



# KATUNGA PRIMARY SCHOOL

## EXCURSIONS AND ACTIVITIES POLICY

### [Overview / Definition](#)

An excursion is an activity organised by a school (not including work experience) during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities (including camps and sport). Adventure activities are included in this definition (regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds or not).

### [Excursion considerations](#)

Principals are responsible for the conduct of all excursions and must ensure:

- an online notification of school activity form is completed prior to the activity
- a planning and approvals process is undertaken, in accordance with Departmental policy and requirements, which takes into account the following considerations:
  - venue selection
  - safety, emergency and risk management
  - informed consent from parents
  - medical information
  - appropriate staffing and supervision
  - student preparation and behaviour
  - requirements for any adventure activities.

**Note:** The regional director should be informed if an excursion leaves a school unoccupied.

## Planning and Approvals

### [Purpose of this policy](#)

To ensure excursions are planned and approved appropriately

### [Policy](#)

Principals must ensure that:

- excursions are appropriately planned and approved in accordance with Departmental policy and requirements
- all excursions requiring school council approval meet the requirements of the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

### [Planning and approvals](#)

**Important:** When undertaking excursion planning, principals, teachers, school councillors and others involved in school excursions (including camps and adventure activities), must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.

The excursion planning and approval process should take into account the following considerations:



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- the educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum
- maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process
- venue selection:
  - the suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion
- safety, emergency and risk management:
  - assessment of excursion risks
  - procedures in the event of an emergency
  - arrangements if the excursion needs to be cancelled or recalled (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions)
  - completion of an online notification of school activity form three weeks prior to the activity
  - first aid requirements
  - any other measures necessary for student and staff safety and welfare including the safety of the students learning with an external provider (this is when the school contracts with another school, a registered training organization or an organization not registered as an education and training provider.)
- staffing and supervision:
  - there are sufficient staff to provide appropriate and effective supervision
  - the experience, qualifications and skills of each staff member (including volunteers, instructors, etc) will allow them to provide effective supervision in general and for planned activities (as applicable)
  - there are appropriate levels of supervision in view of the activities undertaken and students involved.
- informed consent from parents or carers
- adequate student and staff medical information
- student preparation and behaviour
- requirements for any adventure activities
- transportation requirements, noting that:
  - public transport should be used if practicable, where transport authorities should be consulted as to appropriate travel times and at least a fortnight's notice of travel provided
  - excursions that run late, failing to meet times agreed to with private bus operators, are likely to incur significant costs
  - information on student concession cards is available at: [Metlink](#)
- communication requirements
- that staff and students have appropriate clothing and personal equipment
- that group or technical equipment is in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken
- that continuous instruction is provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion
- any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed
- requirements for interstate or overseas excursions
- that the excursion meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedures.

For detailed information about the topics listed above see: [Related policies](#)

### [Who approves the excursion](#)

This table explains the approval required before the excursion occurs.

| Excursion type   | Then it must be approved by  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overnight excursions</li> <li>• camps</li> <li>• interstate and international visits</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school council, or</li> <li>• both school councils when it is a joint activity</li> </ul> |



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## Excursion type

- excursions requiring sea or air travel
- excursions involving weekends or vacations
- adventure activities.

Then it must be approved by

involving another school

and

- day excursions (other than those referred to above that must be approved by the school council).

- the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors must be followed.

- the principal, or
- both principals when it is a joint activity involving another school.

## Joint-school activities

The nominated co-ordinating principal or teacher ensures:

- planning and approval requirements are met
- parents or carers are informed that their children may be supervised by teachers and other approved adults from the other school.

**Note:** All schools involved in a joint excursion must complete an online notification of school activity form.

## Required approvals for staff

This table describes the required approvals for teachers or principals who are to accompany excursions.

|                                     |   |  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| For an excursion that is interstate | The accompanying staff employed by the Department principal | Must be approved by the principal      |
| overseas                            | staff employed by the Department                            | regional director<br>regional director |

## Purpose of this policy

To ensure that adventure activities are conducted safely.

## Prerequisite policy

## Excursions – Planning and Approvals

### Policy

Schools must follow the Department’s guidelines and school excursion policies in planning conducting and approving adventure activities.

### Definition

An adventure activity is an activity that involves greater than normal risk which may include:



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- travel into a relatively undeveloped area of the country in which vehicle contact is difficult and/or uncertain
- confrontation with natural environmental challenges requiring greater reliance upon personal resources than would normally be required in day-to-day life
- less than normal contact by person or by telephone, with medical and other public services available in normal day-to-day life
- exposure to the natural elements with less than the normal physical protection provided in day-to-day life
- activities listed in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors such as:
  - abseiling
  - artificial climbing and abseiling walls
  - bush walking
  - canoeing/kayaking
  - challenge ropes courses
  - cross country skiing
  - cycling
  - downhill skiing and snowboarding
  - horse riding
  - orienteering
  - overnight camping
  - rafting
  - recreational swimming
  - rock climbing
  - sailing
  - scuba diving
  - sea kayaking
  - snorkelling
  - surfing
  - water skiing
  - windsurfing.

**Note:** Bush walking, cycling and overnight camping may be considered adventure activities where they involve greater than normal risk (as outlined above) and in the circumstances outlined in the activity descriptions in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

### [Safety and welfare of students learning with an external provider](#)

Katunga Primary School will take into consideration measures necessary for student and staff safety and welfare including the safety of the students learning with an external provider (this is when the school contracts with another school, a registered training organization or an organization not registered as an education and training provider.)

### [Requirements for adventure activities](#)

Adventure activities:

- are to be treated as excursions regardless of whether they occur on school grounds or not
- require the approval of school council and the planning and guidelines relevant to school excursions apply see: Excursions: Planning and Approvals

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- must also be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

For adventure activities which do not have specific guidelines listed in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, schools should refer to the Adventure Activity Standards (where relevant standards exist) and consider the greater duty of care that may be required for students see: Activities within [Department resources](#)

Information provided by community groups and organisations that specialise in the relevant adventure activities should be taken into account.

## Higher risk adventure activities

This table details additional requirements for the specified activities below:

| Activity                     | Schools must ensure that   |
|------------------------------|--|
| Caving                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• novices must only attempt the simplest caves</li><li>• only teachers and other adults with extensive caving experience lead and supervise students</li><li>• there is a ratio of no more than five students to one instructor with a minimum of two excursion staff members always present</li><li>• permission to enter caves is obtained from the appropriate land manager.</li></ul>  |
| Flying or hot air ballooning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• only commercial operators licensed to carry passengers are used for school organised activities.</li></ul>   |
| Gliding                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• gliding activities are only undertaken through gliding clubs. Activities may include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 'joyflights', under the auspices of an Air Operator's Certificate, with the glider pilot holding a Gliding Federation of Australia charter rating. These flights are conducted under the terms of the Commonwealth Carrier's Liability Act with an associated limited liability. No membership of the Gliding Federation of Australia is required</li><li>- 'trial instructional flights', which require becoming a daily member of the Gliding Federation of Australia. The pilot must hold a minimum of a Gliding Federation of Australia Air Experience Instructor authority. These flights are conducted under the protection of the comprehensive range of Gliding Federation of Australia insurances.</li></ul></li></ul> |

## Unsuitable activities

These activities are unsuitable for school students because of the potential risks involved:

- bungee jumping
- hang gliding
- parachuting or skydiving
- flying ultra light aircraft.



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Flying foxes

Flying Foxes may be erected at school camps provided that:

- safety precautions are taken in its construction and maintenance
- it can be locked or have the carriage removed when not in use
- all students are carefully briefed on its use and associated dangers
- staff supervise all use
- a safety harness is always used.

## Student Preparation and Behaviour

### Purpose of this policy

To ensure that students are adequately prepared for excursions.

### Policy

Schools must ensure that:

- students are adequately prepared for excursions
- the disciplinary measures for students on excursions are appropriate and consistent with the Effective Schools are Engaging Schools – Student Engagement Policy Guidelines and the school's student engagement policy.

### Student preparation

In preparation for excursions, schools should advise:

- students of:
  - the organisational arrangements
  - relevant safety arrangements or emergency procedures
- students and parents or carers:
  - of expected standards of behaviour
  - that in extreme cases students may be sent home from an excursion at the cost of the parents.

For excursions requiring school council approval see: Excursion support - student preparation within [Department resources](#)

### Returning a student home

In extreme cases the excursion staff, following consultation with and the approval of the school principal, may decide to return a student to their home from an excursion. Excursion staff should:

- advise the student's parent or carer of the:

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circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home  
time when the parent or carer may collect their child from the excursion or the anticipated  
time that the student will arrive home.

- consider the age and maturity of the student when making travelling arrangements.

## Safety, Emergency and Risk Management

### Purpose of this policy

To ensure school excursions are conducted safely.

### Policy

Principals must ensure that appropriate emergency and risk management planning is undertaken for excursions.

#### Emergency planning

The emergency management planning in schools extends to and incorporates school excursions.

All excursion staff and where appropriate, students, must be familiar with emergency procedures for each excursion.

Planning must cover arrangements if the excursion needs to be cancelled or recalled (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions).

School council approved excursions must have an emergency response plan see: [Department resources](#).

When staying at a residential campsite emergency procedures should be explained as soon as practicable after arrival and a trial evacuation exercise should be carried out immediately to ensure that procedures are appropriate and staff and students are familiar with them.

### Overseas Travel Requirements

The Smartraveller website is the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), travel advisory and consular assistance service. This site also provides useful travel information and tips see: [Smartraveller](#)

Schools planning and conducting overseas excursions must ensure that they:

- comply with any DFAT travel advice current for the proposed location;
- subscribe to receive automatic travel advice updates from the Smartraveller website both prior to the excursion and when overseas;
- review their risk assessment if there are any changes to the DFAT travel advice.

This table describes the four levels of DFAT travel advice with the required actions and considerations.

Level Required Actions and Considerations

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## Level Required Actions and Considerations

- 1 exercise normal safety precautions.
- 2 'exercise a high degree of caution' - requires additional attention to planning and assessment of risk. 'reconsider your need to travel' – would generally mean excursions should be postponed or cancelled
- 3 as the educational goals are unlikely to justify the risks. Any decision to continue would require a detailed risk assessment and treatment plan together with detailed contingency planning.
- 4 'do not travel' – schools must cancel or postpone the excursion.

Note: Before travelling overseas, schools should check the Smartraveller website itself to ensure that they have the most up-to-date travel advice for the proposed countries and locations to be visited.

For overseas travel risk management guidelines and a downloadable sample risk assessment register see: [Risk Management in Outdoor Education](#) (staff access only).

## [Emergency notifications](#)

In the event of an emergency, to ensure information is provided to emergency services, schools must notify the:

- Department of any approved school camp or excursion at least three weeks beforehand using the [Student Activity Locator online form](#). A user guide has been developed to help schools complete the online form, see: [Student Activity Locator User Guide](#)
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of overseas travel plans so that DFAT can help staff and students remain safe and secure while overseas, see: [Other resources](#)

## [Communications](#)

Parents or carers should be advised of the telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) for the designated school contact person in the event of an emergency.

During the excursion, if parents have reason to believe an emergency may have occurred (such as a media report) they should be informed that in the first instance they should call the contact person and not personnel on the excursion as this will keep the telephone lines free at the excursion site.

Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion must be made.

Consent forms must remain at the school with the designated school contact person and copies of each form must be taken on the excursion by the teacher in charge.

In the event of an emergency, accident or injury:

- staff on the excursion should:
  - take emergency action
  - immediately notify the school principal.
- the principal should make arrangements for the Department's Security Services Unit to be telephoned on 9589 6266.

## [Medical insurance for overseas excursions](#)



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The cost of medical and hospital treatment is high in some countries, therefore all students and staff should take out travel and medical insurance for the entire overseas trip.

## Supervision

Emergency procedures should include the effects of an emergency on student supervision in the event of excursion staff being required to assist injured students or to go for help.

Students who may have difficulty communicating in an emergency because of age or disability should wear identity tags on excursions.

## Fire danger or ban

Principals may need to cancel excursions at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. On such days, the Security Services Unit liaises with fire authorities to obtain up to date information for communication to schools that may be affected by wildfire, including schools who may have students attending camps or other venues in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required.

When required, schools must follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities for all excursions.

## Additional excursion equipment

School councils and principals:

- must supply smoke detectors if indoor accommodation facilities do not have them
- should consider providing communication equipment to be used in emergencies.

## First aid

At least one staff member responsible for each group of students must have a first aid qualifications.

Staff must also have a first aid kit appropriate to the excursion location and activities undertaken.

## Risk management

An assessment of excursion risks must be undertaken.

For excursions requiring school council approval, an excursion risk assessment plan must be provided which includes consideration of risks across the entire excursion (including transportation, activities undertaken and excursion venues). Venue managers and activity providers should be consulted in the preparation of the school's risk management plan and where appropriate, the risk management plans of venues or activity providers should be used to inform the school risk assessment process.

## **Venue Selection**

### Purpose of this policy



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To ensure schools select safe and suitable excursion venues.

## Policy

Excursion venues must be safe and suitable for the activities proposed.

### Venue selection and assessment

Excursion venues must be assessed and selected on the basis of their safety and suitability for the activities proposed.

It is recommended that venues are selected based on the recent and first-hand knowledge (for example, through an inspection of the site) of at least one member of the planning and supervising staff.

Criteria for assessing venues such as campsites or overnight accommodation venues may include:

- health and hygiene
- buildings and facilities
- activity equipment and the conduct of activities
- certification and qualifications of venue staff
- participant supervision provided
- emergency and risk management plans of venues
- fire precautions
- first aid facilities
- quality assurance and consumer protection
- relevant accreditations
- references from other schools.

## Residential campsites

Schools using residential campsites for overnight camping must use accredited campsites, to ensure these venues meet minimum criteria regarding safety and suitability.

**Definition:** Residential campsites are campsites which usually have permanent facilities (such as cooking and eating facilities, beds and an amenities block) and adventure recreation options. This definition does not include caravan parks, hotels/motels, ski lodges or Victorian government residential schools.

The Department recognises three accreditation providers:

- Australian Camps Association's Campsite and Outdoor Activity Provider program see: [ACA Accredited Camps](#)
- Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP) see: [ATAP Accredited Businesses](#) (select Accredited Camp and Adventure Activity Provider)
- National Accommodation, Recreation and Tourism Accreditation (NARTA) program see: [NARTA Accredited Camps](#)

## Other venues

Other venues may include:



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- overnight campsites and venues that only provide accommodation such as caravan parks, hotels/motels or ski lodges
- Victorian government residential schools (for example: Rubicon Outdoor Centre or Bogong Outdoor Education Centre)
- interstate camps or excursions
- overseas venues.

ACA or NARTA programs' accreditation criteria may be used to assess the suitability and safety of these venues. However this criteria *should* be used when assessing overseas venues.

## [Inspection on arrival](#)

The teacher-in-charge must check the excursion venue on arrival to assess apparent dangers and hazards and prepare contingency plans if required.

## Parent or Carer Consent

### [Purpose of this policy](#)

To ensure that schools obtain informed consent from parents or carers, for their child to participate in an excursion.

### [Policy](#)

Schools must obtain written consent from parents or carers for school excursions, for the school to:

- take the student out of the school environment for a day excursion
- have the student in its care after normal school hours on an overnight excursion
- obtain parent or carer authorisation:
  - for the financial costs of the excursion
  - for any adventure activities that may be undertaken during the excursion
  - for students to be sent home from an excursion in the event of serious misbehaviour and for the costs of the student's return to be the parent or carer's responsibility
  - that if needed the school can consent to emergency medical treatment
- enable the parent or carer to alert the school to any medical conditions or allergies.

### [Requirements for informed consent](#)

Schools must:

- give parents or carers, who are to sign consent forms, sufficient information about the excursion to enable them to make an informed decision
- tell the parent or carer the:
  - nature of the proposed activity
  - degree of supervision
  - risks involved
- keep the consent forms at the school
- ensure that the teacher in charge of the excursion takes a copy of each consent form on the excursion, for excursions requiring school council approval.

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## Staffing and Supervision

### Policy

Schools must ensure excursions are appropriately staffed.

### Supervision ratios

Department guidelines provide minimum requirements for staff-student ratios. Schools may need to enhance these measures to ensure student safety.

To ensure appropriate and effective levels of supervision, excursion planning should take into account:

- the experience, qualifications and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors, etc)
- the age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of students
- the ability and experience of the students
- the size of the group
- the nature and location of the excursion
- the activities to be undertaken
- requirements outlined in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, for specific adventure activities
- any other relevant factors.

This table describes the minimum staff-student ratios for excursions:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Type of excursions                                 | One excursion staff member per  |
| Day excursions                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• twenty students.</li></ul> <p>(Principals may extend this ratio for senior secondary students only, if student safety will not be compromised.)</p> |
| Adventure activities                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• specific guidelines for the activity.</li></ul> <p>See: Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors within <a href="#">Department resources</a></p>    |
| <b>Overnight excursions:</b>                       |   |
| Base camps in residential premises or under canvas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ten students.</li></ul>   |
| Study camps in residential premises                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fifteen students.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Example:</b> Year 12 camp.                      |   |
| Local and interstate tours                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• fifteen students.</li></ul>   |

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Type of excursions  
Overseas tours

One excursion staff member per

- ten students.

Further supervision requirements

This table outlines further supervision requirements

| For                                      | The excursion must  |
|--|---|
| most excursions                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be under the direct control of a teacher employed by the Department or the school council with at least one other excursion staff member present</li><li>• have enough teachers employed by the Department or school council to maintain appropriate control of the excursion and of each activity</li><li>• have teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff.</li></ul>   |
| overnight stays for mixed gender groups  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• include excursion staff of at least one person of each sex.</li></ul> <p><b>Note:</b> In primary schools this requirement may be waived, where staff of each sex are not available.</p>   |
| small group excursions in the local area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• with the approval of the principal, be supervised by one or more excursion staff employed by the Department or school council (for example, education support class officers such as integration aides and teacher assistants).</li></ul>   |
| unsupervised excursions                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• be approved by the principal only:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- in a small number of instances</li><li>- for secondary-aged students</li><li>- for activities involving small groups of individual students</li></ul></li><li>• and the teacher responsible for the activity must maintain a formal record of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- a description of the activity, including locations</li><li>- the names and ages of students involved</li><li>- the time of leaving and returning to school.</li></ul></li><li>• In addition, principals should ensure:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- a risk assessment of the activity is completed</li><li>- their decision and the reasons for allowing the activity to proceed is documented.</li></ul></li></ul> |

## Excursion staff

Excursion staff must be approved by the principal or school council (as outlined in Excursions – [Planning and Approvals](#)) and may include:

- teachers employed by the Department or school council
- other adults on a volunteer or paid basis such as:
  - parents or carers
  - education support class officers
  - community members
  - trainee teachers
  - campsite staff
  - specialist instructors for excursion activities.

**Important:** school students cannot be used as excursion staff.



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Excursion staff who will provide supervision of students and who are not registered teachers must have a Working with Children check.

The names of volunteer workers must be recorded for the purposes of volunteer workers insurance see: Volunteer Workers within [Related policies](#)

Where approved excursion staff who are not teachers employed by the Department or school council are in attendance they can be included in the staff-student ratio:

- for the duration of a specific activity for which they have a designated supervisory responsibility; or
- for the overall staff-student for the program, where they are on duty and available on the same basis as other staff (usually a 24 hour basis).

**Important:** the specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member (teachers, instructors, campsite staff, volunteers, etc) must be clarified and understood by all staff and students prior to the commencement of the excursion.

## Specialist staff

Schools must:

- ensure that where specialist instructors are employed they:
  - have the necessary skills or qualifications for the activity
  - have appropriate experience for the age and skill level of the students
- hold appropriate public liability insurance, see: [Related policies](#)
- while specialist instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the teachers have overall responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students, even where the teachers do not directly provide the actual instruction.

## Student Medical Information

### Purpose of this policy

To ensure that staff have up-to-date medical information about students participating in excursions.

### Policy

A confidential medical information form:

- must be completed by parents or carers before each school council approved excursion
- provides parents or carers with the opportunity to vary any information previously given to the school.

Schools must:

- ensure that the teacher-in-charge takes the medical information forms on the excursion
- ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations
- keep copies of the forms at the school.



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**Note:** Students should not be denied attendance at any excursion because a parent/guardian refuses permission for a blood transfusion.

Information: Transfusions or other courses of medical treatment are matters for legally qualified medical practitioners. Teachers cannot be held liable for medical treatment given against the wishes of a parent or carer.

Recommended confidential medical information form

Schools should use the recommended confidential medical information form see: [Department resources](#)

Schools may require additional medical information depending on the nature of the activities undertaken.

### **Communication:**

Katunga Primary School has a process in place where it communicates its policies to staff, students, guardians, parents and the school community by placing its policies on the school website and making them available to anyone who comes into the office and requests to see them.

**Ratified:** This policy has been ratified by School Council in August 2018.