

EXCURSION POLICY

Excursions are a valuable experience for children, families and staff. They provide the opportunity to expand and enhance children's experiences, explore different environments and engage in meaningful ways with our communities. Excursions require appropriate planning and risk management to ensure the best experience and enjoyment for all. The majority of Highland Grove's excursions are walking excursions. If we ever participate in an excursion that includes bus travel this policy is implemented alongside the Safe Transportation Policy. All excursions are well considered, provide meaningful experiences and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
4 (1)	Definition regular outing
89	First Aid Kits
97	Emergency and evacuation procedures
98	Telephone or other communication equipment
99	Children leaving the education and care service premises
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
102	Authorisation for excursion
123	Educator to child ratios-centre-based services
136	First Aid qualifications
161	Authorisations to be kept in enrolment record
168	Policies and procedures are required
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

PURPOSE

To ensure that all excursions undertaken by Highland Grove are carefully planned and conducted in a safe manner, maintaining children's health, safety and wellbeing at all times in accordance with National Regulations. We believe excursions provide the children with the opportunity to expand and enhance their skills and knowledge gaining insight into their local and the wider community.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Excursions will be conducted with the children's safety and wellbeing in mind at all times. We will regularly schedule incursions and visitors to Highland Grove, however, if we feel an excursion will benefit the children and offer a valuable experience, we will adhere to the National Regulations and Service policies and procedures to plan and manage an experience that is enjoyable and educational for children.

Considerations for excursions

The purpose of the excursion should be clearly identified by staff providing information on how the excursion supports the educational program and contributes to the outcomes for children.

Excursions should be planned in advance and consideration given to the:

- time away from the service
- availability of toilet and washing facilities
- access to safe drinking water
- adequate health and hygiene practices
- possible risk to children (identified in risk assessment)
- accessibility for all children
- weather- wet weather arrangements
- any Risk Assessment documentation provided by the excursion venue
- teaching children safety procedures and responsibilities whilst on an excursion
- transportation (where appropriate)
- cost (excursions and incursions if applicable)

Excursion Risk Assessment

The Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor must conduct a detailed risk assessment which reflects Regulation 101 before an authorisation is scheduled under Regulation 102 to determine the safety and appropriateness of the excursion/incursion. If the excursion involves transporting children, the risk assessment must adhere to **all** components of regulations 101 and 102 (effective 1 October 2020).

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

- an *Excursion Risk Assessment* is developed prior to any excursion.
(*Note: If the excursion is a regular excursion, or 'regular outing' a risk assessment authorisation is only required to be carried out once in a 12-month period, however, must be regularly reviewed. If circumstances around the excursion change, a new risk assessment is required*).

- families are notified about the excursion ahead of time and written authorisation must be provide by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record
(*Note: Families have the option to sign permission to allow staff to take children on regular, local walking excursions. This parent/carer permission is included on the child's Enrolment Form*).

families have a right to view the Risk Assessment prior to the excursion upon request

- the risk assessment must
 - identify and assess possible risks that the excursion/incursion may pose to the health, safety and wellbeing of any child being taken on the excursion
 - specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised

- consider the proposed route and destination for the excursion and
- identify any water hazards
- consider the ratio of adults to children involved in the excursion
- consider the risks posed by the excursion, the number of educators or other responsible adults required to provide supervision, and whether any adults with specialised skills are required to ensure children's safety (eg: lifesaving skills)
- consider the planned activities
- determine the duration of the excursion
- consider items that should be taken on the excursion (mobile phone, emergency contacts, first aid kit, medical plans, etc.).
- consider strategies to ensure supervision is consistent at all times during the excursion-transitions, toileting, departure from the service and conclusion of the excursion

Parent/Families Authorisation

The Nominated Supervisor must ensure:

- that a child is not taken outside the Service premises on an excursion unless written authorisation has been provided
- the authorisation must be given by a parent or other authorised person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority to authorise the child to attend a walking excursion
- the authorisation must state:
 - the child's name
 - the reason the child is to be taken outside the premises and the destination of the walking excursion
 - if the authorisation is for a regular outing, when the outings will occur
 - the proposed activities to be undertaken by the child during the excursion
 - the approximate period the child will be away from the premises
 - the anticipated number of children likely to be attending the excursion
 - the anticipated educator to child ratio attending the excursion to the anticipated number of children attending the excursion
 - the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children on the excursion
 - that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the Service
 - that the excursion policy is provided to families and is available at the Service
- if the excursion is a regular outing, the written authorisation is only required to be obtained once in a 12-month period and authorisations must be kept securely in the child's enrolment records
- on each day that a walking excursion occurs, the educators will notify the families (once authorisation has been sought).

Staffing Arrangements

The Approved Provider will ensure that:

- educator to child ratios are no less than the prescribed ratios as per National Regulations
- additional educators/staff are engaged to provide care and support to children with additional needs
- consideration for adequate supervision may include:
 - the number, age and ability of children
 - the number and physical positioning of educators
 - risks related to the mode of transport (for example: walking)
 - visibility and accessibility
 - the experience and skill of each educator
- educators are aware of their responsibility to provide supervision to other responsible adults or volunteers assisting on the excursion

- educators are aware the procedures to follow in the event of an emergency
- at least one educator or the nominated supervisor must hold current First Aid qualification, approved emergency Asthma management and approved anaphylaxis management training. (As all of Highland Grove’s permanent educators hold this qualification, this should be exceeded)

Parent and Volunteer Participation

The approved Provider will ensure parents and volunteers:

- cannot be counted as part of the educator to child ratio
- cannot be left alone with a child/children and must be supervised by an educator at all times
- are briefed prior to participating on an excursion about the risk assessment, emergency procedures, supervision, photograph policy for privacy and confidentiality and use of mobile phone
- are aware that smoking is not permitted
- are aware of need to wear appropriate clothing and footwear.

Items to be taken on an Excursion

The Approved Provider must ensure that the following items are taken on all excursions, as per the risk assessment:

- appropriate number of suitably equipped first aid kits
- fully charged and operating mobile phone
- emergency contact information details for all children participating on the excursion
- medication for children requiring medical and relevant medical management plans
- items required for excursion circumstances- such as sunscreen, hats, other equipment
- The day’s attendance record

Transportation for Excursion

It is a requirement of National Regulations that the means of transport and how each child is accounted for is stated on the risk assessment record and parent authorisation record.

At Highland Grove, our excursions are primarily walking excursions (mostly to our local park).

When on a walking excursion, educators:

- must ensure children and adults use the safest footpaths and safe crossings where possible, such as pedestrian crossings and traffic lights
- will ensure all children and adults obey road rules and ensure children follow the ‘stop, look, listen and think’ process when walking near roads.
- will remain vigilant that no child runs ahead or lags behind the group

Excursions involving transportation must adhere to the *Safe Transportation Policy* including ensuring a risk assessment has been completed prior to children being transported and authorisation for the service to transport children as part of the excursion.

It is a requirement of National Regulations that the means of transport is stated on the risk assessment record and parent authorisation record. Information must be included in the risk assessment about the process for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for.

On the rare times the centre transports children on an excursion by bus, the Approved Provider will ensure that the seating capacity, as displayed on the compliance registration, is not exceeded. All children must sit on seats, preferably with, or close to an adult. Any requirements for seat belts or safety restraints under law must be followed depending on the vehicle used. If the bus has seat belts, they must be worn at all times.

Check for Children's Safety

On a walking excursion, educators will ensure:

- Children's attendance records are taken on excursions.
- where possible, educators hold children's hands (or peers join hands) to supervise them walking
- head counts are conducted at least every 30 minutes whilst on the excursion
- bathrooms and toilets are checked for any potential hazard before children enter, and children are escorted to the bathrooms and supervised.

When on an excursion where transport by bus is involved, educators will do above and also ensure:

- all children are accounted for when embarking and disembarking the bus.
- A thorough check is made of the bus to ensure no child is left on the vehicle.
- The vehicle is parked to avoid, driveways or car parks.
- The vehicle is parked as close as possible to the venue

LOST CHILD DURING AN EXCURSION

In the event of a child being unaccounted for during an excursion, educators will immediately:

- inform another educator and provide supervision for groups
- conduct a head count
- ask children/parent helpers/other educators if they have seen the missing child
- search the premises
- check organised meeting points (use mobile phone to contact other educators)
- if the child is still unaccounted for after checking as above, the nominated supervisor, educator will contact the Police on 000 and report the incident
- the nominated supervisor will contact parents/guardian
- educators will reassure other children and provide supervision
- the Approved Provider must make a notification to the Regulatory Authority within 24 hours of a serious incident

Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (2009) *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010. (Amended 2018).

[Education and Care Services National Regulations](#). (2011)

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2018). (Amended 2020).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Victoria State Government Education and Training *Early Childhood Professionals*

Reviewed: 12.10.23