



DSM Policy

Activities, Camps and Excursions

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Statement

Deutsche Schule Melbourne – A German English Bilingual School (DSM) aims to help students realise their own potential and become creative and confident participants in the global community. The school caters for and welcomes children and families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Activities, camps and excursions offer us the chance to provide for different types of learning experiences. They are essential to child development. They strongly support the social emotional development of our students and foster real world application of academic learning.

Policy

This policy sets out requirements for DSM to plan for and safely undertake excursions, including camps and adventure activities. It is adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/policy>.

Summary

- All excursions must be planned in accordance with the requirements outlined in this policy.
- DSM staff must also comply with this policy.
- If the excursion involves an adventure activity, staff must also follow the specific adventure activity guidelines as set out in the Department of Education's adventure activity guidelines¹ for that activity. These require additional approval and risk management procedures.

Details

Excursions are an important part of the learning experiences of all students. Excursions support quality curriculum delivery and provide important social and emotional development opportunities for students that are often not available in the classroom.

While the degree of planning involved will depend on the nature and likelihood of the risks involved, the conduct of any excursion or activity must consider the following:

- the excursion's educational purpose and contribution to the curriculum or other educational value
- approval requirements for excursions and staff travel
- suitability of the venue and/or environment for the excursion
- informed consent from parents or carers
- adequate student and staff medical information
- adequate student preparation and clear behaviour expectations
- importance of providing an inclusive excursion experience for all students, including students with disabilities and additional needs
- how DSM staff will meet their responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards
- requirements for any adventure activities
- assessment of excursion risks and appropriate risk minimisation strategies, including appropriate supervision arrangements
- maintenance of excursion records, including clear documentation of the planning process, in accordance with DSM's management of school records.

¹ Available at <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>



When planning an excursion, staff must consider local and general emergency warnings including weather conditions and fire danger ratings.

When planning and conducting excursions, DSM staff must follow the measures set out in this document.

Definitions

Note: Workplace learning and intercampus travel are not considered school excursions.

Adventure activities

Adventure activities are activities that involve greater than normal risk. There are additional mandatory guidelines associated with these activities.

Camps

Camps are excursions involving one or more night's accommodation, including sleepovers on school grounds.

Day excursions

Day excursions are activities organised by the school where the students are taken out of the school grounds for all or part of a day (for example, day excursion or school sports).

Excursion levy

DSM charges an annual levy for each child. This covers costs associated with local and day excursions. Camps may incur additional charges.

Local excursions

Local excursions are activities organised by the school where students are taken out of the school grounds for all or part of a day, but the location of which is within easy walking distance of the school grounds.

Principal

For the purposes of this document, the term Principal refers to the Principal of the school or their delegate.

Teacher in Charge

The teacher nominated as responsible for the overall planning and supervision of the camp.

Related policies

DSM 2022 - Child Safety & Wellbeing

DSM 2021 - Teaching and Learning

DSM 2020 - Supervision Policy

DSM 2020 - Serious Incidents and Mandatory Reporting

DSM 2019 - Staff Code of Conduct

DSM 2019 - Student Code of Conduct



Approvals ²

Who approves

All excursions must be approved by the Principal.

Local and day excursions

To obtain approval, complete and submit the *DSM Evidence of Risk Assessment for Local and Day Excursions* form.

Camps and adventure activities

The following forms must be completed and submitted to the Principal:

1. *DSM Principal Approval Template - Camps and adventure activities*. This form includes detailed information that may be needed in an emergency such as:
 - the location of the excursion participants at all times, including during travel
 - the relevant contact number/s through which excursion staff may be reached in an emergency
 - the names and family contact details for all students and staff.
2. Parental consent and medical advice forms of students
3. Risk register
4. Emergency response plan (if required)

This documentation must be approved by the Principal prior to the excursion starting.

To support planning and to ensure all staff have met their responsibilities, the Teacher in Charge (TIC) must use the *DSM Activities, Camp and Excursions Checklist*

The Principal is responsible for the approval of the operational requirements, including the risk register, for all excursions.

Joint-school activities

Where there is a joint activity involving another school, the nominated coordinating Principal or teacher ensures:

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

Cancellations or alterations

The Principal approves cancellations or alterations to excursion arrangements.

² Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/approvals>



Consent ³

When consent is required

DSM must obtain written or electronic consent from parents or carers for school excursions:

1. to take the student out of the DSM school environment for a day excursion or local excursion
2. to have the student in its care after normal school hours on an overnight excursion
3. to enable the parent or carer to alert the school to any medical conditions or allergies
4. for any adventure activities that may be undertaken during the excursion
5. for any additional financial costs of the excursion where these are not covered by the Excursion Levy

If written consent is not received, the student must not participate in that activity.

Requirements for informed consent

DSM must:

- give parents or carers sufficient information about the excursion to enable them to make an informed decision
- tell the parent or carer:
 - the nature of the proposed activity/activities
 - the educational purpose of the activity
 - the location of the activity and any restrictions or barriers to accessing this location
 - the type of transport being utilised if applicable
 - whether the excursion will be supervised by staff not employed by DSM. If so, refer to the [Supervision](#) section of this policy.
 - that students may be sent home from an excursion in the event of illness or serious misbehaviour, and that any costs relating to the student's return will be the parent or carer's responsibility
 - that the Principal may need to cancel or alter excursions arrangements at short notice, which may lead to inconvenience or financial losses to parents. This would be required to ensure the safety of students and/or due to circumstances beyond the control of the school.
 - arrangements for students who cannot attend or for whom consent is not received
 - other information deemed relevant by the school
- keep records of the consent documentation at the school in line with the school's policies and procedures

Consent for local excursions

DSM will seek consent for local excursions on an annual basis. DSM will use the *Local Excursions Annual Consent Form* for this purpose.

Once annual consent is obtained, DSM is not required to obtain further consent before a local excursion. However, parents and carers must be informed about a local excursion closer to the date of the event, so that parents have an opportunity to inform staff of any medical or other issues that may be relevant to the local excursion.

For local excursions that occur on a recurring or semi-regular basis, DSM can notify parents/carers once of the frequency and location of the activity, at the commencement of the recurring event.

³ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/consent>



Consent for day excursions

Consent must be sought using the DSM Excursion Consent Form generated through Compass.

Consent for recurring day excursions

For recurring day excursions where the details of the excursion do not substantially change, such as participation in interschool sports events, consent must be sought using the DSM Excursion Consent Form generated through Compass. This should list the expected dates of each occurrence, allowing parents and carers to be aware of upcoming events and advise of any changes to student participation, health or medical information.

Consent for camps and adventure activities

DSM must obtain written consent from parents or carers using the *DSM Camp Consent Form*.

Electronic consent requirements

Electronic consent can include:

- the use of a username and password to verify the acceptance of terms or consent
- a digitally encrypted image of a person's handwritten signature (i.e. a pin or password would be required before the signature can be inserted into a document)
- email correspondence
- online scripts and pop-ups requiring 'tick the box' and 'accept'
- SMS.

To ensure that electronic consent is valid, DSM will utilise a process to ensure that:

- it is the parent or carer providing the consent (for example, requiring identification such as a password) and
- the parent or carer intends to provide their consent.



Student Medical Information ⁴

Medical information previously provided to DSM

DSM must provide parents or carers with the opportunity to vary any medical information previously given to the school before any excursion.

Confidential Medical Information Form

This form must be completed by parents or carers before any excursion involving an overnight component, an adventure activity or any travel via air or water.

DSM must:

- ensure that the teacher-in-charge has immediate access to either hard copy or electronic versions of 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
- consider whether additional medical information is required, depending on the nature of the activities undertaken.

⁴ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/student-medical-information>



Risk Management Planning ⁵

General

DSM must assess risk for all excursions (including local excursions) and identify measures to reduce reasonably foreseeable risk to students wherever possible. The type and level of risk, and possible consequences, will differ depending on a range of factors including the location, activity and cohort of students.

The type of excursion will determine the type of risk assessment required.

Risk assessment process

The risk assessment will inform the planning of the event and help decide what resources, staff and equipment will be required. The assessment should cover the entire excursion including:

- all activities to be undertaken
- excursion location or venue (including environment)
- student behaviour, safety or illness
- staff safety, illness or other specific needs
- transportation (for example public transport cancellations, travelling in hazardous areas, student behaviour, travel sickness).

Where appropriate, the risk assessment should also address:

- risk to intended educational objectives
- any significant financial risks to the school and/or parents
- the risk that the general community might lose confidence or trust in the school if a reasonably foreseeable risk is not identified or if insufficient steps are taken to minimise that risk and this results in injury, loss or damage.

The risk assessment must be completed during the planning of the excursion, reviewed before the commencement of the excursion and where appropriate or required, during the excursion.

Responsibilities and processes for treating risks must be communicated to all excursion staff before departing on the excursion.

Local and day excursions (excluding adventure activities)

For local and day excursions (excluding adventure activities), the risk assessment must be documented using the *DSM Evidence of Risk Assessment for Local and Day Excursions* form.

Local excursions that occur on a recurring or semi-regular basis

For local excursions that occur on a recurring or semi-regular basis, the starting point is that the *DSM Evidence of Risk Assessment for Local and Day Excursions* form only needs to be completed once. If there is a change that would substantially affect the risk assessment for the relevant excursion, then the *DSM Evidence of Risk Assessment for Local and Day Excursions* form must be updated and approved by the Principal.

⁵ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/risk-management-planning>



Note that written consent of the Principal must always be obtained in advance of any recurring or semi-regular local excursion occurring, and the names of that day's accompanying staff provided, even if the *DSM Evidence of Risk Assessment for Local and Day Excursions* does not need to be completed again.

All other excursions – risk register required

For excursions that involve:

- overnight stays
- interstate travel
- overseas travel
- adventure activities (including instructional swimming)
- travel via water or air
- weekends or school holidays, excluding OSHC Holiday Program activities where these meet the criteria of local and day excursions

a **risk register** assessing risks across the entire excursion must be completed and submitted to the Principal when seeking approval for the excursion (refer to the Department of Education's sample [Excursion Risk Register and Emergency Management Plan](#), and to the DSM Risk Coordinator for a completed example).

All risks need to be evaluated using the department's risk rating matrix (see the Department's sample Excursion Risk Register and Emergency Management Plan referred to above for details). Risks rated:

- low or medium do not necessarily require further treatments and are considered acceptable – these risks should be reviewed periodically.
- high or extreme will require further treatment to reduce their level of risk to a more acceptable level.

If planning a camp that involves multiple adventure activities, a risk assessment must be conducted for each adventure activity. When completing the risk assessment, all risks associated with each activity can be placed on the one camp risk register, or a risk register for each activity can be completed.

Consultation with external providers

Staff should consider whether to consult with external providers during the preparation of the excursion risk register. Staff should also consider whether using an accredited provider and/or appropriately trained staff to lead activities (such as adventure activities) is sufficient mitigation for some activity specific risks. If so, the excursion risk register should not focus on treating risks relating to technical aspects of an activity (for example, ropes or harnesses used in abseiling). Instead, these risks should be identified and include 'the use of external provider' as a control.

Sample risk registers for specific adventure activities can be found on the Department's website here: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/resources>.



Emergency or Critical Incident Management⁶

When an emergency management plan is required

Excursions must have an emergency management plan when they involve:

- overnight stays
- interstate travel
- overseas travel
- adventure activities
- travel via sea or air
- weekends or school holiday periods.

Refer to the Department's sample Excursion Risk Register and Emergency Management Plan⁷.

Emergency management plan content

The excursion emergency management plan must have clearly written emergency response procedures that:

- address the consequences (rated moderate or above) of all risks identified in the risk register
- are understood by those involved in the program (this may, where appropriate, include a trial evacuation exercise carried out at the venue to ensure that procedures are appropriate and staff and students are familiar with them)
- include
 - rescue, resuscitation and first aid procedures
 - how to contact a doctor, ambulance or emergency service
 - how to maintain situational awareness at all times (for example, weather forecasts for outdoors activities)
 - 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
 - support for students who may have difficulty communicating in an emergency, and ways to manage any specific risks to these students in an emergency
- cover arrangements if the excursion needs to be cancelled, recalled or altered. This should include arrangements for communicating with parents/carers.
- where relevant, are consistent with the procedures used by venue owners, managers or rescue and life-saving patrols.

The teacher in direct control of the group is responsible for implementation of the procedures, which may include the involvement of others who have more experience in dealing with emergencies.

To support the development of the emergency management plan, see the Department's [Sample emergency responses procedures \(DOCX\)](#),⁸ which outlines key actions in a variety of emergency situations. In the event of an emergency, accident or injury:

- staff on the excursion should:
 - take emergency action to establish safety as per the emergency management plan

⁶ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/emergency-or-critical-incident-management>

⁷ <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/PAL/excursions-camps-risk-register.docx>

⁸ Available from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/emergency-or-critical-incident-management>.



- immediately notify the school Principal or designated school contact
- the Principal or designated school contact:
 - should make arrangements for the incident to be recorded in the school's student management system
 - may obtain further information, such as statements from witnesses, where required to provide appropriate support to affected students or to properly document the incident and retain these on file. Any such documents should be managed in accordance with the *DSM Privacy Policy*.



Staffing: Roles and Responsibilities ⁹

Who are excursion staff?

Excursion staff are adults who provide the supervisory, instructional and educational elements of the activity.

Overall responsibility (teacher in charge)

A teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching and employed by DSM must be present and have overall responsibility for the activity, unless other arrangements have been approved by the Principal in accordance with the [Supervision](#) section of this policy.

Who can be excursion staff?

Excursion staff must be approved by the Principal and may include:

- teachers employed by DSM
- other adults on a volunteer or paid basis such as
 - parents or carers
 - interns
 - community members
 - trainee teachers
 - campsite staff
 - specialist instructors for excursion activities.

School students cannot be used as excursion staff.

All excursion staff must have a Working with Children Check, as per the DSM Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy. This applies even if a parent would have an exemption under the Working Screening Act 2020 because the activity is one in which their child is participating or ordinarily participates.

Volunteer workers are covered by our insurance policy.

Inclusion of non-teacher excursion staff in the staff-student supervision ratio

Where approved excursion staff who are not teachers employed by DSM are in attendance they can be included in the staff-student supervision ratio:

- for the duration of a specific activity for which they have a designated supervisory responsibility, or
- for the overall staff-student supervision ratio for the program, where they are on duty and available on the same basis as other staff (usually a 24-hour basis), for example third party providers such as residential camp staff.

The specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member (teachers, instructors, campsite staff, volunteers and so on) must be clarified and understood by all staff prior to the commencement of the excursion.

⁹ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/staffing-roles-and-responsibilities>



School staff

While non-teacher excursion staff may be used, under their duty of care, teachers bear greater responsibility for the supervision of students than do support staff members, parents or other volunteers.

School staff participating in an excursion should:

- understand the purpose of the program and its connection to student learning
- be aware of their supervisory responsibilities throughout the excursion
- know which member of staff will provide first aid if required
- know the exact location of students they are responsible for at all times including during travel.

In addition, the nominated teacher-in-charge must:

- ensure risk assessments have been completed and treatments are communicated to all staff involved in the excursion and/or activity
- know the exact location of students at all times including during travel
- maintain a record of telephone contacts for the supervising staff accompanying the excursion
- know who the school contact person is and their phone number
- have immediate access to the names of family contacts for all students and staff on the excursion
- have immediate access to copies of medical advice forms for those students on the excursion
- maintain a copy of the completed *DSM Principal Approval Template – Camps and Adventure Activities* (including all attachments) submitted to the Principal for approval.

Specialist instructors

DSM 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

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.

Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher responsible for the activity should understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted. This teacher must confer with the designated instructor about the supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility. If this teacher is not the designated instructor, they are to act on the advice of the designated instructor on technical safety issues.



Supervision ¹⁰

Risk assessment

To ensure appropriate and effective levels of supervision, the excursion risk assessment should take into account:

- the experience, qualifications and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors and so on)
- the age, maturity, physical characteristics, medical needs 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
- known or anticipated weather conditions
- requirements outlined in the specific activities guidelines for specific adventure activities – see [Adventure Activities](#) section of this policy
- emergency response planning
- any other relevant factors.

Minimum supervision requirements

This section outlines DSM's minimum requirements for staff-student ratios. They are based on Department of Education policy for government schools. When planning staff-student ratios for an excursion:

- consider whether additional staff or volunteers are required to ensure student and staff safety
- consider the likelihood of circumstances where a staff member may be unable to actively supervise the group (for example, staff illness, staff needing to support a particular student because of illness, behaviour and so on), and the time it will take for a replacement staff member to arrive at the excursion destination
- apply the information in the [Staffing: Roles and Responsibilities](#) section of this policy, which sets out the range of adults that can be included in the excursion staff supervision ratios, including parent volunteers and specialist instructors

Except where otherwise indicated, all excursions and camps must have a minimum of 2 staff members.

Excursion type	Minimum supervision ratio
Local excursion	Regular class teacher-student ratios with an additional accompanying staff member (as required)
Day excursion	1:20 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
Overnight camp	1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
Interstate travel	1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
Overseas travel (currently N/A)	TBD
Adventure activities	Specific ratios for each activity, refer to specific activities guidelines for specific adventure activities – see the Adventure Activities section of this policy.

The excursion must:

¹⁰ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/supervision>



- be under the direct control of a teacher employed by DSM at all times, with at least one other excursion staff member present
- have enough teachers employed by DSM to maintain appropriate supervision of the excursion and of each activity, and to provide for the safety and wellbeing of participating students and staff
- have teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff.

Mixed gender groups

For overnight stays for mixed gender groups the excursion must include staff of at least one person of each sex. For primary school aged students this requirement may be waived where staff of each sex are not available.

Exceptions to minimum supervision requirements

Transport to and from excursions

It can be acceptable to have less than the minimum supervision ratios when transporting students to and from the excursion venue. Consideration should be given to:

- distance travelled
- type of transportation
- the age, number and individual needs of the students.

The decision to alter the supervision ratios for transportation to and from the venue should be documented in the risk assessment and controls enacted accordingly.

Excursions in the local area

For small group excursions in the local area, a teacher must be responsible for the excursion. However, with the approval of the Principal, a small group can be supervised by one or more excursion staff employed by DSM who are not teachers (for example, integration aides or teacher assistants).

Day excursions for senior secondary students

It is acceptable to have less than the minimum supervision ratios for senior secondary students attending local or day excursions if student safety will not be compromised.

Consideration should be given to the age, number and individual needs of the students as well as any relevant factors relating to attending staff.

Unsupervised excursions

This only applies to small groups of secondary aged students in a limited range of instances. For unsupervised excursions, the Principal must give written consent.

The Teacher in Charge must:

- maintain a formal record of a description of the activity, including locations; the names and ages of students involved; and the time of leaving and returning to school
- ensure that students have appropriate methods of communication in the event of an emergency.



Student Preparation and Behaviour ¹¹

Aims

DSM aims to ensure that:

- students are adequately prepared for excursions
- disciplinary measures for students on excursions are appropriate and consistent with DSM's *Student Code of Conduct*
- reasonable adjustments are made for students with disabilities, including students with medical or health conditions that may have an impact on the student's ability to meet expected standards of behaviour
- preparation also includes supporting the mental health and wellbeing of students.

Student preparation

In preparation for excursions, and in addition to the information required in the consent documentation, DSM should advise students and parents/carers of:

- organisational arrangements
- roles of each staff member supervising the activity or excursion
- risks involved in the activity or excursion
- relevant safety arrangements or emergency procedures (as appropriate)
- expected standards of behaviour
- prohibition of alcohol and smoking for all students on all school camps and excursions, and the consequences of non-compliance with this instruction
- that in extreme cases, students may be sent home from an excursion at the cost of the parents.

In some cases, students may require specific skills or training before going on excursions, particularly when undertaking adventure activities. If this is the case, staff should utilise the Department's [Documentation of participant preparation, prerequisite skills/knowledge \(DOCX\)](#) to assess students' suitability to undertake the activity and what support they may need.

Returning a student home

In extreme cases the excursion staff, following consultation with and the approval of the 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:
 - circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home
 - time and location for the parent or carer to 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.

¹¹ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/student-preparation-and-behaviour>



Liability, Waivers and Indemnities ¹²

Duty of care

DSM staff owe students a duty of care to take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm. The information in these guidelines has been developed to support staff to take reasonable and appropriate steps to prevent and reduce risks to students, in accordance with their duty of care obligations.

Excursion planning and conduct may be reviewed subsequently if there is injury or damage to property, and/or a legal claim related to the excursion.

Waivers of liability and indemnities

Providers will frequently seek a 'waiver and indemnity of liability' as a condition of hire of a venue or participation in a planned activity.

- DSM and its staff must not agree to give a 'waiver and indemnity' where the provider seeks to absolve itself and its personnel from liability for negligence.
- DSM and its staff cannot, and must not, sign a 'waiver and indemnity' on behalf of a student nor permit a student to sign a 'waiver and indemnity'.
- DSM and its staff must not ask parents and carers to sign a 'waiver and indemnity' on behalf of a student if the waiver and indemnity seeks to absolve the provider and its personnel from liability for negligence.

It may be necessary to seek legal advice on any waivers and indemnities requested by providers.

¹² Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/liability-waivers-indemnities>



First aid ¹³

Excursion staff must have first aid and emergency response knowledge appropriate to the excursion location, the students involved, and the activities undertaken by each group of students.

First aid kit

Staff must have a first aid kit appropriate to the excursion location, the activities undertaken and the specific needs of participating students with health or medical conditions.

Documentation

Staff must carefully document first aid incidents and outcomes in Compass.

First aid training

The extent of the first aid training required by staff will be determined by:

- the environment in which the group will operate
- the remoteness of the location
- length of time the staff are required to provide patient support before definitive medical help arrives
- the resources available to support a patient in these conditions
- the known medical history of students and staff.

For excursions involving adventure activities or locations without readily accessible medical support, at least one member of staff responsible for each group of students must hold, as a minimum, a current first aid qualification and a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) qualification.

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2010 and the [Code of Practice from Safe Work Australia](#), all first aiders should hold nationally recognised Statement/s of Attainment issued by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) for the relevant nationally endorsed unit/s of competency.

Three relevant first aid training courses for excursion staff include:

- Provide First Aid – Provides competencies required to recognise and respond to common life-threatening injuries or illnesses, including life-support using CPR, and to manage the casualty and incident until the arrival of medical or other assistance. E.g. HLTAID012 Provide First Aid in an education and care setting incl CPR
- Remote Area First Aid – Provides competencies advised for staff who will be on excursions which are more than an hour (by any means) from definitive care such as a hospital and where there is reliable vehicle access and communication options available. E.g. HLTAID013 Provide First Aid in Remote Situations
- Wilderness First Aid – Provides competencies advised for staff who will be conducting excursions which are more than an hour (by any means) from definitive care such as a hospital, when access to the patient/s is difficult and and/or communication is unreliable. Wilderness first aid courses are also advised for staff who may be required to coordinate an emergency response or be required to care for a patient for an extended period of time prior to help arriving. E.g. SSISS00126 – Wilderness First Aid

¹³ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/first-aid>



For more information about first aid, refer to *DSM Policy: Arrangements for Ill Students and First Aid* and *DSM Policy: Administration of Medication*.

Sun protection

Sun protection is required in terms 1 and 4 and when the UV Index is 3 or above. DSM's sun protection policy applies to activities, camps and excursions. See *DSM Policy: Sun Protection*.

Anaphylaxis

DSM's anaphylaxis policy applies to activities, camps and excursions. See *DSM Policy: Anaphylaxis*.



External Providers¹⁴

General

External providers (for example, camp providers, specialist instructors, or expedition providers) may be engaged to deliver specific activities (such as adventure activities) or a whole program. They may provide expertise in a certain activity and can be a valuable addition to a program.

Clear and open communication undertaken well in advance of the planned program is the key to an effective and well-informed relationship between DSM and an external provider.

Duty of care

School staff must be aware that they still have a duty of care to the students, even when external providers are used.

Requirements for selection of external providers

Before an external provider is selected to assist with the delivery of a program, DSM should complete a thorough check to ensure that the provider is appropriate for the program, has experience working with groups of children and/or young people and that child safety and wellbeing will be maintained throughout the duration of the program.

Prior to the commencement of a program, DSM should ensure that the external provider has:

- a current public liability insurance certificate (minimum \$10 million) for insurance provided by an Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) approved insurer
- that the public liability insurance referred to above does not contain an exclusion for personal injury arising from molestation/child abuse by the provider or its employees or its volunteers
- demonstrated that staff have the correct qualifications and/or experience for their specific role/s. For information on required qualifications under specific activities guidelines for specific adventure activities, see the [Adventure Activities](#) section of this policy.
- ensured that students are supervised by either a registered teacher or an approved staff member with a current Working with Children Check (WWCC must be sighted or a copy provided to DSM prior to the commencement of the program)
- agreed with DSM who has responsibilities for first aid, emergency communications and other specialist equipment
- agreed with DSM who will be responsible for emergency procedures, and that these are well understood prior to the excursion taking place
- read the relevant sections of the Department of Education's specific activities guidelines for specific adventure activities and understood their obligations under these guidelines. See the [Adventure Activities](#) section of this policy.
- adequate child safety policies and procedures including incorporation of the Child Safe Standards (Ministerial Order 1359)
- established a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued
- a program that will contribute to the educational purpose of the relevant excursion or camp
- suitable facilities, including access to toilet facilities with disability access, or non-gendered facilities if used by any transgender or gender diverse students

¹⁴ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/external-providers>



- where relevant, suitable storage options (e.g. if students need to take their school bags with them, are these being carried by students during the entire excursion, or are locker facilities available)
- where relevant, suitable food options (e.g. for longer excursions, what food options are available for students, including space to eat their food)
- where relevant, first aid facilities

Negotiation of arrangements between DSM and external providers

The Principal should:

- carefully negotiate terms and conditions with external providers prior to accepting arrangements
- ensure school staff know who to report any concerns to
- provide relevant information about students to the external providers in order to look after the students and reduce risk.



Venue Selection ¹⁵

General

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

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. If a staff member plans to inspect a venue or location, either within or outside of normal school hours, prior approval must be sought from the Principal.

Any residential campsites should be accredited to ensure these venues meet minimum criteria regarding safety and suitability. A list of accredited camps can be found at:

- Australian Camps Association (ACA) – [Find a camp](#)
- the [National Accommodation, Recreation and Tourism Accreditation Program \(NARTA\)](#)
- for expedition camping, [Parks Victoria](#)

Information regarding camp and adventure activity accreditation is provided in the Quality Tourism Framework module: [Camps and Adventure Accreditation](#).

Further information regarding Quality Tourism accreditation can be found at: [Quality Tourism Australia](#).

Assessment criteria - campsites or overnight accommodation

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

- health and hygiene
- buildings and facilities
- child wellbeing and safety procedures, policies and/or practices
- activity equipment and the conduct of activities
- certification and qualifications of venue staff
- participant supervision provided
- risks posed by other users of the site
- emergency and risk management plans of venues, including fire safety
- first aid facilities
- quality assurance and consumer protection
- relevant accreditations
- references from other schools.

Outdoor locations

Outdoor environments can be unfamiliar settings for students and can present hazards which may not be immediately obvious. Environmental factors including landscape, vegetation and wildlife, and weather conditions must be considered when planning activities. Furthermore, outdoor environments are extremely variable by nature. Conditions need to be planned for and monitored regularly in the lead up to, and during, the activity.

¹⁵ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/venue-selection>



When preparing for outdoor activities, staff should consider ways to minimise the environmental impact of the activity. When conducting excursions on land operated by Parks Victoria, DSM staff must complete an Education Group Activity form via [ParkConnect](#) at least one month before any visit. This will assist Parks Victoria to alert DSM of any park closures, storm damage or management activities that may affect the visit, such as planned burns or pest programs.

To ensure safe conduct of the excursion, schools should consider whether there are any environmental factors, or access or permit requirements that they need to be aware of.

This information may be obtained from other relevant authorities such as:

- [Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning](#)
- [Transport Safety Victoria — Maritime Safety](#)
- [VicEmergency](#)
- [VicForests](#)
- local councils

Assessment criteria – suitability of outdoor locations

Factors to consider when assessing the suitability of outdoor locations should include:

- staff experience and qualifications required for the activity and location (including first aid)
- level of access to resources, services and facilities that may be needed, such as campsites, water, walking trails, toilets, emergency shelter, or interpretive information
- level of access to communication equipment and networks for routine and emergency use
- evacuation points and routes including alternative routes in the event of an emergency
- external assistance available in the event of an emergency or extreme weather conditions. The more remote the location, the more self-contained and self-reliant the group must be. This must be considered in the planning of the activity
- potential exposure to environmental hazards and difficulties
- ability and fitness levels of students.



Weather and Emergency Warnings ¹⁶

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Teacher in Charge to check weather forecasts and emergency warnings, including fire danger ratings, for the relevant location in the days leading up to the excursion, on the day of the excursion, and daily during camps. It is their responsibility to monitor the situation, and be prepared to cancel, modify or relocate at any time if a severe weather warning is issued for the area.

Information on local weather conditions is available from a variety of online and telephone services. The Teacher in Charge should compile a list of all relevant sources of information on local conditions, warnings and forecasts and their contact details, as well as a list of all relevant emergency services contact details, and share this with all excursion or camp staff.

Agencies may include but are not limited to:

- [Bureau of Meteorology and MetEye](#)
- [Marine and Ocean](#) for coastal waters forecast and observations
- [VicEmergency](#)
- [National Warnings Summary](#)
- [Victorian Weather and Warnings](#)

Fire danger or ban

DSM staff must ensure they consider the risk of bushfire or grassfire at the excursion location when conducting their risk assessment and developing their emergency management plan.

On days of forecasted Catastrophic fire danger rating all excursions in that fire weather district must be cancelled.

If the forecast fire danger rating is identified as extreme, or a total fire ban has been declared, Principals must reassess the excursion risk assessment and can seek advice from regional emergency management staff about whether the excursion should be cancelled.

If an excursion is not cancelled, alternative lower risk activities may be required, depending on the location.

¹⁶ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/weather>



Transport ¹⁷

Factors to consider

The transportation of groups to and from activity locations must be carefully considered and planned, taking into account the following:

- If using public transport, transport authorities should be consulted on appropriate travel times, fares and if relevant, at least a fortnight's notice of travel provided to the relevant transport authority. Contact [Public Transport Victoria \(PTV\)](#) for further information.
- Groups of 12 or more can get a concession discount for travel on public transport with a Group Travel Authority, while Victorian preschool, kindergarten or primary school excursion groups of 12 to 35 people can travel for free during the school day and on weekends. For details refer to [PTV group travel](#).
- Excursions that run late, failing to meet times agreed to with private bus operators, are likely to incur significant costs.
- Vehicles used to transport students must comply with [VicRoads](#) registration requirements.
- Drivers must comply with all licensing requirements.
- Occupational Health and Safety laws require employers and employees to take all reasonably practicable steps to manage driver fatigue.
- Equipment carried inside vehicles must be securely stowed and not create a risk of injury or damage. Equipment and luggage should be carried and secured as appropriate in trailers, roof racks or behind luggage barriers. VicRoads offers advice on load restraint at [Securing your load](#).

Private vehicles

DSM policy does not currently permit a teacher, staff member or volunteer to drive a private vehicle as a means of transporting students for an excursion.

School owned bus

DSM does not currently have a school owned bus.

School hired bus services – for private use and school charters¹⁸

Bus Safety Act

Under the Bus Safety Act, the procurer of a bus service is a person who charters a bus service or otherwise engages with an operator for the purposes of using the bus service, whether or not the provision of the bus service is on a commercial basis.

A 'procurer of a bus service' will generally have influence over the schedule, route, type of bus and the fare a passenger may or may not be expected to pay. However, they are not the operator of the bus service and do not provide the driver.

Whether or not the provision of the bus service is on a commercial basis, if DSM intends to procure a bus service, DSM has certain safety duties under law.

So far as is reasonably practicable, DSM must ensure the safe operation of the bus service.

¹⁷ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/transport>

¹⁸ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/vehicles/policy>



A procurer (i.e. DSM) would contravene this duty if they procured the bus service on terms that impose conditions or obligations which prevent or threaten, or are reasonably likely to prevent or threaten, the safe operations of the bus service.

DSM must only hire accredited, insured and roadworthy vehicles.

DSM must seek confirmation from hired bus operators that their bus and driver meet all accreditation, licensing and insurance requirements by requesting from the bus operator copies of their certificate of accreditation and certificates of currency.

Child restraints

DSM must ensure vehicles it hires or uses that seat up to twelve passengers have child restraints or booster seats for children under 7 years. See VicRoads' [child restraints page](#). VicRoads recommends that child restraints and booster seats are used in buses where possible. As a minimum the children should use the seat belts provided.

Risk management

As noted above, the Bus Safety Act requires an operator of a bus service, or a procurer of a bus service to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the safe operation of the bus service.

Accordingly, when chartering a bus, DSM should assess the risks for bus safety. See, for example, the Department of Education's template [Bus Risk Register](#).

DSM must take steps to address risks of a bus driver being impaired by fatigue. This may involve seeking confirmation from a bus operator that it has appropriate fatigue management processes in place for its drivers.

Air travel

[When considering whether air travel is appropriate for an interstate excursion, factors DSM will take into account include:

- the importance of maximising available educational programme time;
- the distance to be travelled;
- cost;
- environmental factors;
- the safety record of the relevant airline(s);
- available seating arrangements on board; and
- the ability of excursion staff to adequately supervise the students in the departure terminal, during the flight and in the arrival terminal.]

Approval for air travel must be given by the Principal. The Teacher in Charge must consult with the airline to ensure they are compliant with the airline's adult:child ratios and group travel policies. All accompanying staff and students must familiarise themselves with the safety procedures as explained in the safety demonstration before take-off and through the safety cards provided, and follow all safety instructions given by airline staff.

Overseas travel

DSM does not currently engage in overseas travel.



Communications ¹⁹

Excursions with an overnight component

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

Remote locations

If conducting an activity in a remote location with limited access to technology and emergency services, a documented communication plan must be developed prior to the activity. This can be incorporated into the risk register. The plan must:

- be developed specifically for the location based on current information about the area and other relevant information such as mobile phone coverage maps
- enable staff to receive weather/fire danger forecasts, updates and warnings, communicate with the school, outside parties and engage support in the case of an incident or emergency
- identify equipment to be used, based on current communication technology and the location of the activity
- be clear to all staff involved in the program, including its limitations
- include a communication strategy for the group during the program that also enables communication with outside parties including the school and emergency services
- not rely on a single device.

The communication plan should enable staff to:

- receive weather forecasts, updates and warnings
- communicate with the school
- engage support in the case of an incident or emergency.

The Principal must consider providing communication equipment that may be reliably used in emergencies.

A sample template for developing the communications plan can be found on the Department of Education's [Resources tab](#).

¹⁹ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/communications>



Identification ²⁰

General

Easy identification of staff and students can be an important factor in the safe conduct of some excursions, including adventure activities.

Systems of identification

Staff must determine the most suitable system/s of identification, based on the assessment of the environment, students' skills, the type of activities to be undertaken and the age and number of students. This may include high visibility vests for staff and/or students.

Information on identification strategies is available in the relevant specific activities' guidelines for specific adventure activities. See the [Adventure Activities](#) section of this policy.

General outdoors activities

Students should wear high visibility items such as vests or reflective items when bushwalking or cycling.

Water activities

Strategies to identify participants may include:

- high visibility rash tops
- swim caps or helmets
- wrist bands.

²⁰ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/identification>



Interstate travel ²¹

All students and staff should take out travel insurance for the entire interstate trip. Where possible, it is recommended that all staff and students travelling interstate are covered by the same insurance provider. This makes it easier to manage multiple claims within a group.

It is strongly recommended that staff and students take out insurance cover directly and not via a tour operator. This ensures that insurance coverage has been obtained as required (there have been past instances where tour operators have accepted pre-payments on account of insurance but failed to take out the insurance as promised leaving staff and students uninsured).

Before taking out any insurance cover, staff and families of student travellers should ensure they:

- consider whether or not the insurance cover excludes events that may disrupt travel plans such as pandemics, storms, floods, and strikes
- make an independent assessment of whether or not the level of cover provided is appropriate for their needs.

See also the [Transport](#) section of this policy.

²¹ Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/overseas-travel#travel-insurance-for-overseas-excursions>



Adventure Activities ²²

General

The following information is additional to the requirements relating to all excursions. Mandatory guidelines are also provided in relation to specific adventure activities, under each activity name below.

What is an adventure activity?

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

- physical activities beyond the scope of the regular physical education curriculum
- 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
- theme parks, fun parks and trampoline centres
- an activity listed under the adventure activities guidelines, outlined below.

Guidance

If the Principal does not have detailed knowledge of an adventure activity as listed in the adventure activities guidelines below, it is recommended that further information and advice is sought from:

- activity peak bodies (see activity specific guidelines)
- a teacher or other qualified person with recent experience instructing the activity, who can offer an understanding of both the technical requirements and the educational context.

Pre-activity check

Prior to any adventure activity, the Teacher in Charge must undertake a pre-activity check (refer to [Pre-activity check template \(DOCX\)](#)). The pre-activity check aims to identify any reasonably foreseeable issues that could possibly affect the planned activity negatively particularly in regards to the safety of the participants and staff.

A pre-activity check must establish the:

- current weather, warnings and forecast conditions
- fire danger rating and current fire conditions and warnings
- conditions and nature of the environment in which the activity is being undertaken and the impact on the activity
- psychological and physical health and wellbeing of participants and staff on the activity
- condition of the activity specific and safety equipment being used in conducting of the activity, for example, helmets, life jackets, bikes.

²² Adapted from <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>



A decision to proceed with the activity, modify it, cancel it or implement contingency plans should be made based on the pre-activity check and any issues that could reasonably be considered to negatively affect the activity and/or the health and wellbeing of the participants and staff.

Adventure activity guidelines

The safe running of outdoor and adventure activities requires:

- appropriate planning
- the identification of potential risks and difficulties
- active decision making.

These adventure activity guidelines are for developing a risk register specific to the location, activity and group participating. They support teachers' professional judgement and experience. These may be incorporated into the risk register for the overall excursion or developed separately, using the risk registers available on the Department of Education's [Resources tab](#) – under Activity Specific Risk Registers.

If the excursion has an overnight camping component, the camping guidelines apply in addition to any planned specific activities. The length and difficulty of an overnight route should be selected so that groups generally arrive at the camp well before dark, with sufficient energy left to make camp and prepare a meal. This may not, however, be appropriate in all situations, for example, when it is preferable to walk at cooler times of the day.

These adventure activity guidelines are agreed minimum activity standards for adventure operators and they do not necessarily reflect the greater duty of care owed to students.

Specific activities guidelines

The Department of Education has published specific activities guidelines on its Adventure activities guidelines page (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>). These guidelines must be followed by DSM.

- Abseiling (DOCX)
- Artificial climbing and abseiling walls (DOCX)
- Bushwalking (DOCX)
- Camping (DOCX)
- Canoeing/kayaking (DOCX)
- Challenge ropes courses (DOCX) (includes flying foxes)
- Cycling (including Bicycle Education) (DOCX)
- Horse riding (DOCX)
- Orienteering (DOCX)
- Rafting (DOCX)
- Rock climbing (DOCX)
- Sailing (DOCX)
- Scuba diving (DOCX)
- Sea kayaking (DOCX)
- Snorkelling (DOCX)
- Snow activities (DOCX)
- Surfing and stand-up paddle boarding (DOCX)
- Swimming and water activities (including instructional swimming)(DOCX)
- Water skiing (DOCX)
- Windsurfing (DOCX)



Adventure activities without guidelines

Schools may consider adventure-based activities for which specific guidelines have not been provided. A thorough risk assessment is critical when undertaking an activity for which guidelines have not been provided.

For these activities, DSM must comply with the [Australian Adventure Activity Standards](#), and consider the duty of care that is required for students.

Before undertaking these activities, the Principal must satisfy themselves that the activities:

- are of educational value
- are supervised and instructed by appropriately experienced and/or qualified staff
- have appropriate insurance cover, including when offered by an external provider.

Further information and advice should be gathered from more than one source such as:

- peak bodies
- professional associations
- colleagues with experience instructing the activity with students.

Caving

Caving activities must only be conducted under the following circumstances:

- novices must only attempt the simplest caves
- only teachers and other adults with extensive caving experience lead and supervise students
- there is a ratio of no more than five students to one instructor
- permission to enter caves is obtained from the appropriate land manager
- Weather forecast have been obtained and there is no chance of flooding or rushes of water occurring in the caves
- The caves have been entered and examined by experts or specialist before and deemed safe for school aged children.

Flying or hot air ballooning

Only commercial operators licensed to carry passengers can be used for school organised activities.

Unsuitable activities

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

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