

Excursions policy

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5	July 2017	Quality School Systems and Support	Minor updates for publishing – spelling and formatting
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7	April 2021	Quality School Systems and Support	Minor amendments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning principal and teaching principal role and responsibility • Role clarity for QSSS • Remove requirement of movement requisition for category A and B • Remove requirement of category A and B excursions being submitted to QSSS

Acronyms	Full form
DFaT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
NT	Northern Territory
NTG	Northern Territory Government
QSSS	Quality School Systems and Support
SIL	School Improvement and Leadership
SSNT	School Sport NT
TRM	Territory Records Manager

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This policy is part of the Excursions information available on the Department of Education School policies webpage in the Excursions section.¹ Read this document with the Excursions guidelines¹ and the Official travel policy, which is available to staff only on the Education intranet.

1. Policy

This policy outlines responsibilities and procedures that must be adhered to when planning and undertaking school excursions. Excursions must have clear educational outcomes that take into account the learning programs and individual needs of students, as well as the educational programs and resources of the school. Activities must be inclusive, with all students appropriately supported to participate.

All excursion documentation must be submitted and approved in accordance with this policy and associated guidelines¹ prior to any excursion taking place.

1.1. Excursion categories

1.1.1. Category A – local area excursions and regular outings

Local area excursions include reoccurring excursions and regular outings involve movement either on foot or requiring transport within the local community but not involving absence overnight. Category A excursions require principal approval.

1.1.2. Category B – excursions beyond the local area or overnight

Are excursions which may involve travel beyond the local community but within the Northern Territory (NT) and/or involve overnight accommodation, for example school camps. Category B excursions require principal approval.

1.1.3. Category C – interstate excursions

Interstate excursions require in-principle approval from the Senior Director School Improvement and Leadership (SIL), through the director QSSS before planning commences. Final approval is required from the Chief Executive.

1.1.4. Category D - international excursions

International excursions involve travel overseas and require in-principle approval from the Senior Director SIL, through the Director QSSS, then endorsement from the Chief Executive and final approval from the Minister for Education. All requests for international excursions are to be justified in terms of need, educational benefits and cost prior to seeking approval for travel from the Minister for Education.

It is important to note: Interstate and international excursions may not be considered for approval unless documentation is submitted within the timeframes as set out in the Excursion guidelines.

The department does not accept responsibility for expenses incurred for excursions unless prior approval for the expenditure has been granted by the appropriate delegate.

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

Students should be notified when enrolling in a course of study where excursions are an integral part of the course. Alternative educational programs should be available to students unable to participate in an excursion.

2. Business need

Excursions are a valuable teaching and learning experience providing an opportunity for students to learn from the wider community, building on and reinforcing the school curriculum. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff, educational excursions and/or regular outings should be conducted with consistent processes and awareness of all parties of their responsibilities. This policy and related guidelines¹ seeks to clarify the obligations and procedural requirements for preschools and schools – including independent public schools – and particularly principals, teachers and parents.

Where a school operates a preschool service or other education and care service regulated under the National Quality Framework² for early childhood education and care, the department is obliged to ensure regulatory requirements are maintained at all times in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Law*³ and Education and Care Services National Regulations.⁴

3. Scope

This policy applies to all excursions arranged by Northern Territory Government (NTG) schools – including preschools and independent public schools, and department coordinated programs, for example Katherine Stronger Smarter Sisters program.

This policy does not apply to:

- a) third party arranged excursions such as Clontarf and Role Models and Leaders Australia excursions, however:
 - principal approval must be sought in accordance with any third party organisation's procedures prior to students participating in such excursions
 - prior to approving any such excursion, principals must be satisfied that appropriate risk management strategies are in place to ensure student wellbeing
 - where students are participating in overseas travel as part of an overseas excursion, the Chief Executive must be notified.
- b) work experience
- c) vocational education placements
- d) School Sport NT (SSNT) sporting excursions - SSNT excursions are approved by the Chief Executive and have set procedures on duty of care and safety. For further information, refer to SSNT policies and procedures⁵.

² <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework>

³ <https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/education-and-care-services-national-law-act-2010/013>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

⁵ <https://www.schoolsportnt.com.au/forms-and-policies/>

4. Definitions

Accompanying adults – includes teachers, parents, school council employees or any other adult individual who will be participating in the excursion and providing supervision.

Consent – means the parent agrees to their child participating in an activity after they have been made aware of the details, risks and associated costs involved.

Excursion – means an educational, sporting or cultural trip by students within or outside the NT, under the direction of teachers and activity leaders authorised by the department.

Higher risk or of a significant nature – for the purpose of this policy, excursions that include water-based or outdoor education activities, overnight stays or include travel outside of the local area, are considered to be higher risk or of a significant nature.

Movement Requisition Form – is only required for Category C and D excursions. These forms are in Microsoft Word format, and only one movement requisition form is completed for all adults on the excursion.

Ochre Card – is photo identification proof that an individual has received a Working with Children⁶ Clearance Notice. In the NT, it is a legal requirement for all persons over 15 years of age undertaking paid or voluntary child-related work to hold a current Ochre Card. The NT *Education Act 2015* and Regulations uphold this requirement. Parents may be exempt from holding an Ochre Card if they:

- are engaged only as a voluntary worker
- are a parent of at least one of the children with who they have contact with while in this role
- do not participate in any overnight stays
- are at all times under the direct supervision of someone who holds a current Ochre Card, and
- are not required by the principal to hold a current Ochre Card.

Parent – means a child's father, mother or any other person who has parental responsibility for the child, including a person who is regarded as a parent of the child under Aboriginal customary law or Aboriginal tradition. The definition of parent does not include a person standing in place of the parent on a temporary basis.

Parental responsibility (in regards to the definition of parent) – refers to a person who has:

- a) daily care and control of the child, or
- b) is entitled to exercise all the powers and rights, and has all the responsibilities, in the relation to the long-term care and development of the child, or
- c) has daily care and control of the child and the entitlement and responsibilities at (b) and includes a person who has been given the above responsibilities under another state or territory law.

Principal – a principal, for the purpose of excursion approval includes a teaching principal.

Recurring excursion/regular outing – means a walk, drive or trip to and from a destination that the student cohort visits regularly as part of its educational program, where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same on each outing e.g. swimming lessons or visiting a local playground. The

⁶ <https://nt.gov.au/emergency/community-safety/apply-for-a-working-with-children-clearance>

application process, including the risk assessment and parent consent, are only required to be undertaken once every 12 months for regular outings.

Teacher in charge – means the teacher nominated by the principal to organise the excursion and to have ultimate responsibility and authority while the activity is in progress. In some circumstances a principal may nominate a trainer to be the teacher in charge of category A or B excursions. For department-coordinated programs the teacher in charge may be a departmental employee who is not a teacher.

Trainer – has at least a Certificate IV in training and assessing and vocational competencies, or qualifications to the level being trained and assessed.

Travel with students for official purposes – involves travel either interstate or overseas by school staff on official business, for example travel to foster sister school relationships, interstate/intrastate events and ceremonies. Official travel with students requires in-principle approval from a Director QSSS before planning commences, and final approval from the Chief Executive. School staff accompanying students must follow the Official travel policy processes when organising and booking their travel in addition to completing the excursion paperwork.

TRM – Category C and D excursion applications are entered and processed for approval via the Territory Records Manager system (TRM).

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1. Teacher in charge or authorised department employee

The teacher in charge or authorised department employee, is responsible for:

- following the Excursion guidelines and procedures **Error! Bookmark not defined.** to prepare all required documentation for the relevant excursion category
- submitting all documents to the principal for endorsement or approval within the required timelines
- in the case where an excursion involves a particular class or year level group, the organising teacher will ensure that there is an alternative program available for those students not attending the excursion
- working with the principal to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to assist students with additional needs to participate in the excursion activities and overall program
- ensuring that all relevant information about respective responsibilities and obligations is clearly communicated to all accompanying adults
- ensuring that all excursion staff and where appropriate, students, will be familiar with the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each excursion
- exercising proper care and supervision throughout the duration of the excursion.

5.2. Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- authorising an appropriate department employee to be in charge of any excursion undertaken by the school
- approval of Category A and B excursions

- obtaining approval from the relevant authorising delegate for category C and D excursions, as directed in the Excursion guidelines **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- ensuring that excursion outings are planned and conducted in accordance with this policy and the Excursion guidelines **Error! Bookmark not defined.** and that reasonable care is taken to ensure the safety of students and staff
- ensuring that all teaching staff, trainers and volunteers adhere to the requirements of this policy and the Excursion guidelines **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- submitting international and interstate travel forecasts to their Director QSSS.

If an excursion requires expenditure of funds, the principal must verify that the expenditure is within their financial delegation.

5.3. International Education and Non-Government School Services

International Education and Non-Government School Services is responsible for:

- providing advice specific to Category D excursions and the suitability of destinations in line with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFaT) travel advice
- liaison with DFaT in situations where schools are travelling to a location with a risk rating level that is greater than one.

5.4. Directors QSSS

Directors QSSS are responsible for:

- monitoring that principals are compliant with the requirements of this policy and the Excursion guidelines **Error! Bookmark not defined.** through educative audits
- providing advice regarding in-principle endorsement from the Senior Director, School Improvement and Leadership (SIL) of all Category C and D excursions
- endorsing Category C and D excursions for progression to the General Manager QSSS.

5.5. General Manager QSSS

General Manager QSSS is responsible for:

- endorsement of Category C and D excursions and progression to the Deputy Chief Executive, Education NT.

5.6. Deputy Chief Executive, Education NT

The Deputy Chief Executive is responsible for:

- endorsement of Category C and D excursions and progression to the Chief Executive.

5.7. Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is responsible for:

- approval of Category C excursions
- endorsement of Category D excursions and progression to the Minister for Education for approval.

5.8. Secretariat, Department of Education

Secretariat is responsible for:

- seeking approval of travel from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade
- providing Protocol Office, Department of the Chief Minister and Cabinet with notification of any Category D travel approved by the Minister for Education.

6. Related policy, legislation and documents

6.1. Policy

The following policy documents are publicly accessible by visiting the NT Department of Education's School policies webpage:⁷

- Alcohol consumption on department premises policy
- Recording and reporting student injuries - guidelines and procedures
- Safety in school sport policy
- School swimming and water safety programs policy, procedure and FAQ
- Working with Children Clearance Notices (Ochre Card) policy
- Excursion guidelines and procedures¹

The following policy documents are for staff use and accessible through the Document Centre:

- Official travel policy
- NTG travel policy framework
- NTG travel policy statement: overseas travel

6.2. Legislation

- *Education and Care Services National Law*
- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- *NT Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*⁸
- *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*

6.3. Supporting documents

- Excursions - parent consent form¹

The following supporting documents are for staff use and accessible through the Document Centre:

- Excursions - self inspection checklist
- NTPS Teacher and Educator Enterprise Agreement

⁷ <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies>

⁸ <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>

- International travel forecast
- Excursion application – Category A and B
- Excursion application – Category C and D
- Excursions – interstate or international travel - memo for in-principle approval
- Ministerial brief – Attachment A – international travel itinerary – Category D only