

Excursions guidelines and procedures

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Acronyms	Full form
QSSS	Quality School Systems and Support
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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This document should be read in conjunction with [Excursions policy¹](#) and the [Official Travel policy²](#).

1. Introduction

Excursions can range from a short visit of less than one hour to a number of days or weeks and can be in locations close to the school, intrastate, interstate or overseas. For the purposes of this policy and guidelines, excursions are categorised as:

Category A – Local area (includes regular outings)

Category B – Beyond local area and overnight

Category C – Interstate

Category D – International.

Refer to the approval steps and documentation requirements below for each category of excursion and ensure the stipulated timeframes are met. A summary of the approvals process and paperwork requirement for each excursion category has been provided in Appendix A.

Strict timeframes apply for interstate and overseas excursions, noting that all schools are required to submit a forecast of intended Category C and D excursions to their Director/Manager, Quality School Systems and Support (QSSS).

2. Procedures

Excursion specific documents, forms and templates outlined within these procedures are located on the [Department of Education Document Centre³](#).

2.1. Category A – Local area excursions and regular outings

Table 1. Category A – Approval steps and documents required for local area excursions and regular outings

Approval steps	Documents required
Teacher in charge to submit documentation and seek approval from the principal, teaching principal or delegate.	Excursion Application Form – Category A/B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Consent Forms • Self-Inspection Checklist • Participant List • Risk Management Plan (included in form)
All excursion documentation to be retained by the school for 45 years from date of excursion. See 3.8 Records for further information.	

Category A excursion risk management planning must broadly follow these guidelines and the risk management plan template, especially around medical information and parent permission, but can be achieved using the simplified risk management plan structure provided in the Excursion Application Form – Categories A and B.

¹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/excursions>

² <http://ed.ntschoools.net/finance/travel/Pages/welcome.aspx>

³ <http://ed.ntschoools.net/documentcentre/Pages/home.aspx?category=Teaching%20and%20learning&subcategory=Excursions%20and%20work%20experience>

Preschools must use the ACECQA Excursions Risk Assessment Template to ensure compliance with the National Regulations.

For recurring excursions / regular outings where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same on each outing (such as a swimming program) the approval steps and documentation only needs to be obtained once every 12 months.

2.2. Category B – Beyond local area or overnight

Category B includes any excursion that requires overnight accommodation, regardless of the distance from the school.

Table 2. Category B – Approval steps and documents required for beyond local area or overnight

Approval steps	Documents required
<p>Teacher in charge to submit documentation and seek approval from the Principal or delegate</p> <p>* Detailed Risk Management Plans and Movement Requisition Forms may not be required (except for preschools who must always complete a risk management plan). Please confirm prior to seeking final approval.</p>	<p>Excursion Application Form – Cat A/B, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Consent Form • Self-Inspection Checklist • Participant List • Risk Management Plan (included in form)* • Movement Requisition Forms*
<p>Principal to submit documentation to the Director/Manager QSSS for noting and recording in TRM</p>	<p>Excursion Application – Category A/B</p>
<p>All excursion documentation to be retained by the school for 45 years from date of excursion. For further information go to section 3.8 Records</p>	

2.3. Category C – Interstate excursions

Table 3. Category C – Approval steps and documents required for interstate excursions

Approval steps	Documents required
<p>Principal to submit memo to the Director/Manager QSSS (by email to excursions.doe@nt.gov.au) for in-principle approval by Senior Director School Improvement and Leadership.</p>	<p>Note: Must be submitted a minimum of eight weeks prior to excursion date</p> <p>Memo for in-principle approval</p>
<p>Teacher in charge to submit documentation and seek endorsement from the Principal.</p> <p>Movement Requisition Forms are to be completed by all school staff and accompanying adults (e.g. principals, teachers, school council staff, parents) accompanying students on the excursion. The itinerary template includes a detailed participant list.</p>	<p>Note: Must be submitted a minimum of six weeks prior to excursion date</p> <p>Excursion Application Form – Category C/D, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Consent Form • Risk Management Plan (included in form) • Self-Inspection Checklist • Education Program (included in memo) • Itinerary (included in form) • Movement Requisition Form

Approval steps	Documents required
<p>Principal to submit documentation to the Chief Executive (by email to excursions.doe@nt.gov.au) for approval, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director/Manager QSSS • General Manager QSSS • Deputy Chief Executive Education NT. <p>Movement Requisition Forms are to be completed by all school staff and accompanying adults (e.g. principals, teachers, school council staff, parents) accompanying students on the excursion. The itinerary template includes a detailed participant list.</p>	<p>Evidence of domestic travel insurance purchased by each person travelling.</p> <p>Note: Must be submitted a minimum of six weeks prior to excursion date</p> <p>Excursion Application Form – Category C/D, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental Consent Form • Risk Management Plan (included in form) • Self-Inspection Checklist • Education Program (included in memo) • Itinerary (included in form) • Movement Requisition Form <p>Evidence of domestic travel insurance purchased by each person travelling.</p>
<p>All excursion documentation to be retained by the school for 45 years from date of excursion. For further information go to section 3.8 Records.</p>	

2.4. Category D – International excursions

All schools must:

- seek in-principle approval from Senior Director School Improvement and Leadership through the Director/Manager QSSS (by email to excursions.doe@nt.gov.au) using the in-principle approval memo template
- provide forecasts of intended international and interstate travel to the Director/Manager QSSS
- obtain the Minister’s approval prior to making any formal travel arrangements as per the approval steps provided below.

When seeking in-principle approval, the teacher in charge must consult the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Smartraveller website to identify DFAT’s current travel advice for the particular destination, including visa requirements and recommended vaccinations. The teacher in charge must continue to monitor the advice given by DFAT regarding security in the destination country in the lead up to, and during the school excursion.

Proposals to take students on school excursions to other countries other than those categorised by DFAT Level 1 (exercise normal safety precautions) will be considered on a case by case basis by the Chief Executive based on advice from International Education and Non-Government School Services.

Table 4. Category D – Approval steps and documents required for international excursions

Approval steps	Documents required
<p>Principal to submit in-principle memo through International Education and Non-Government School Services to the Director/Manager QSSS (by email to excursions.doe@nt.gov.au) for endorsement and approval by Senior Director School Improvement and Leadership.</p>	<p>Note: Must be submitted a minimum of sixteen weeks prior to excursion date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo for in-principle approval

Approval steps	Documents required
<p>Teacher in charge to submit documentation and seek endorsement from the Principal.</p> <p>Once endorsed, Principal to submit documentation to the Chief Executive (by email to excursions.doe@nt.gov.au) for approval, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director/Manager QSSS • General Manager QSSS • Deputy Chief Executive Education NT. <p>Movement Requisition Forms are to be completed by all school staff and accompanying adults (e.g. principals, teachers, school council staff, parents) accompanying students on the excursion.</p> <p>The International travel itinerary template includes a detailed participant list.</p>	<p>Note: Must be submitted a minimum of fourteen weeks prior to excursion date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excursion Application Form – Category C/D, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parental Consent Form ○ Risk Management Plan(included in form) ○ Self-Inspection Checklist ○ Education Program (included in memo) ○ Itinerary (included in form) ○ Movement Requisition Form • Evidence of international travel insurance purchased by each person travelling.
<p>Principal to submit Ministerial to Minister for approval (by email to excursions.doe@nt.gov.au), through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director/Manager QSSS • General Manager QSSS • Deputy Chief Executive Education NT • Chief Executive. <p>Please refer to the International Travel Flowchart for more information.</p>	<p>Note: Must be submitted a minimum of fourteen weeks prior to excursion date</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministerial brief, including International Travel Itinerary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ministerial Brief – International Excursion • Ministerial Brief – Attachment A – International Travel Itinerary
<p>International excursion participants must be registered with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) www.smartraveller.gov.au</p>	
<p>All excursion documentation to be retained by the school for 45 years from date of excursion. For further information go to section 3.8 Records.</p>	

3. Management of excursions

3.1. Accidents

The [Recording and Reporting Student Injuries Guidelines and Procedures](#)⁴ must be followed for all accidents occurring during an excursion.

3.2. Alcohol

Accompanying adults and students are not permitted to consume, possess or be under the influence of alcohol whilst on an excursion. Accompanying adults who act as a driver of a vehicle conveying students during an excursion must have a zero blood alcohol level whilst undertaking driving duties.

⁴ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/recording-and-reporting-student-injuries>

3.3. Billeting

Where students are required to be billeted on an excursion, the teacher in charge must ensure that:

Parents of students:

- are briefed in writing and where possible, face-to-face prior to the parents consenting to their child being billeted
- must be provided with contact details of the host family and be able to make contact with their child as necessary.

Host schools / families:

- families accepting billets are deemed suitable by the host school and have met all appropriate local education authority guidelines to ensure student safety and wellbeing. This information must be communicated in writing to the teacher in charge and must indicate the household members do not have criminal convictions that may preclude the host family from billeting a student.
- provide accommodation that includes:
 - a private bedroom or one shared with a student of the same gender
 - private bathing and toilet facilities.

Teacher in charge:

- consent forms are signed by the parents of students to be billeted (incl. up-to-date medical information)
- will be notified of any travel by the student involving an overnight stay during the period of the billet
- is contactable for the duration of the billet
- will contact the student(s) regularly during the period of the billet
- has access to transport in order to visit the student(s) at short notice
- must arrange alternative accommodation for students who need to be relocated.

Billeted students:

- have reasonable means to contact the teacher and their parents
- at all times must have emergency contact details.

It is recommended that principals make contact with the host school principal to confirm the suitability of the host families and billeting arrangements.

3.4. Consent forms

Written parental consent is required for all excursions. Consent forms need to provide enough information about specific activities to allow parents to make informed decisions about their child's participation. Parents must be given the opportunity to provide relevant information about the child's care needs, as well as advising the school if they do not give permission for their child to participate in some or all of the activities listed.

Consent given by parents for children to attend excursions does not indemnify the school nor relieve supervisors of their duty of care responsibilities.

Consent for recurring excursions / regular outings to specified local venues for the same purpose is only required to be obtained once in a 12 month period, providing the circumstances of the outing have not changed since the risk assessment was completed.

The teacher in charge should be mindful of the possibility of changes to students' health/medical requirements from one week to the next. Parents must be reminded of their obligation to notify the school of any changes in consent to their child participating in recurring excursions / regular outings.

When advising parents of excursions and recurring excursions / regular outings the following details should be included as appropriate:

- the child's name
- purpose of the excursion
- times and dates of departure and return
- a description of the proposed destination
- details of activities to be undertaken by the child
- mode of travel and route, including supervision available
- number of children likely to be attending the excursion
- level of supervision and ratio of educators to children
- anticipated number of staff members and other adults that will accompany and supervise the children
- names of teachers and adults accompanying the group
- accommodation arrangements
- equipment and clothing needed
- details of cost
- special rules applicable to the excursion
- information stating a risk assessment has been completed and is available if required
- details of any activity where there may be a greater risk of student injury, for example abseiling
- means of contact with excursion group, for example mobile number and contact details of teacher in charge of excursion.

Any consent form should allow the parent/carer to clearly indicate that they:

- consent to the student taking part in the excursion/regular outing and the specified activities
- agrees to the accommodation arrangements specified (e.g. billeting)
- provides details of special medical/physical/dietary needs or other problems
- authorises the teacher in charge to make arrangements for the welfare of the student (including first aid, medical or surgical treatment) in an emergency
- agrees to meet the costs associated with any emergency arrangements made by the teacher in charge (including travel)
- agrees to the student being under the teacher's authority for the duration of the excursion, and to the teacher being empowered to return the student home at the expense of the parent/carer if the teacher considers that circumstances warrant such action

- agrees, where appropriate, to the student travelling by private car, driven by a teacher, parent or other approved person (not a student)
- accepts liability for loss, theft or damage to their child's property while on excursion, and
- notes that the department will take all reasonable steps to protect students against reasonably foreseeable risks of injury or harm.

Copies of consent forms must be taken on excursions as it contains information that may be needed in the event of an accident or illness.

Where no teacher is accompanying the excursion, in addition to the consent form, where an excursion is planned and supervised by a person not employed as a teacher (e.g. trainer, department employee or School Council employee), parents must be informed in writing that the supervisor is solely responsible during the excursion and that no teacher will be present.

3.5. Duty of care

Teachers have a responsibility to exercise proper care and supervision throughout the duration of the excursion. The duty of care requires taking reasonable steps to protect the student against risks of injury or harm that are reasonably foreseeable. It is the responsibility of principals to ensure that all teachers are aware of their responsibilities.

A teacher cannot delegate their duty of care responsibilities to anyone. If a professional organisation is involved in a school excursion, the teacher should make general enquiries as to the safety of the activity and equipment and the expertise of the staff running the activity.

Where a trainer has been nominated by a principal, the trainer cannot delegate their duty of care and has the responsibility to exercise proper care and supervision throughout the duration of the excursion.

A first aid kit must be taken on all excursions and it is strongly recommended that at least one of the accompanying members of staff holds a current First Aid Certificate.

In regards to excursions and regular outings for preschools, at least one staff member that holds an approved (i) first aid qualification, (ii) anaphylaxis management training and (iii) asthma management training must accompany the students or be immediately available.

Access to drinking water must be available for all excursions and parents must be advised of the need to supply students with relevant safety precautions such as sunscreen, hat and covered shoes.

3.6. External providers

Where private providers are used as instructors for specific excursion activities, such as rock climbing and sailing, the principal must ensure that the provider acknowledges, in writing, that the following criteria are met:

- meets industry standards and is appropriately accredited
- staff are trained to industry standards required to supervise the activity and are appropriately accredited
- has a risk management and/or safety plan relevant to the activity
- holds appropriate and current insurance including public liability (minimum \$10 million).

The school must request and obtain a copy of the private provider's insurance policy.

Parents must be made aware of any disclaimer statements from private providers and make their own informed decision about whether to consent to their child's participation.

3.7. Insurance

The Northern Territory Government self-insurance arrangements encompass public liability, workers compensation, personal accident and injury risks and legal liabilities arising in relation to Northern Territory (NT) Government schools, school councils, and their respective employees and volunteers.

The Excursions policy and these guidelines require that schools conduct appropriate planning and risk management to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect students against reasonably foreseeable risks of injury or harm arising from school related activities.

Financial responsibility for medical and other costs incurred in emergency situations which includes the cost of transport to a medical facility or to their home, or where a decision is taken to return a student home, rests with the parent/guardian of the student. A parent/guardian may wish to take out additional insurance to cover such costs.

While travel insurance for overseas and interstate excursions is compulsory, the need for commercial travel insurance is highly recommended when planning all excursions. Where travel insurance is arranged, the value of premiums forms part of the cost of the excursion.

All Department of Education employees, corporate and school-based, can access the whole-of-department international travel insurance policy when they are travelling overseas for work. As such, department employees are not required to purchase individual travel insurance for overseas business trips. This policy does not cover students or accompanying adults on international excursions.

Department employees are required to obtain written advice from International Education and Non-Government School Services confirming that they are covered by the whole-of-department international travel insurance policy as part of the Overseas Travel Checklist.

The NT Government self-insurance arrangements do not extend to suppliers, contractors or consultants engaged by the department. These individuals or organisations are required to carry their own insurance cover. Certificates of currency must be obtained from suppliers, contractors or consultants where they are involved in school related activities.

3.8. Records

All excursion documentation must be retained by the school for 45 years after the excursion has been completed. This includes, but is not limited to itineraries, student details, completed consent forms, risk management plans, travel arrangements, movement requisition forms, incident records, and student health and medical information.

Records pertaining to serious incidents, such as a serious injury or death, must be kept as a permanent record.

For further information refer to the [NTG Record Disposal Schedule for School Management](https://dtc.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/593749/Disposal-Schedule-2018-10-School-Management.pdf)⁵.

⁵ https://dtc.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/593749/Disposal-Schedule-2018-10-School-Management.pdf

3.9. Risk assessment and management

A **Risk Management Plan** and a [Self-Inspection Checklist](#) (both links are staff access only) must be completed for all proposed excursions.

Please note:

- Category A excursion risk management planning must broadly follow these guidelines and the risk management plan, especially around medical information and parent permission, but can be achieved using the simplified risk management plan provided in the Excursion Application Form – Category A/B.
- Where an excursion (either Category A or Category B) includes activities that may be considered as higher risk or of a significant nature, it is important to ensure that potential risks are properly planned for which may require a detailed risk management plan.
 - Schools should use the department's [Excursions - Risk Management Plan](#) (staff access only).
 - Preschools must always use [ACECQA's Excursions risk assessment template](#).

For recurring excursions / regular outings where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same on each outing, approval, risk assessment and parental consent only needs to be obtained once every 12 months. Schools must be mindful of the need to ensure that no significant changes have occurred which may have affected the content of the initial documents e.g. student medical information.

Excursion venues can be assessed using the criteria provided in the self-inspection checklist. Where schools are unable to complete an inspection by visiting the location (e.g. interstate/international excursions), information on the suitability of the venue can be obtained via:

- other schools that have visited the location in the last six months
- government/education authorities in the local area
- external providers conducting tours etc.

Swimming, water safety or aquatic activities must adhere to the [School Swimming, Water Safety Program and Aquatics Activities Policy](#)⁶.

When conducting outdoor educational activities, schools are encouraged to visit the Victorian Department Education and Early Childhood Development's [Outdoor Activities and Working Outdoors](#)⁷ site regarding best practice risk management strategies.

3.10. Supervision - teacher/student ratios

Decisions regarding supervision requirements and teacher/student ratios should take into account factors such as the age of the students, their maturity, location of the excursion, specific needs of students, anticipated behaviour and the nature of the activities to be undertaken. Principals may implement enhanced measures to cater for the safety of students.

Minimum teacher to student ratios are provided on the following page, although a lower ratio is recommended.

⁶ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/swimming-and-water-safety>

⁷ <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/outdoor-activities-and-working-outdoors/policy>

Table 5. Teacher/Student ratios – minimum requirements

Excursion type	Minimum ratio
Preschool day excursions*	1:11
Primary school day excursions	1:15
Middle School day excursions	1:27
Senior School day excursions	1:27
Overnight excursions – Mixed parties should be supervised by both a male and female supervisor	1:15
Interstate and International excursions – must have minimum of two supervising adults, one of whom must be a teacher. Mixed gender should be supervised by both a male and female supervisor.	1:15
Small groups of students travelling Interstate – may be appropriate for one teacher to accompany a group of students of mixed gender students or for a teacher to accompany a group of students of the opposite sex whilst travelling providing supplementary supervision is arranged at the interstate venue / accommodation and that all duty of care requirements are met.	
Aquatic excursions- teacher-student ratios as detailed in the School Swimming, Water Safety and Aquatics Activities Policy must be observed.	
Where an activity may be considered hazardous or the student group are unskilled, ratios should be varied in accordance with section 3.9 Risk Assessment and Management above.	

* noting in regards to regulated preschools, parents cannot be included in meeting the minimum ratio requirements (effective 1 January 2016)

School staff, parents and volunteers may be used to meet the minimum ratio and gender balance requirements however, the teacher in charge must ensure that participants have successfully completed the Working with Children Screening process prior to the excursion.

3.11. Transportation

3.11.1. Use of private vehicles – school staff/parent

Where private vehicles are used, the teacher in charge of the excursion must ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy, currently registered, has fully comprehensive insurance, the driver has an appropriate and valid NT driver's licence, and that the number of passengers does not exceed the seat belt carrying capacity of the vehicle.

Parental consent must be obtained, in advance, where it is necessary for students to travel in private cars driven by teachers, parents or other approved persons.

3.11.2. Use of private vehicles - student

In very rare circumstances, students in senior schools may use their own private transport, with the same requirements as per the use of staff/parent vehicles. Teachers should carefully monitor these arrangements including ensuring that the student's licence is valid, vehicle is currently registered, and that parental consent is obtained. Students are NOT to transport other students regardless of written permission being provided.

3.11.3. Transportation of preschool children

The National Regulations require preschools to address risks associated with excursion transportation. These risks are included in the ACECQA Excursions Risk Assessment template, and require preschools to ensure that each child is appropriately secured and restrained, in accordance with the laws of the Northern Territory (NT).

Seatbelt and safety restraint requirements are dependent on the type of vehicle being used for the excursion. In the NT all children under seven years of age must be secured in an approved child restraint or booster seat when travelling in a vehicle that seats 12 or less people (including the driver). For further information see [Child restraints frequently asked questions](#)⁸.

3.12. Working with children clearance notices

The [Working with Children Clearance Notices \(Ochre Card\) Policy](#)⁹ applies to all accompanying persons over 15 years of age on the excursion. Note that a parent *may* be exempt from the Ochre Card requirement where the parent:

- is only engaged as a voluntary worker, and
- is a parent of at least one of the children with whom they may have contact with as such a worker, and
- does not participate in any overnight stays, and
 - is at all times under the direct supervision of someone who holds a current Ochre Card and
 - is not required by the Principal to hold a current Ochre Card.

4. Forms and templates

The following templates should be used to assist in providing the required documentation. While these can be amended to suit the excursion, ensure that all details required by the policy and guidelines are retained. These documents can be accessed via the department's [internal staff site](#).

Table 6. Excursions forms, templates and attachments

Forms/templates	Attachments
Excursion Application – Category A/B	Parental Consent Form
Excursion Application – Category C/D	Risk Management Plan (included in form)
Memo for in-principle approval	Self-Inspection Checklist
Ministerial Brief (incl. International Travel Itinerary)	Education Program (included in memo) Itinerary (included in form)

⁸ <https://roadsafety.nt.gov.au/safety-topics/seatbelts>

⁹ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/working-with-children-clearance-notices-ochre-cards>