name of the venue to be used, its location and contact telephone number
- a map of the area(s) to be used, including the planned travel routes and alternative routes, time of departure and estimated time of arrival
- transport access details e.g. by foot, two wheel drive, four wheel drive, including barriers



- location of the nearest telephone, land manager, e.g. ranger, hospital, State Emergency Service office, police, nursing station or other relevant information
- a list of resources the group will carry e.g. first aid kit, the number and type of vehicles, camping or specialist equipment
- the communications media that will be used e.g. fixed telephone, mobile phone, satellite phone, radio, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB)
- an estimate of the time it might take to raise an alarm and the amount of time that might elapse before appropriate support could be provided

Suggested emergency equipment includes items such as a first aid kit and communication equipment.

Mobile phones should not be relied upon as the sole method of communication. In regional or remote locations, consideration should be given to other means of emergency communication such as EPIRB or satellite telephone. All participants should have ready access to maps.

Briefing students and supervisors

The teacher-in-charge is accountable for ensuring that all relevant information about responsibilities and obligations are clearly communicated to students and supervisors. Topics that must be included are:

- emergency procedures and signals
- methods of communication
- appropriate use of any equipment
- roles of supervisors
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- procedures for events (e.g. start and finish procedures, what to do if lost)
- areas demarcated specifically for identified student groups
- standards of acceptable behaviour

Students should be appropriately briefed about aims and objectives, clothing and equipment, the itinerary, camping and bushwalking skills, food requirements, health and hygiene, environmental aspects and expected weather conditions.

Participants should be informed of the route to be followed, and what they should do if they become separated from the group.

Students should be well briefed on the appropriate minimum impact practices relative to this program and the environment, such as:

- minimise use and impact of fires
- dispose of human waste appropriately
- camp and travel on durable surfaces
- leave no trace of the camp
- leave what you find with regard to artefacts
- respect flora and fauna
- be considerate of other visitors

Students should be thoroughly briefed about the cooperative nature of the activities and the need to adopt a responsible and supportive attitude towards safety at all times.



Advice when lost

For supervisory team: if the group is lost

There is always a risk of getting lost, usually as a result of inaccurate navigation and / or poor visibility.

If lost, it is important not to panic, maintain group morale and to take a break before trying to determine the group's position.

The students must remain in one place. A supervisor should take responsibility for maintaining morale, while the teacher-in-charge or qualified supervisor attempts to locate the group's position.

Possible strategies include:

- using cross-bearings
- retracing the route to the last known bearing
- if on a track, clearly marking a set position before walking approximately a kilometre in either direction
- if not on a track, walking in a fixed direction and keeping a written record of all bearings

The teacher-in-charge or the qualified supervisor should mark the route by breaking twigs or building rock cairns and should avoid moving to lower ground.

For supervisory team: if the group remains lost

Where the group remains unclear about its position, the teacher-in-charge or qualified supervisor should locate a sheltered campsite and set up camp.

The group should attempt to attract attention using known forms of distress signals, such as SOS signals, whistle blasts, flashing mirrors or torches, or lighting a smoky fire by day or a bright fire at night.

The group should listen for voices, shouts, and whistles. Water, food and energy should be conserved.

For individual group members (to be made known during briefing)

If students become separated from the rest of the group, they should:

- Stop. Continuing to walk will make it more difficult for searchers to locate them
- try to attract attention of the group by blowing their whistle or shouting. Remember to listen for a reply or signals from searchers.
- make themselves comfortable in a sheltered spot and try to keep warm
- mark their position, for example, with brightly-coloured articles placed in a conspicuous location or broken branches
- listen for calls from the main group

For supervisory team: in the event of an individual or sub group becoming lost:

- Stop and establish a base.
- Question group as to who is missing, how long they have been missing, what their intentions might have been, what equipment they have with them.
- Use this information to make some assessments on what might have happened and how large an area they might have to search. This might vary with the assessment of the student skills and possible responses they could be expected to make.
- Send two lookouts to nearest prominent high point with instructions on caution, signals. Ensure they have food and water.



- Send group of three under the direction of other supervisor to retrace steps to point last seen. This group is to quickly retrace steps to last point of contact, look for clues of other group along the way, signal and call, listen for replies, leave a clear note at the point last seen instructing the lost party to remain where they are should they return and to check other possible points they might have gone to. This group must be given a time limit for reporting back to the teacher in charge.

At this point the leader has to consider a huge number of variables that will differ considering:

- time of day
- abilities and maturity of the students
- equipment and food carried by the students
- any relevant medical/psychological information
- information collected by gathering evidence from other group members
- other factors such as terrain, weather, time of day etc.

Given that the problem situation or search area might be worsening with the passage of time, the leader will have to set a cut-off time at which steps are taken to notify outside support services and for the communications system to be initiated.

It is recommended that staff document all relevant information as it is gathered and that the emergency plan to call in outside help is set in motion - whether it be immediate notification of Police, notifying the Principal or nominee, notifying the office of the external provider who might have their own procedures to follow or some other previously documented strategy.

The implementation of the emergency response plan might be delayed only if the supervisory team are confident that no imminent danger exists and that the information gathered allows for a reasonable expectation that the students will soon be found. Should such a temporary determination be made, an interim course of action and a time to review the situation should be agreed to.



Appendix 3

Excursion Request Form

See separate attachment