



ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, COHUNA EXCURSIONS POLICY

1. Vision

The vision for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (CES Limited) is to provide, in partnership with our families, stimulating, enriching, liberating and nurturing learning environments in each of the Catholic school communities within the Diocese. At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the ongoing duty of care that we have for the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people.

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act
- in leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment.

2. Background

Schedule 4 clause 12 of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 require registered schools in Victoria to ensure the care, safety and welfare of all students attending the school in accordance with any applicable State and Commonwealth laws and to ensure that staff employed at the school are advised of their obligations under those laws. The Guidelines to Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration provides that all schools must have appropriate arrangements for the supervision of students engaged in off-site activities and which include consideration of the risk of bushfire in the activity location.

CES Limited requires all Sandhurst Catholic Schools to adopt this Excursions Policy that outlines how each school will manage the risks associated with school excursions and to ensure that it meets duty of care owed to students, as well as the requirements of the Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017.

An excursion is defined as any activity beyond the school grounds. As excursions are conducted off school premises, away from the usual protections of the school environment these activities have the potential to present unique risks to the school. All staff have a Duty of Care to take reasonable steps to protect students from an injury that staff may have reasonably foreseen.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the processes and procedures of the school for managing the risks associated with school excursions and to make excursions as safe as possible for students.

4. Principles

Excursions are seen as an integral part of the school curriculum as they enable students to explore, extend and enrich their learning and their social skills development, in a non-school setting. Excursions may have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and

complement the educational programs offered at the school . When planning an excursion, the following general principles must be followed:

- Excursions should relate to the school's curriculum
- Excursions must be age/stage appropriate
- Excursions must provide valuable outcomes for students
- Excursions are inclusive and schools must make all reasonable attempts to give all students an opportunity to participate
- A teacher has a duty of care to take reasonable steps to protect students from an injury that the teacher may reasonably foresee
- The school will retain overall responsibility for the supervision and care of students throughout all excursions (including adventure activities), regardless of whether or not external providers are managing the activity
- Acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected during an excursion
- For overnight camps and extended excursions, supervision and accommodation arrangements are such that no staff member or accompanying adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegation of improper conduct to be made
- Comply with the CES Ltd Excursion Management Plan (see attached) for all excursion/Camps which includes hazard identification, risk assessment, control options, risk rating, monitoring and review of all activities to be undertaken.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all excursions including overnight camps, recreation and outdoor activities, single day excursions and other regular off campus activities organised by the school. This policy and procedures must be followed when planning and conducting excursions for students.

6. Proposing an excursion

When planning for and conducting excursions and any off-site activities the school must conduct a risk assessment of the activity/ies, to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risks associated with each proposed excursion.

The school's risk assessment must include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire activity in the excursion location. In the event of a Code Red Day being announced, excursions in affected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled in accordance with the School's Emergency Management Plan. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the excursion for any other reason.

A teacher who wishes to put forward a proposal for an excursion must do so by following the procedures in the CES Ltd Excursion Management Plan and submitting the Initial Application to the Principal. In the event the Principal provides preliminary approval, a teacher will need to prepare an Excursion Management Plan which will then need to be submitted to the Principal for final approval.

An Excursion Management Plan is a written document which is used to identify risks posed by a particular excursion, and to assess those risks having regard to mitigation strategies that have been developed.

CES Limited has developed a comprehensive Excursion Management Plan, including forms to assist schools in the process of proposing an excursion, providing documentation to ensure clear purposes, goals and strong rationale is present and the wellbeing and safety of all participants is of primary concern. Where similar excursions have been conducted in the past previous Excursion Management Plans should be reviewed and if suitable, used as a starting point for planning the new excursion.

A link to the Excursion Management Plan Template can be accessed from the Related Documents section at the end of this policy.

Final approval for an excursion may only be given by the Principal upon satisfaction that the risks posed by the particular excursion have been appropriately identified and appropriate risk mitigation strategies have been developed which will be implemented effectively.

Approval is given by the Principal signing and dating a copy of the Excursion Management Plan.

The Principal shall notify the classroom teacher once the excursion has been approved, or alternatively shall provide reasons if approval has not been granted.

The school is committed to ensuring students with additional needs are provided with an inclusive excursions program and will work with families during the planning stage, as needed, to support all students' attendance and participation in excursion activities.

All school staff will be aware that they retain overall responsibility for the supervision and care of students throughout all excursions (including adventure activities), regardless of

whether or not external providers are managing the activity.

In cases where an excursion involves a particular class or year level group, the Organising Teacher will ensure that there is an alternative educational program available and appropriate supervision for those students not attending the excursion.

Students and their parents, guardians and/or carers need to be made aware that acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected during an incursion or an excursion. Parents will be notified if a child is in danger of losing their eligibility to participate due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal (or his/her representative), in consultation with the relevant teacher(s).

7. Risk Management Procedures for Excursions

These strategies must be addressed in the Excursion Management Plan:

7.1 Consultation

- All key stakeholders including students, staff, parents, guardians and/or carers and where appropriate external providers are consulted as to the nature of the excursion, and any potential hazards which may be associated with the excursion
- All families will be given a reasonable time period to return permission forms and full payment for each excursion. This will usually be two weeks from the date the permission form is sent home.

7.2 Informed Consent

- Full details of the excursion have been provided to each student and their parent, guardian and/or carer
- The permission form for each excursion/incursion will state the date, the cost, the location, the method of transport, supervision arrangements including use of any external service providers, management of known medical/health conditions, any special needs
- All completed permission forms must contain at least one emergency contact and a parent, guardian and/or carer name and signature All students attending the excursion have received written permission from their parent, guardian and/or carers to attend.

7.3 Clothing & Equipment

- All students attending the excursion have been provided with details of the excursion requirements such as suitable clothing and equipment.

7.4 Venue Selection

- The appropriate nature and location of the selected venue/s.

- Consideration of bushfire in the location of the selected venue/s.

7.5 Transport Arrangements

- Appropriate transportation arrangements, including use of seat belts; and
- Appropriate pick up and drop off arrangements.

7.6 Known Medical issues

- All parents, guardians and/or carers are requested, prior to the excursion, to provide up to date details of any medical/health condition
- Students with disabilities and impairments may require additional assistance and every endeavour will be made to facilitate their involvement
- Where a child is considered higher risk because of an existing medical/health condition, appropriate strategies must be put in place.

7.7 Student's Capacity

- That any required skills have been identified and the planned activities are appropriate for the student's capacity
- Where a student is identified as not having the necessary capacity, appropriate risk management strategies are implemented for that particular student

7.8 Supervision

The development of a supervision strategy;

- The availability of supervisors with appropriate competencies, skills and experience (including first aid)
- An appropriate supervisor to student ratio having regard to the nature and length of the excursion
- Consideration of the supervision requirements for activities at an off-site location undertaken on excursions having regard to:
 - the nature and particular risks of the activity, such as swimming and water based activities
 - the risks presented by the activity venue and its location, such as bushfires and other environmental hazards
- Appropriate care is taken in selecting non-teaching staff/volunteers to perform a supervisory role during the excursion;
- Any parent, guardian and/or carer who provides assistance with an excursion must hold a current Working with Children Check and have provided the School with a copy of this check
- All excursion staff including parent, guardian and/or carer volunteers are

properly briefed with respect to all aspects of the Excursion Management Plan. They will be familiar with supervision requirements and the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each excursion.

7.9 External Service Providers

- Where possible external providers are selected from CES Limited Approved Supplier List
- Due diligence has been conducted on all external providers involved in the excursion to ensure their competency, their compliance with workplace safety laws and other relevant legislation.

7.10 Critical Incident (Emergency Response)

- Appropriate emergency response procedures are put in place
- A mobile telephone and a first aid kit/bag must be taken to all excursions.

7.11 Communication Strategies

- Appropriate communication strategies are put in place.

7.12 Insurance

- Appropriate insurance coverage is in place.

Where the need for additional risk assessments have been identified these must be included in the Excursion Management Plan.

8. Post excursion

At the conclusion of an excursion (including at the conclusion of Regular Off Campus Activities), the Organising teacher is required to complete the Excursion Debriefing Form, which is contained in the Excursion Management Plan, and provide a copy to the Principal. Staff debriefings following excursions provide an excellent opportunity to identify successful practice, areas of risk not previously considered, as well as areas for improvement.

9. Record keeping

Following the excursion, copies of all records relating to a particular excursion must be maintained, archived and marked "not to be destroyed".

Records to be maintained include:

- A copy of the Excursion Management Plan signed by the Principal and the Organising Teacher
- A copy of the Excursion Debriefing Form
- Name and Contact details of the Organising Teacher

- Names and Contact details of all supervisors, including non-teaching staff and parent helpers
- Names and Contact details of all students attending the excursion
- A Copy of the Child Safety Code of Conduct signed by non-teaching staff and parent helpers who acted in supervisory capacity during the excursion
- A Copy of any contracts the school may have entered into with a third party.
- A copy of any additional risk assessments
- In the event that an incident occurred during the excursion copies of all reports, documents or records, including any communication records relating to the particular incident.

10. Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 Role of the School Principal

- a) Implement and review the school's Excursions Policy as part of the CES Limited's Duty of Care Framework
- b) Review and approve Excursion Management Plans
- c) Ensure staff are provided with training and development opportunities in student supervision and duty of care obligations
- d) Ensure the policy is made publicly available
- e) Provide reports to the Executive Director CES Limited on the Policy and its implementation, including records of any incidents that occurred during an excursion as required and requested
- f) Ensure records of excursions are maintained and archived

10.2 Role of the Organising Teacher

- Ensure to follow this Policy and Procedures in organising and conducting an excursion, including completion of the Excursion Management Plan, and an Excursion Debriefing Form and Camps

10.3 Role of the Catholic Education Sandhurst (CES Limited) Board

- Receive reports from Executive Director on implementation and compliance across all Sandhurst Catholic Schools
- Review and assess reports received by the Executive Director on excursions

11. Review

This Excursion Policy is scheduled for review every three years, or more frequently if required.

Related Documents and Other Resources

- Excursion Management Plan
- Excursion Debriefing Form

Responsibility for Policy	Executive Director CES Limited Assistant to the Director: Pastoral Wellbeing School Principal
Approval Authority	CES Limited Board
Approval date	October 2020
Date of next review	October 2023