



ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL, KINGAROO

EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS POLICY

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Duty of Care Policy.

GUIDING SCRIPTURE

Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God's wonders. Do you know how God controls the clouds and makes his lightning flash? Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge? (Job 37:14-16)

PURPOSE

The school curriculum provides valuable opportunities for students to experience life in community situations outside the family and normal school routine, through school excursions, camps and tours.

Because excursions involve both staff and students leaving the school premises, they often present risks to which staff and students are not normally exposed to at school. To ensure the health and safety of staff and students, this policy outlines the responsibilities and processes to follow to manage these risks.

SCOPE

The St John's Lutheran School *Excursions and Camps Policy* applies to all staff (teaching and non-teaching who are full-time, part-time, contract, casual, and temporary) and volunteers who accompany students on excursions and/or camps.

DEFINITIONS

The term ***duty of care*** is a legal concept that defines the duty a person must take in reasonable care towards others in order to protect them from a known or reasonably foreseeable risk of harm and/or injury. This duty is placed on:

- All employers
- Their employees, and
- Any others who have an influence on the hazards in a workplace.

The latter includes contractors and those who design, manufacture, import, supply or install plant, equipment or materials used in the workplace.

Excursion refers to a well-planned curriculum-related activity that is conducted outside of the school grounds that aims to maximise students' learning experiences. The school maintains responsibility for the students during an excursion.

Harm refers to any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

POLICY STATEMENT

Appropriately planned and supervised camps and excursions assist greatly in the students' understanding of the community in which they live and of God's creation. St John's Lutheran School has developed a program of excursions and camps, which have the following aims:

- To help students acquire an appreciation of God's creation and an awareness of the natural environment
- To develop among the students a growing sense of Christian fellowship
- To provide each child with the opportunity to develop confidence in their ability to cope purposefully and adequately with an environment different from that of their home area
- To develop skills of co-operation between members of a group
- To develop skills of social adjustment in a differing environment
- To promote an appreciation of outdoor adventure experiences and develop knowledge and skills to provide a basis for future outdoor recreational activities.

An educational excursion must relate to current or future class objectives.

St John's Lutheran School and teachers have a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and welfare of students and others from known and reasonably foreseen risks of harm whilst attending excursions and camps.

PROCEDURES

1. Camp Program

To enable students to gain experience and to meet the aims of our policy, the school has developed a camping program within the curriculum and chosen venues that relate to topics discussed within the classroom.

The camp program includes the following camps; however, these may change at the discretion of staff:

Year level	Number of days	Camp Purpose	Possible Locations
11/12	3	Leadership Camp	TBA
10	3	Adventure Camp	Emu Gully
9	3 days	City Challenge	Brisbane
8	3 days	Team building	Coolum
7	3 days	Physical challenge	Koojarewon
6	3- 5 days	Government / Leadership / Canberra	Canberra
5	3 - 4 days	Swim focus / Adventure outdoors	Mapleton
4	3 - 4 days	Swim focus / Adventure outdoors	Currimundi
3	2 days		Duckadang

Camp destinations and dates are to be provided to parents at the parent information nights held at the start of the year.

2. Legal Accountabilities

Each excursion holds a different level of risk and therefore a different standard of care. The higher the risk, the higher the standard of care required. The level of duty of care varies according to the age and ability of the students; venue and conditions; staffing levels; and method of transport.

The engagement of an external provider to either run, or assist in the running of, excursions and where they provide venues and equipment does not release St John's Lutheran School from its duty of care obligation to ensure the safety of students who participate in the excursion. The school will carefully consider the terms of any proposed disclaimer or indemnity clauses in paperwork from external providers in relation to liability and seek appropriate legal or other advice.

3. Consent

3.1 Principal's Consent

The Principal will be responsible for approving all excursions. An *Excursion Application Form* must be completed and submitted to the Principal for approval prior to making any excursion arrangements. The Principals decision must ensure all curriculum activities are justified by the expected educational outcomes, given the level of residual risk.

All local excursions can be funded from the 'activity levy'. Teachers are to check with the Business Manager to ensure adequate funds are available.

3.2 Parent Consent

Written parental consent must be received from a parent before a student is allowed to participate in an activity.

Parents must be made aware of all details of the excursion, including, but not limited to:

- An outline of activities, particularly any hazardous activity or those requiring specialist instruction
- The identity and number of supervisors and whether any of them will be volunteers/parents
- The itinerary and transport arrangements
- The name and phone number of the school contact (during school and after hours)
- Full details of time, location, costs
- Details of emergency protocol
- A statement that troublesome students will be sent home at parental expense.

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL, KINGARROY

For all excursions held out of town or outside of normal school hours, a parent consent form must be obtained. For excursions held on a regular basis throughout the school year (e.g., sport), one consent form only should be required.

These forms should remain in possession of the teacher in charge throughout the duration of the excursion in case any details are required. A further copy of this information should be retained at the school office for referral during the excursion and for future reference.

Only students with a signed consent form can participate in an excursion or activity. The school is required to provide supervision at school for any students remaining at school and not participating in the excursion.

3.3 Medical Consent Forms

St John's Lutheran School will request detailed medical information and consent for medical treatment for extended excursions. The *Medical Consent Form* will indicate that the school will call a doctor and/or ambulance if required and that parents will be required to meet all associated costs.

If a student has a medical condition that may require attention on the excursion, staff should develop an individual medical plan in consultation with parents. Advice may be sought from a medical professional. This plan should be signed by parents and given to every staff member attending. Medication is to be administered to students in line with the *Managing Students Health Support Needs Policy*.

4. Planning

Prior planning by staff is an essential component of the school's risk mitigation strategies for a successful and safe activity or excursion.

The following issues need to be addressed when planning an excursion:

4.1 Educational Outline

The teacher in charge of the excursion or the Camp Coordinator is to prepare an educational outline of the program. It should include:

- Objectives
- Skills focus
- Pre and post activities
- Evaluation procedures.

4.2 Itinerary

A full itinerary is to be prepared by the teacher in charge of the excursion or Camp Coordinator using the *Itinerary – Excursion and Camps* form. This is to be submitted to the office at least one (1) week prior to departure.

4.3 Emergency Contingency Plan

An *Emergency Contingency Plan for Excursion or Camp* must be developed before embarking on an excursion or camp. It is essential that the teacher in charge of the excursion be fully aware of the intrinsic level of risk of the excursion to be undertaken. This plan needs to be understood by all teaching and supervising staff. A copy of the plan needs to be always held by the teacher in charge.

An emergency requires an immediate response that could be carried out calmly, therefore it is important to develop and practice an emergency contingency plan as part of normal school operations, in preparation for the potential of one occurring.

The school contact person should be readily available, especially outside normal school office hours, and be known to all parents. The contact person should know the names and phone numbers of all in the group, have details of the itinerary and be able to contact the teacher in charge.

4.4 Supervision

In planning the excursion, staff need to give careful consideration to the appropriate level of supervision and the characteristics of the student group.

Supervisors

A teacher in charge is to be appointed for all excursions or camps, who is responsible for the overall running of the activity and retains responsibility for the activity. This person must not be given supervision of any student group.

In respect to supervisors, including staff and volunteers, questions to consider include:

- How many teachers are needed, and which schools will the teachers be from if it is a combined excursion?
- Is there sufficient staffing provision to ensure that staff are not required to work extended hours without appropriate breaks? (for excursion that are for a number of days)
- How many volunteers are needed, who are they and do they require a Blue Card? (Refer to 2.25 *Screening Adults Involved in Child Related Activities Policy*)
- Are both male and female supervisors required? (particularly relevant if the excursion is for a number of days)
- What are the arrangements for supervision of students at night and in their sleeping accommodation?
- Are supervisors of the appropriate gender for all female, and/or all male excursions?
- Is there sufficient staffing provision to ensure that staff get sufficient sleep and are rested and functioning competently? (for excursions that are for a number of days)
- What is the chain of command?
- Who is the teacher in charge of the excursion and what is the backup plan should that person be injured or unable to fulfill their responsibilities?
- Do any teachers or volunteers require specialised training or qualifications for the excursion? (e.g., first aid certificate, bronze medallion, special drivers' license)
- Should the school consider allocating staffing responsibilities so that where staff are required to be in driving control of a vehicle in which students are travelling, that staff member has no other designated responsibility other than driving the vehicle?
- Who is responsible for the students whilst on the excursion if the students normally attend another school?
- Does the teacher accompanying the students still have a duty of care to the students whilst they are out of the teacher's control? (e.g., attending a foreign school)
- Who is responsible for the students if they are billeted out with families whilst on the excursion?
- Should there be a meeting to introduce the supervisors to the parents and outline the itinerary for the excursion?
- Should there be an opportunity for the parents to ask any questions about the excursion?
- Does the teacher in charge have adequate local knowledge of the area the excursion is visiting?
- Who is responsible for supervising the return home of a troublesome or injured student?

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL, KINGARROY

- What are the implications for the school and the teachers supervising the students, with respect to duty of care, if the excursion is organised by an external agency? (refer to *Section 2 Legal Accountabilities*). Is this situation different if the teachers are paid or unpaid?

Students

In regard to students, questions to consider include:

- What are the number, age and gender of students attending the excursion? (this is important when considering the level of supervision necessary, younger students may require more supervisors)
- Are there any students with disabilities or special needs and do supervisors require any special training to attend to these students?
- Do any students have any allergies or require special medication?
- Are supervisors needed to administer special medication to students and if so, do they require any special training to do so?
- Are all students capable of undertaking the planned activities? (e.g., Can they swim? If the student can't do the activity, what will they do during that time and how will they be supervised?)
- What are the arrangements for returning a troublesome student home and who will bear the cost?

Activities

In regard to activities, questions to consider include:

- How closely do the students need to be supervised?
- How much individual attention do students need for successful instruction at the beginner level?
- If a student gets into difficulty, can other students immediately stop what they are doing while staff help the student in difficulty?
- If students get into difficulty, do they need immediate assistance?
- How will the students be organised while doing the activity?
- How will the staff be deployed? Will constant supervision be maintained? If not, can this be justified? How far away will staff be?
- Over what area/distance will the students be spread? Will the students be divided into subgroups?

4.5 Equipment to be used and Specialist Instruction

Before embarking on the excursion or activity the following is to be considered:

- Whether the equipment to be used on the excursion is adequate for the purpose
- Whether the equipment is in good repair
- Whether any of the activities to be undertaken on the excursion require specialised instruction. If so, details of who will provide the instruction
- If the school is engaging external instructors, details of the instructors' qualifications, insurance etc.

4.6 Insurance

The school is to ensure that current insurance policies are adequate for the purposes of the excursion. This may require a discussion with the school insurance company at an early stage to establish what is required. Assurance should be obtained in writing that the school is covered for activities undertaken on the excursion, participating volunteers/staff, transport, and any implications for excursions organised by an external agency etc.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Assessing Student Capabilities

The capabilities of the students attending an excursion are a major factor in determining the duty of care that teachers have to those students. For excursions using external instructors, the school is to contact them for a list of what is expected of the students during the excursion and what level of expertise is required of the students before commencing.

5.2 Qualifications of Staff/Leaders

The school is responsible for ensuring that the teacher or assisting instructor is sufficiently qualified to run the excursion and has the appropriate skills and abilities to deal with the environment. At least one staff member/leader is to hold a current first aid certificate.

5.3 External Instructors

It is important that the school ensures that the instructor has the appropriate qualifications, experience, police clearance, insurance coverage and permits required and holds details of these at the school prior to the excursion.

5.4 Discipline Procedure

Before the start of any excursion, it will be outlined to all students, assisting adults and parents what student behaviour is expected during the excursion, emphasising the need for safety standards. For some excursions, consideration may need to be given to an individual student's previous behaviour. To avoid confusion and inconsistencies, all discipline and matters relating to general conduct must be left to the teaching staff and, if possible, the teacher in charge. Parents, non-teaching staff and outside staff are to be made aware of the person to whom discipline matters are to be referred.

5.5 Student Attendance

Attendance of students on excursion or camp is at the discretion of the school administration team as ultimately the school is responsible for all students on such activities and all needs and situations must be considered for the overall safety and wellbeing of all concerned.

All students attending an excursion are to be marked on a roll at the beginning and the end of an excursion. For extended excursions, regular head counts should occur. This may be, for example, at 'lights out', before transport leaves an activity site, and during water activities.

5.6 Parent Involvement

Parents will be involved on excursions as deemed appropriate by the school administration team. When planning for parent involvement, adult to student ratios should be considered, as outlined in *Section 6.1 Teacher/Student Ratios*.

Selection Process

The following selection process aims to facilitate the possible chance for a parent per family per child per camp to attend camp if they choose to nominate, although the school cannot guarantee this.

- A priority system has been put in place so families (i.e., parent or guardian) who have not had the chance to attend camp are entered into the first round draw of names
- If adequate numbers or gender ratio of first time helpers are unavailable, then a second round draw open to other interested parents may follow
- Priority may be given to parents or carers who need to attend the excursion to support a student's particular needs
- Parents may be selected based on experience, specialist knowledge or medical/first aid skills

- The school ultimately reserves the right to confirm which parents attend camps.

Day visits to camp by parents will be negotiated and agreed upon between Camp Coordinator, teachers, learning support and parents.

Information for Parent Helpers

It is important to make sure that all parents participating are aware of the emergency procedures, minor first aid procedures, any medical conditions of the students in their care, subject to privacy considerations, and that they are to pass any discipline problems on to the teacher in charge.

Parent helpers attending camps will receive the *Guideline for School Camp Helpers* and must:

- Complete a Restricted Persons Declaration, and
- Complete the Valuing Safe Communities course for volunteers.

Blue Cards

As outlined in *2.25 Screening Adults Involved in Child Related Activities Policy*, parents of children attending the school are not required to hold a valid blue card. All non-parent volunteers must hold a current blue card.

6. Safety

6.1 Teacher/Student Ratios

The following factors will be considered in relation to the ratio of teacher to student:

- The age of the students
- The capability of the students
- The location and nature of the planned activity.

Departments of Education around Australia set down guidelines for best practice for staff: student ratios with respect to outdoor excursions. More information about ratios for particular activities is available at: [Managing risks in school curriculum activities procedure \(qed.qld.gov.au\)](http://qed.qld.gov.au) Information provided at this link outlines risk assessment criteria for a variety of school activities and includes reference to risk levels, leader qualifications, safety of students etc.

St John's Lutheran School has established the following ratios:

Day Excursions

When planning a day excursion, the following adult: student ratio must not exceed:

- Prep 1:5
- Years 1, 2, 3 1:8
- Year 4 – 9 1:15

Camps

When planning a camp, the following adult: student ratio must not exceed:

- Preferably 1:8 but no more than 1:10 as is appropriate to the camp.

Further Suggestions for Ratios

The following suggested general adult: student ratios are guidelines, based on criteria laid down by various Educations Departments around Australia:

- One of the adults accompanying any group should be a registered teacher. For mixed groups, it is preferable that there is one male and one female teacher present. For excursions lasting more than one day, volunteers can be used for part of that time so that the male/female mix remains as long as there is at least one teacher always present

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL, KINGAROO

- A minimum of two adults should accompany a group irrespective of the group size, with one of the adults being a teacher. If an adult other than a teacher is busy with students, a teacher should always be present to take overall responsibility for duty of care
- For all excursions it is recommended that there be at least one staff member with current first aid qualifications and experience
- The staff: student ratio will be lower as the age and maturity of students is lower
- The staff: student ratio will be lower as the difficulty and danger of the activity becomes higher
- For closed water activities (e.g., swimming in swimming pool), after taking into account the minimum requirement of two supervisors: One qualified supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof, and for every 12 students or part thereof, there will be one supervisor (inclusive of the qualified supervisor). That is, for a swimming class of 32, there would be one qualified supervisor, plus 2 others. Note that for younger primary students the most common ratios are between 1: 5 and 1: 8 depending on the age, experience and maturity of the student group
- For open water activities (e.g. surf beach, flowing river), after taking into account the minimum requirement of two supervisors: One qualified supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof; and for every 8 students or part thereof, there will be one supervisor (inclusive of the qualified supervisor). That is, for 32 students there would be two qualified supervisors + 2 others.

6.2 Safety and Risk Management

It is essential that all adults involved in an excursion or camp understand the level of risk and are able to manage the risk at a level equal with the ability of the students and the area in which the excursion or camp is held.

To uphold duty of care obligations, the school is to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment using the *Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment Form (CARA)* for each excursion and that this risk assessment is used to inform actions and decisions about the excursion. The Principal is to ensure that health and safety risks associated with the excursion have been addressed.

Risk assessments must be completed by the Camp Coordinator and teacher in charge for camps excursions.

Risk assessments must be completed at least two weeks prior to the excursion for the following:

- The venue
- Activities undertaken
- Transport
- Any other contracted organisations.

Risk assessments must be completed two weeks prior to a camp for the venue and activities to be undertaken.

The risk assessment must be approved by the WHS Officer before an excursion or camp can take place.

It is important that the risk involved in an excursion is mitigated to an acceptable level, weighing up risk versus benefit to students. As per the risk management process outlined in the *5.25 Risk Management Policy*:

- The potential risks a particular activity presents to students and teachers are to be identified and assessed according to the *likelihood* of the risk happening and the *consequences* if it does happen
- The planning of the excursion will then include control measures for reducing or eliminating each identified risk.

All accidents and incidents which occur during an excursion or camp must be reported and recorded as per the procedures in *4.35 Work Health and Safety Policy*.

6.3 Students with Disability/Medical Needs

It is essential that where students with disability and/or medical needs are concerned, St John's are to check with our insurers, the child's parents and, where relevant, the child's doctor (at the parents' discretion) while the excursion is in the planning stages.

- If a student has a medical condition that may require attention on the excursion, the school is to develop an individual medical plan in consultation with the parents. Advice could be sought from a medical professional if appropriate. The plan should be signed by the parents and given to every member of staff attending. It should contain information such as who should be contacted immediately (parent, doctor), phone numbers, Medicare number, private health fund details. Action to be taken is outlined in Steps to be taken i.e. 1. Ring ambulance (OOO), 2. Ring mother (phone number), 3.....
- Should the school have serious concerns about their ability to meet the child's medical needs, the child's parent or a trained nurse can be asked to attend. Another parent or a teacher assistant with medical expertise may volunteer, or the school may have to employ an appropriate person
- If children with ADHD, intellectual disabilities, psychological problems or behavioural concerns are attending, attention should be given to the individual needs of the students in the planning stages. Ways to prevent/overcome possible problems that can be foreseen should be discussed and documented by all staff involved.
- Some students have physical disabilities or medical conditions that make participation in some or all activities difficult. The risks and practicalities must be discussed with the parents while the excursion is in the planning stages. Alternative or adapted activities may be offered. If solutions cannot be found, another location/venue/activity should be considered for all students. The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* means that St John's Lutheran School cannot exclude students with disabilities unless the adjustments required cause unnecessary hardship or are unreasonable.

7. Transportation

7.1 Bus Travel

Travel to and from excursions will be by bus. If any other mode of transport is to be used, parents will be given prior notification. The following conditions are to be adhered to:

- Students must be in a seat and wearing a seat belt at all times
- Children must be collected from inside the school grounds unless alternative arrangements have been made
- Any behaviour issues of students during transportation must be reported to the teacher in charge.

The *Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses* forms part of these transport conditions. Refer to 1.16 Duty of Care Policy, Section 7 Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses.

7.2 Use of Private Vehicles

Use of private vehicles for excursions is to be discouraged, however this may be unavoidable at times. The school's duty of care extends to ensuring that all private vehicles use by parents and teachers on school excursions adhere to the following conditions:

- A driver must hold a current driver's licence, unrestricted for the vehicle they are driving. The school will not allow 'L' or 'P' plate drivers to transport students. The school reserves the right to sight and record the person's current driver's licence
- Teachers' driver's licence and insurance details will be recorded by administration

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL, KINGAROO

- All private vehicles used to transport student must be in a roadworthy condition and have current registration and compulsory third-party insurance. The school reserves the right to sight and record these details
- The school does not accept any liability for any damage to a private vehicle
- The number of children permitted in the vehicle must not exceed the legal limit
- Written permission is to be obtained from parents for their child to be driven in a private vehicle
- Approval must be given from the Principal for teachers to use their cars to transport students
- Seat belts or appropriate child restraint must be used at all times
- Smoking is strictly prohibited whilst transporting students in private vehicles
- The driver of a private vehicle must record a blood alcohol limit of 0.00% whilst transporting students in a private vehicle
- Drivers should have a mobile phone available for use in an emergency, with the contact details of the school accessible
- Any student behaviour issues must be reported to the teacher in charge.

8. Camp / Excursion Preparation for Teachers and Administration

When planning camps and excursions, teachers are to complete the following forms:

- *Excursion Application Form and Checklist* (Form 1.18.1 on Sharepoint)
- *Camp Preparation Checklist* (Form 1.18.2 on Sharepoint).

Administration will ensure the following tasks are completed:

- Signed permission from the Principal or delegate to book camp
- Confirm booking and transport
- Costing
- Visit and inspect campsite if new site is to be used

9. Establishing Activity Guidelines

While guidelines will change depending on such things as the difficulty of the activity, age and experience of participants and so on, some general guidelines can be applied to the role of supervisors during an activity. For all activities, it is essential that participants are aware of all guidelines before commencement.

All supervisors should be made aware of their individual supervisory role including:

- Where they are to be positioned
- Which area is theirs when scanning for students and what the safety check systems are, e.g., Establish a buddy system where swimmers are paired and regularly checked for all water activities
- Which teacher/assisting adult is to test the area prior to students being allowed to enter
- If an outdoor activity, who is responsible for evaluating the area for changes, e.g., Weather conditions
- Who is specifically responsible for first aid
- When and where roll calls/head counts will occur and who is responsible
- What the communication method is, e.g., whistle, clap, bell
- Who is responsible for matters related to the emergency plan e.g. mobile phone, flotation devices if water activities.

10. Other Staff Considerations

Staff members are on duty for the whole period of an excursion; in the event of an emergency, all excursion staff may be required to take responsibility for students at short notice. While staff members need to sleep and need time off to relax, technically they remain on duty even at such times. Only when a staff member finally ceases to be a member of the excursion or when the excursion concludes do they cease to be on duty. Therefore, when planning camps, consideration will need to be given to staffing rostering to ensure that in normal circumstances, staff get adequate time for sleep and to relax.

The consumption of alcohol is totally banned on all school excursions and camps.

Legislation / References:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld) • Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cwth) • Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld) • Civil Liability Act 2003 (Qld) • <u>Code of Conduct for School Students Travelling on Buses</u> • Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwth) • Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld) • Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) • Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 (Qld) • Education (Work Experience) Act 1996 (Qld) • Privacy Act 1988 (Cwth) • Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cwth) • Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwth) • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld) • Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 (Qld) • Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 (Qld)
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