



## **EMERGENCY & SAFETY: EXCURSIONS**

### **PURPOSE**

This policy provides clear guidelines for planning, organising, and conducting excursions safely at Essential Early Learning. Excursions provide valuable learning experiences for children by extending their experiences beyond the service environment. We are committed to ensuring that all excursions are well-planned, appropriately supervised, and conducted in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Our service will:

- Provide enriching excursion experiences that support children's learning and development
  - Conduct comprehensive risk assessments for all excursions
  - Ensure appropriate supervision and educator-to-child ratios are maintained
  - Obtain written authorisation from parents/guardians
  - Plan for emergency situations during excursions
  - Communicate effectively with families about excursions
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### **SCOPE**

This policy applies to:

- All children enrolled at the service
  - The approved provider, nominated supervisor, educators and staff
  - Parents, guardians and families
  - Students on placement and volunteers
  - All excursions taken by the service, including regular outings and special events
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### **LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS**

This policy is based on the following legislation and standards:

#### **Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010**

- Section 165: Offence to inadequately supervise children
- Section 167: Offence relating to protection of children from harm and hazards

#### **Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011**

- Regulation 100: Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
- Regulation 101: Conduct of risk assessment for excursion
- Regulation 102: Authorisation for excursions
- Regulation 123: Educator-to-child ratios
- Regulation 136: First aid qualifications
- Regulation 168: Education and care service must have policies and procedures

#### **National Quality Standard**

- Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

- Element 2.2.1: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard
- Quality Area 3: Physical Environment
- Element 3.2.3: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible
- Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

### **NSW-Specific Legislation:**

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW)
  - Road Transport Act 2013 (NSW)
  - Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)
  - Privacy Act 1988
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### **KEY DEFINITIONS**

**Excursion:** An outing organised by the service where children leave the service premises. This includes walks in the local community, visits to parks, libraries, schools, or other venues, and special events.

**Regular Outing:** An excursion that occurs on a regular basis to the same destination (e.g., weekly visits to the local park or library).

**Risk Assessment:** A systematic process of identifying potential hazards, assessing risks, and implementing control measures to minimise those risks.

**Authorisation:** Written permission from a parent or guardian for their child to participate in an excursion.

**Responsible Person:** The nominated supervisor or educator in day-to-day charge who is responsible for the overall coordination and safety of the excursion.

**Water-based Excursion:** An excursion where children will be near or in water (including beaches, pools, rivers, lakes, or water play areas).

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

#### **1. Types of Excursions**

##### **Regular Outings:**

The service may conduct regular outings, including:

- Walks in the local community
- Visits to local parks and playgrounds
- Visits to the local library
- Nature walks and environmental education activities

##### **Special Excursions:**

The service may organise special excursions, including:

- School visits for transitioning children
- Cultural events and performances



- Farm visits or animal encounters
- Community events and celebrations
- Educational venues (museums, aquariums, etc.)

## 2. Risk Assessment for Excursions

### **Requirement:**

In accordance with Regulation 100 and 101, a risk assessment must be conducted before each excursion. This includes regular outings and special excursions.

### **Risk Assessment Must Consider:**

The risk assessment will identify and assess risks that may be posed to children on the excursion, including:

- The proposed route and destination
- Any water hazards (including rivers, creeks, beaches, pools)
- Any traffic hazards (roads, car parks, driveways)
- The method of transport to and from the excursion
- The number of adults and children involved in the excursion
- The ages and developmental stages of the children
- The ratios of educators to children
- The experience, knowledge and skill levels of educators
- Children's individual needs, abilities and medical conditions
- The duration of the excursion
- Toilet and nappy change facilities
- Areas where children will be eating
- Access to drinking water
- Weather conditions
- Access to shade
- Accessibility for children with additional needs
- Emergency evacuation procedures at the venue
- Location of nearest hospital or medical facility
- Mobile phone reception

### **Risk Minimisation Strategies:**

For each identified risk, the risk assessment will document:

- The specific hazard
- The level of risk (low, medium, high)
- Strategies to minimise or eliminate the risk
- Who is responsible for implementing the control measures

### **Site Visits:**

- For special excursions to new venues, a site visit should be conducted before the excursion where practical
- During the site visit, educators will assess all aspects of the venue for safety
- Photographs or notes may be taken to assist with planning



#### **Documentation:**

- Risk assessments will be documented in writing
- Risk assessments will be kept on file for 3 years
- Risk assessments will be reviewed if circumstances change

### **3. Parental Authorisation**

#### **Authorisation Requirements:**

In accordance with Regulation 102, written authorisation must be obtained from a parent or guardian before a child participates in an excursion.

#### **Authorisation Must Include:**

- The child's name
- The reason for the excursion (description and purpose)
- The date of the excursion
- The destination and any venues to be visited
- The method of transport to and from the excursion
- The proposed departure time
- The anticipated return time
- Any risks identified in the risk assessment that are relevant to the child
- How these risks will be managed and minimised
- The proposed educator-to-child ratio
- Signature of the parent/guardian
- Date of authorisation

#### **Regular Outings Authorisation:**

- For regular outings (e.g., weekly library visits), families may provide ongoing authorisation on enrolment
- The authorisation must specify the regular outing type, destination, and frequency
- Families will be notified before each regular outing occurs
- Families may withdraw authorisation at any time

#### **Children Without Authorisation:**

- Children without written authorisation will not attend the excursion
- Alternative care arrangements will be made at the service
- Educator-to-child ratios will be maintained for children remaining at the service

### **4. Supervision and Educator-to-Child Ratios**

#### **Minimum Ratios:**

At a minimum, educator-to-child ratios on excursions will meet the requirements of Regulation 123:

- Children aged 2-3 years: 1 educator to 5 children
- Children aged 3-5 years: 1 educator to 11 children

#### **Enhanced Ratios:**

The service will consider enhanced ratios (more educators) based on:

- The nature and risks of the excursion



- The ages and abilities of children attending
- Children with additional needs
- The complexity of the destination
- Water-based excursions
- Distance from emergency services

**Active Supervision:**

- Educators will maintain active supervision at all times
- Children will remain within sight and/or hearing of an educator
- Educators will position themselves strategically to supervise all children
- Regular head counts will be conducted
- Children will be counted before leaving the service, during transitions, and before returning

**Parent/Volunteer Assistance:**

- Parents and volunteers may assist on excursions
- Parent/volunteer helpers do not count towards educator-to-child ratios
- Parent/volunteer helpers must have a current Working with Children Check
- Parent/volunteer helpers will be briefed on their role and responsibilities
- Parent/volunteer helpers remain under the direct supervision of an educator

**5. Transportation**

**Walking Excursions:**

When walking to an excursion destination:

- Children will walk in pairs or small groups with an educator at the front and rear
- High-visibility vests will be worn by educators and children where appropriate
- Safe pedestrian crossings will be used
- Children will be taught and reminded about road safety
- A risk assessment will consider traffic and pedestrian hazards

**Public Transport:**

When using public transport:

- Children will be closely supervised at all times
- Children will be seated with an educator nearby
- Regular head counts will be conducted
- Safety rules will be explained to children (e.g., holding on, staying seated)

**Private Vehicle Transport:**

If private vehicles are used for transportation:

- All drivers must have a current driver's licence appropriate for the vehicle
- All drivers must have current Working with Children Check
- Vehicles must be registered and insured
- Vehicles must be roadworthy and in good condition
- Age-appropriate child restraints/seatbelts must be used for all children
- Children must never be left unattended in vehicles
- A head count must be conducted before leaving and upon arrival



### **Chartered Bus/Coach:**

If a chartered bus or coach is used:

- The transport company must be reputable and licensed
- Appropriate restraints/seatbelts must be available for all children
- Educators will supervise children during boarding, travel, and alighting
- A head count will be conducted before departure and after arrival

## **6. Preparation and Resources for Excursions**

### **Essential Items:**

The following items must be taken on all excursions:

- First aid kit
- Mobile phone(s)
- Emergency contact information for all children
- Attendance record/roll
- Medical management plans and medications for children with medical conditions
- General-use adrenaline auto-injector (if risk of anaphylaxis)
- Asthma reliever medication and spacers
- Drinking water
- Sun protection (hats, sunscreen)
- Nappies, wipes, and change mat (if applicable)
- Spare clothes
- Tissues and hand sanitiser
- Plastic bags for soiled items
- Authorisation forms
- Risk assessment
- Copy of this excursion policy

### **Educator Responsibilities:**

Before the excursion, educators will:

- Be briefed on the excursion plan, risk assessment, and their roles
- Check they have all necessary resources and equipment
- Review children's medical management plans
- Prepare children by discussing the excursion, expectations, and safety rules
- Conduct a head count before departure

### **Children's Preparation:**

- Children will be prepared for excursions through discussions and activities
- Safety rules and expectations will be clearly explained
- Children will be taught to stay with their group and educators
- Children will be encouraged to ask questions

## **7. Emergency Procedures During Excursions**

### **Emergency Planning:**

- The responsible person will know the location of the nearest hospital/medical centre
- Emergency assembly areas will be identified at the excursion venue



- Emergency procedures will be adapted for the excursion location
- Mobile phone reception will be checked

### **Missing Child:**

If a child cannot be accounted for:

- Immediately notify the responsible person
- Conduct an immediate thorough search of the immediate area
- Divide search areas amongst educators
- Notify venue staff/security
- Call 000 (Police) if child cannot be located within 5 minutes
- Notify parents/guardians
- Notify the service and approved provider
- Maintain supervision of other children

### **Medical Emergency:**

If a medical emergency occurs:

- Administer first aid immediately
- Follow the child's medical management plan (if applicable)
- Call 000 for ambulance if serious
- Contact parents/guardians immediately
- An educator will accompany the child in the ambulance if parents have not arrived
- Notify the service and approved provider
- Maintain supervision of other children
- Complete incident documentation

### **Other Emergencies:**

- Follow emergency procedures for the specific situation (fire, severe weather, etc.)
- Follow venue emergency procedures where applicable
- Prioritise children's safety and wellbeing
- Keep children calm and together
- Contact emergency services if required
- Notify parents and the service

## **8. Water-Based Excursions**

### **Additional Requirements:**

For excursions where children will be near or in water:

- Enhanced supervision ratios will apply (1:1 or 1:2 depending on water depth and conditions)
- At least one educator with current water safety or swimming qualifications will attend
- The risk assessment will specifically address water hazards
- Children's swimming abilities will be considered
- Appropriate flotation devices will be available if required
- Boundaries for water play will be clearly defined
- Constant direct visual supervision will be maintained
- Water safety rules will be explained to children

## 9. Communication with Families

### Before the Excursion:

Families will be informed about excursions through:

- Written notices or newsletters
- Emails or digital communication platforms
- Verbal communication
- Display boards at the service

### Information Provided:

Families will receive information about:

- The purpose and educational value of the excursion
- Date, destination, and itinerary
- Departure and return times
- Method of transport
- What to bring (e.g., lunch, hat, water bottle)
- What children should wear
- Any costs (if applicable)
- Educator-to-child ratio
- Risk management strategies

### After the Excursion:

- Families will be informed about how the excursion went
- Photos may be shared (with family consent)
- Learning experiences and highlights will be documented
- Any incidents or concerns will be communicated

## 10. Cancellation of Excursions

### Reasons for Cancellation:

Excursions may be cancelled or postponed due to:

- Severe weather conditions
- Unsafe conditions at the destination
- Insufficient educator-to-child ratio
- Emergency situations
- Venue closures or changes
- Other safety concerns

### Notification:

- Families will be notified as soon as possible if an excursion is cancelled
- Alternative arrangements will be made for children's care at the service
- Excursions may be rescheduled where possible

## EDUCATOR AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

### Nominated Supervisor/Person in Day-to-Day Charge:

- Ensure all excursions comply with this policy and regulations





- Conduct or oversee risk assessments for all excursions
- Ensure written authorisation is obtained from all families
- Ensure appropriate educator-to-child ratios are maintained
- Designate a responsible person for each excursion
- Ensure all necessary resources and equipment are prepared
- Brief educators on their roles and responsibilities
- Make decisions about cancellation if necessary
- Maintain communication with the service during excursions

#### **All Educators and Staff:**

- Understand and follow this policy
- Participate in risk assessment and planning
- Maintain active supervision of children at all times
- Conduct regular head counts
- Follow emergency procedures if required
- Administer first aid when necessary
- Communicate with families before and after excursions
- Document observations and learning experiences
- Report any incidents or concerns

#### **FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Families are responsible for:

- Providing written authorisation for their child to attend excursions
- Reading excursion information carefully
- Ensuring their child arrives on time for excursions
- Providing appropriate clothing and items as requested
- Informing educators of any changes to their child's health or needs
- Ensuring medical management plans and medications are current
- Notifying the service if their child will not attend an excursion
- If volunteering, obtaining a Working with Children Check
- Following educator instructions when assisting on excursions

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#### **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- ACECQA: Guide to the National Quality Framework
- ACECQA: Excursions Fact Sheet
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard
- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website:  
[www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Early Childhood Australia: Excursion Guidelines
- SafeWork NSW: Work Health and Safety Guidelines
- Transport for NSW: Child Restraint Information



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## POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every two years or more frequently if required due to:

- Legislative changes
- Changes in best practice
- Following an incident during an excursion
- Feedback from families, educators or staff
- Following regulatory assessment and rating
- Changes to service operations or excursion practices

**Date policy was last reviewed:** 11/01/2026

**Date for next review:** 11/01/2028

**Reviewed by:** Director and Staff