

Overseas excursions advice and application pack

An overseas excursion must have the endorsement of the principal and, when more than one school is involved, the principals of all participating schools.

Approval for overseas excursions cannot be assumed. At least **nine months** prior to the date of planned departure principals must send their Director, Public Schools NSW a completed Notice of intention to plan an overseas excursion.

Overseas excursions must be approved by the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW on the recommendation of the Director, Public Schools NSW. At least **four months** prior to the date of the planned excursion a completed *Application for approval of overseas excursions* must be forwarded by the principal via the Director, Public Schools NSW to the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW.

The *Overseas excursions advice and application pack* contains:

- [Notice of intention to plan an overseas excursion](#)
- [Application for approval of overseas excursion](#)
- [Overseas excursion checklist](#)
- [Risk management process and pro-forma](#)
- [Parent or caregiver information and consent form](#)
- [Medical information form](#)
- [Good practice in billeting](#)
- [Acknowledgement of billeting conditions by billeting families](#)
- [Planning an overseas excursion: helpful hints for teachers, students and parents](#)

Instructions

This document contains advice and a series of automated forms to assist principals in preparing for overseas excursions.

Directions:

- 1 Save this file to your computer.
- 2 The file will open as a document in Microsoft Word. When preparing excursions make a copy of the file preferably with the name of the excursion.
Note: If using a Macintosh computer, ensure that the title has “.doc” as a suffix. This will allow the file to be opened easily on a Windows machine if necessary.
- 3 Automated Forms:
 - a. The wording on an Automated Form cannot be changed.
 - b. Shaded areas are provided to indicate where a response needs to be made. The shading is intended as a guide only and will not print.
 - c. There are two types of shaded response areas:

- i. Text box – these appear as a shaded box and are often underlined. Click in the shaded area and type. The box will expand automatically to accommodate the text you wish to provide.
 - ii. Drop down menu – these are typically of a *Yes / No / Not applicable* nature and are used where a specific response is required. Click in the shaded area and you will note the options for response will appear. Click on the appropriate response.
 - d. For assistance with a shaded response area, click in the shaded area and then press F1 or note the comment in the status bar at the bottom of the screen.
- 4 The following Automated Forms are provided and **must be included** when seeking approval for the excursion from your Executive Director, Public Schools NSW:
- a. *Notice of Intention to Plan an Overseas Excursion* (to be submitted to the Director, Public Schools NSW at least **nine months** prior to the departure date.)
 - b. *Application for approval of overseas excursion*
 - c. *Overseas excursion checklist*
 - d. *Risk management plan*
- In addition, further pages will need to be added to include the signed copy of *Notice of Intention to Plan an Overseas Excursion*, a list of students, names of accompanying adults, a detailed itinerary, a breakdown of costs, and current travel advice from the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/>
- 5 Each page of the *Application for approval of overseas excursion*, *Overseas excursion checklist* and *Risk management plan* forms must be signed by the excursion coordinator and principal and dated before submission to the Director, Public Schools NSW for endorsement.
- 6 Level of approval
- An overseas excursion can only be approved by an Executive Director, Public Schools NSW or Deputy Secretary, School Operations and Performance. The completed submission must be forwarded for approval to the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW via the Director, Public Schools NSW at least **four months** prior to the departure date.
- Travel for teachers acting as supervisors or caretakers must be approved in accordance with section 6.2 of the [Travel on Official Business guidelines](#).

Notice of Intention to Plan an Overseas Excursion

School: _____ School code: _____

Proposed destination: _____

Proposed departure date: _____

Proposed return date: _____

Anticipated number of school days: _____

Anticipated number of vacation days: _____

Anticipated cost per student: _____

Organising teacher: _____

Proposed class(es): _____ Anticipated number of students: _____

Is it proposed that other schools will be involved in this excursion? _____

If Yes, they are _____

Reasons for the excursion and anticipated student learning outcomes: _____

Organising teacher:

Date:

Principal:.....

Date:

SEA Office use only	
Endorsed:	I have considered this <i>Notice of Intention to Plan an Overseas Excursion</i> and give / do not give in-principle approval to proceed. _____, Director, Public Schools NSW
Date:	

Application for approval of overseas excursion

School: _____ School code: _____

Excursion to: _____

Date: From _____ to _____

Number of school days: _____

Number of non-school days: _____

Excursion organiser: _____

- Pages attached:
1. Overseas excursion checklist
 2. Risk management plan
 3. List of accompanying adults
 4. List of students
 5. Detailed itinerary
 6. Breakdown of costs
 7. Accommodation details
 8. DFAT travel advice
 9. Notice of Intention to Plan an Overseas Excursion (signed by SED)
- Other: _____

Excursion coordinator

Principal

Date

SEA Office use only	
Endorsed:	<p><i>I have checked all supporting documentation for this overseas excursion and submit this application for approval by the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">_____, Director, Public Schools NSW</p>
Date:	_____
Please resubmit with further information:	_____
Regional Office use only	
Approved:	_____, Executive Director, Public Schools NSW
Date:	_____
Please resubmit with further information:	_____

SEA Office use only	
Endorsed:	<p><i>I have checked all supporting documentation for this overseas excursion and submit this application for approval by the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">, Director, Public Schools NSW</p>
Date:	
Please resubmit with further information:	
Regional Office use only	
Approved:	, Executive Director, Public Schools NSW
Date:	
Please resubmit with further information:	

Overseas Excursion checklist

Details

Is the tour substantially in vacation time?..... _____

What is the educational value of proposed excursion? _____

Are the activities available in Australia? _____

Consent forms

Is there a signed Excursion consent form for each student? _____

If Incomplete, why? _____

Is there a signed Medical information form for each student?..... _____

If Incomplete, why? _____

Evidence that parents have been informed in writing of all details is attached..... _____

Supervision

Has a risk assessment been conducted?..... _____

Is a risk management plan attached?..... _____

Are there any unsupervised activities?..... _____

If Yes, what are they? _____

Is a list of teachers accompanying students on the excursion attached?..... _____

Have parents or caregivers been provided with details of supervision and risk reduction strategies? _____

Will a teacher with CPR and emergency care be present?..... _____

Are parents, caregivers or volunteers going? _____

If Yes, has the principal:

• received a signed 'Prohibited Employment Declaration' _____

• checked the Department's not to be employed list..... _____

• consulted referees..... _____

Have child protection issues been addressed? _____

Excursion coordinator

Principal

Date

Cost of excursion

What is the cost per student of the excursion? \$ _____

Is the exact breakdown of costs attached?..... _____

If No, explain why not: _____

Have any gratuities, donations or subsidies, including free airline tickets, been received _____

If Yes, how have these been applied? _____

Is the school fundraising to support the students?..... _____

If Yes, how? _____

Are there strategies in place to support students who cannot afford the excursion? _____

Provide details of those strategies: _____

Are there alternate activities for non-attendees? _____

Other

Have the staff and the principal checked against the current Excursions policy? _____

Is a list of students including gender and school year attached? _____

Is a detailed itinerary attached? _____

Is a copy of current travel advice from the website of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (www.dfat.gov.au/travel) attached? _____

Are details of accommodation, including names, addresses and phone numbers attached?..... _____

Is the travel company an Australian registered one? _____

If Yes, note registration number. _____

Has all travel insurance been arranged by participants? _____

Will excursion documents be maintained at the school? _____

Note: If the excursion involves students from other schools, each principal and if applicable, Director, Public Schools NSW, should include a letter of support / approval.

Excursion coordinator

Principal

Date

Risk management process

Risk management is a process consisting of well-defined steps which, when taken in sequence, support better decision making by contributing to a greater insight into risks and their impacts. Risk management processes are used to identify hazards and to assess and eliminate or control risks associated with activities.

Consultation with key stakeholders including staff, parents and external venue providers is a central component of the risk management process.

Although the focus for risk management may differ from school to school, the same steps should be followed. These steps are consistent with the principles of risk management outlined in chapter 2 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001*.

The four essential steps of the risk management process are:

1. Risk identification
2. Risk assessment
3. Risk elimination or control
4. Communicate the risk management plan
5. Monitoring and review.

To be effective the risk management plan must be communicated to stakeholders. Principals should also ensure that plans are documented and retained to assist in future planning of excursions.

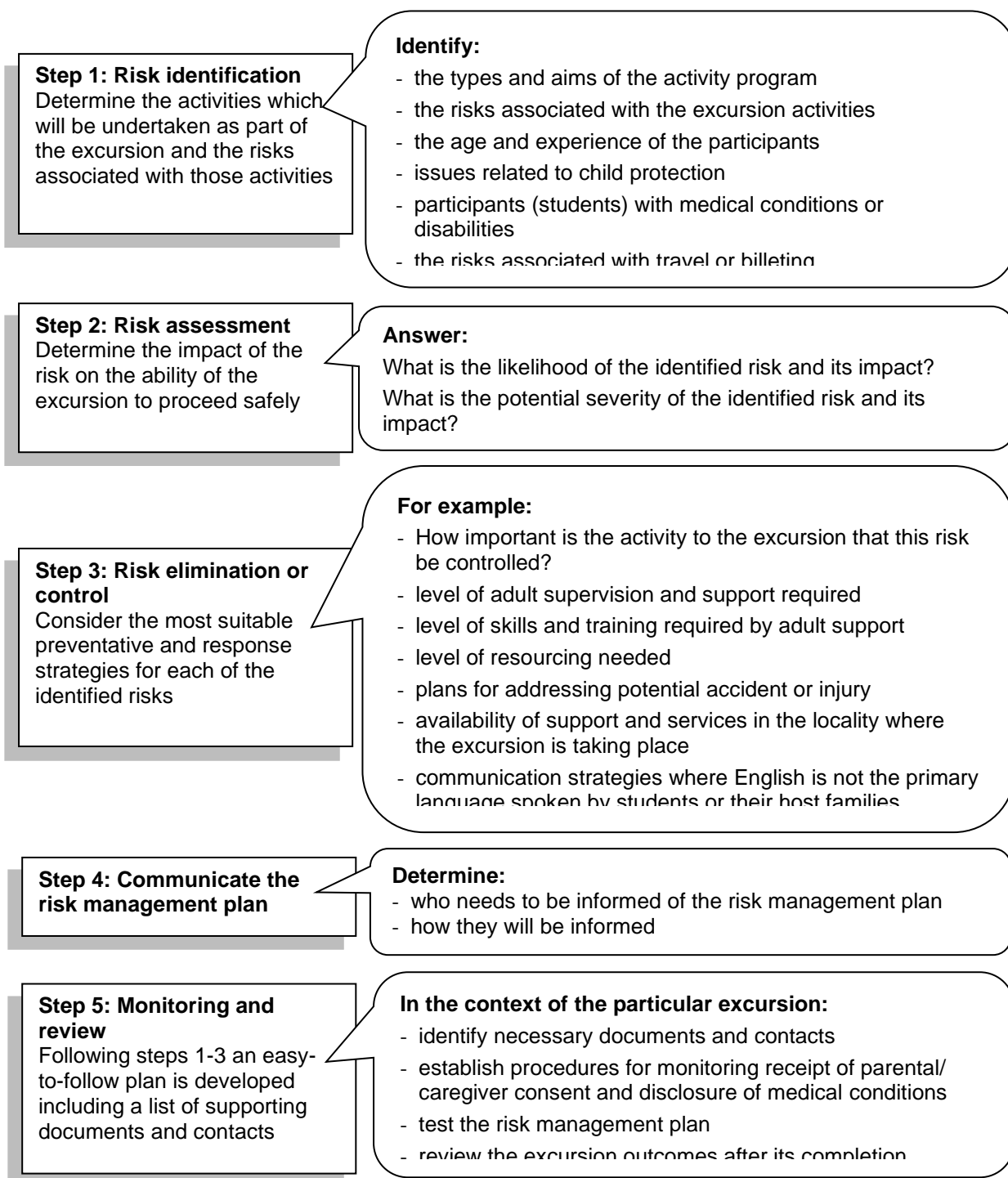
In the context of student excursions the risk management process should examine, but not be limited to, the following:

- type and aims of the activity or program
- child protection issues
- age and experience of the participants
- special factors such as participants with medical conditions or disabilities
- level of adult supervision and support required
- level of skills and training required by adult support
- level of resourcing needed to support the activity
- DET policies or procedures relevant to the excursion activity
- type of information required by participants and their families
- method of communication required, e.g. interpreters
- potential risks and known dangers associated with the activity or program
- potential risks and known dangers associated with travel to the location
- availability of support services in the locality where activity is occurring
- contingency plans for addressing potential accidents or injury
- the venue used has public liability cover
- type of communication required if English is not the primary language spoken or read by students' families.

Information gained from this examination would comprise the first step of the risk management process: risk identification.

Risks identified then need to be analysed and evaluated in terms of their potential impact for students and staff undertaking the excursion.

A simple way of representing the risk management process as it applies to excursions is by using the following flow chart:



OHS Risk management plan pro-forma

Excursion coordinator: _____
 Location: _____ Date(s) of excursion: _____
 Description and location of excursion: _____

Group/class: _____ Number in group/class: _____
 Accompanying staff: _____
 Parents, caregivers, volunteers: _____
 Contact Number: _____

Hazard/Risk Identification Type/Cause	Priority (severity & likelihood)	Risk Management Plan - Elimination or Control Measures (Elimination Substitution Isolation Engineering Administration PPE)		
			Who	When

Excursion coordinator: Date:
 Principal: Date:

Consulted with: _____
 Risk Management Plan communicated to: _____

Monitor and Review

- Were the controls effective?
- Were all those involved in the excursion aware of the controls?
- Were new hazards identified?

- What further actions are required for future excursions?

Signature: _____ Review Date: _____

Who	When

School excursions: Parent or caregiver information and consent form

Instructions:

This document provides wording to create an information form and permission slip for use with a range of excursions. This is the minimum information required. However, depending on the nature and specific activities of each excursion, further advice and details may need to be included.

Section A provides a simple information form that will be of use for most excursions.

Section B provides wording to cater for a range of activities that may occur on excursion, and advice on the privacy implications of the collection of personal data. These sections should be copied as required and inserted into Section A. In addition, a medical information form is provided and must be appended to the information form as required.

Overseas excursions:

Due to the more complex nature of overseas excursions, consent forms should provide as much detail as possible for parents and caregivers on:

- Travel details, including
 - detailed itinerary
 - all travel times, dates and modes of transport
 - planned activities
 - Accommodation details, including:
 - addresses
 - contact phone numbers where applicable
 - Supervision details, including:
 - names and gender of all accompanying adults
 - advice on staff with CPR and first aid certification
 - how parents and caregivers might get in contact with their child, and staff in an emergency

As personal information will be sought on students, the consent form must include advice on privacy and the use of personal details. A sample is provided below.

Parents and caregivers should provide the organising teacher(s) with informed consent for the excursion, including:

- relevant medical information relating to their child
- a copy of travel insurance, where necessary
- acknowledgement of the supervision arrangements in place and, where necessary, the accommodation arrangements.

Section A

Dear parent or caregiver,

_____ 's class will be going on an excursion to _____ on _____ to _____ .

This excursion has been planned to supplement the following work being done in the classroom:

The cost of the excursion is \$ _____

The class will depart from _____ at _____ and return to _____ at _____

Travel will be by _____ .

The staff member with first aid training is _____

Accompanying staff are _____

Insert as appropriate:

- **Overnight excursion advice**
- **Water activities advice**
- **Travel insurance advice**
- **Privacy advice – whenever personal information is sought the privacy advice must be included.**
- **Overseas excursion advice, including travel, itinerary, accommodation and supervision details.**

Excursion coordinator

Principal

-----✂----- Please detach and return to _____ by _____

I do / do not consent to participating in an excursion to _____ on _____ .

My son / daughter has the following special needs (please provide full details and include any relevant medical details on the attached *Medical information form*)

I give / do not give permission for my child to receive medical treatment in case of emergency.

Insert as appropriate:

- **Overnight excursions – response**
- **Water activities – response**
- **Travel insurance - response**

Signature

Date

Section B

Travel insurance - advice
The Department recommends that parents or caregivers arrange travel insurance for students for intrastate or interstate excursions that require travel by air.
Travel insurance - response
I have arranged travel insurance with A copy of that policy is attached.

Water or swimming activities - advice
The excursion will involve the following water or swimming activities: These activities will take place at: The school will provide the following flotation devices to students who may require assistance in the water:
Water or swimming activities - response
In relation to the proposed water or swimming activities, I advise that my child is a: <i>(please tick one)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> strong swimmer <input type="checkbox"/> average swimmer <input type="checkbox"/> poor swimmer <input type="checkbox"/> non-swimmer I advise that my child requires the following flotation device to assist him/her in the water:..... I undertake to provide this device so that my child can participate in the excursion. Yes / No I give / do not give permission for my child to participate in the water or swimming activities.

Overnight excursions - advice
Accommodation will be at Travel will be by The group will be supervised by <i>Additional information (consider advice on the number of students and teachers, protective clothing or equipment)</i>
Overnight excursions - response
I understand that my son / daughter will stay overnight at

Privacy notice

Note: A Privacy notice must appear on all forms issued by the Department used for collecting personal information. A sample *Privacy advice* notice is below for use with consent forms. Principals will need to fill in the blanks to make this relevant to each particular excursion. A Privacy notice will also need to be included on any electronic personal information data collection system.

For further information on privacy and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* please see http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/papipa1998464/.

Privacy - advice

The information provided on by is being obtained for the purpose of

It will be used by the NSW Department of Education and Training for

[If applicable] Other persons and/or agencies that will be provided with this information are for the purpose of

Provision of this information is required by law / voluntary. It will be stored securely.

[If applicable] If you do not provide all or any of this information then

You may correct any personal information provided at any time by contacting

Medical information form

The information provided on by is being obtained for the purpose of

It will be used by the NSW Department of Education and Training for

[If applicable] Other persons and/or agencies that will be provided with this information are for the purpose of

Provision of this information is required by law / voluntary. It will be stored securely.

[If applicable] If you do not provide all or any of this information then

You may correct any personal information provided at any time by contacting

Student name:

Class:

Parent or caregiver contact details

Name:

Address:

Home phone: Work: Mobile:

Doctor contact details

Name:

Address:

Doctor's telephone: 1. 2.

Emergency contact(s) details (nominated by the parent or caregiver as alternate contact)

1. Name: Phone:

2. Name: Phone:

List existing medical conditions or illnesses (include asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, allergies etc.). Outline the treatment for each.

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Medical conditions or illnesses continued
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Outline special dietary needs including possible reaction to inappropriate diet
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Medication(s) to be administered during the excursion. Include name of medication, instructions for administration, time of administration, and any possible reactions
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Signature: Date:

Please return this form by:

Good practice in billeting

This document provides support material for your consideration and use when planning an activity that involves students being billeted.

In order to support teachers and principals the following documents are provided below:

- *Good practice in billeting*
- *Acknowledgement of billeting conditions by billeting families and Undertaking to provide a billet*

This is an automated form. Click in the shaded areas and add the necessary information. The shaded areas will expand as you type, and the shading will not print.

Parents or caregivers agreeing to billet students should complete the *Undertaking to provide a billet*. Schools must retain a copy of the signed acknowledgement.

Billeting relies on the goodwill of host families offering to accommodate visiting students, usually without financial compensation. The majority of parents will appreciate the obligation that the Department has in relation to the welfare of students and the measures that need to be in place to fulfil that obligation.

If the wellbeing or safety of a student is at risk, or there is a suspicion that this could be so, the student should be relocated to another approved accommodation arrangement and the student's parents informed that this has occurred.

Principals must ensure that all staff have received training in child protection and are aware of the need to be vigilant in all matters relating to the safety and welfare of students involved in billeting.

Good practice in billeting

- Determine whether billeting is the preferred option for the proposed activity.
- Commence planning as far in advance as possible.
- Appoint a coordinator at both the visiting school and the host school. Schools visiting from overseas usually use an agent to arrange visits. The agent would undertake the role of coordinator. Coordinators must establish mechanisms for collaboration and regular communication.
- Determine how many staff supervisors will be required for the particular activity. Other policies may also apply, such as those relating to emergency care procedures. An important requirement is that each billeted student has ready access to a supervisor.
- Establish a clear timeline for the billeting process.
- Billet the group of students, where possible, at one school or neighbouring schools so that they can travel together.
- Billet two or more students of the same sex together, where possible. This allows for increased comfort and safety of students and often requires little extra organisation for the host family.
- Ensure that consent forms are signed and medical information forms completed by the parents or caregivers of students to be billeted.
- Provide the names and ages of students to be billeted to the host school as early as possible. Suggested groupings for multiple billets and individual issues such as special needs should be included. Communication between coordinators can enhance the effectiveness of matching students to host families. Ensure that appropriate information about students is provided to host families. In cases of visiting overseas schools this information will usually be forwarded by the agent.
- Provide details of billeting families and allocated students to the coordinator of the visiting school at least seven days before the commencement of the activity. This information is usually required at least four weeks in advance for visiting overseas schools.

- Ensure that an adult from each family hosting a billet has signed an acknowledgement of the billeting conditions (use the pro-forma provided).
- Child protection is a critical issue for education authorities worldwide. In organising an overseas excursion, teachers must discuss with the host school DET requirements for child protection.
- Ensure contact between coordinators to discuss any final arrangements at least seven days before the activity.
- Provide for alternate suitable accommodation, should there not be enough families volunteering to host the visiting students.
- Ensure that non-government agencies or school personnel from interstate or overseas are aware of Departmental requirements in relation to child protection.
- Provide a program to all participants in the billeting activity prior to the commencement of the activity. Include:
 - the agenda
 - venues
 - meeting times, places and addresses
 - group travel arrangements.
- Ensure that requirements and expectations about transporting students to and from group meeting places are made clear to the adults in billeting families. Consider establishing a meeting time each day for billeted students so that they can raise issues.
- Provide students to be billeted with information on things that can go wrong and strategies for keeping themselves safe.
- Ensure that lines of communication, including contact phone numbers, are known to all students and their families for contact with the coordinator.
- Communicate to all participants that no unplanned alterations to billeting arrangements may be made without the approval of the coordinator.
- Concerns about a student's safety must be taken seriously and appropriate action taken to protect the student.

Acknowledgement of billeting conditions by billeting families

Dear parent or caregiver,

The school has received an indication that you may be willing to provide accommodation for a student who is participating in the _____.

This activity will involve the provision of accommodation for visiting students from: _____ to _____.

The school is very grateful for your offer to billet visiting students.

You would be aware that the NSW Department of Education and Training has policies and procedures relating to child protection. The Department, as an agency responsible for the care and welfare of students in schools, has a charter to protect the young people in its care from all forms of abuse. In order to formalise the billet, please sign and return the undertaking below. All adults and adolescents residing in your home must be aware of this undertaking.

We hope you will enjoy having the billeted student in your home and anticipate that the student will benefit from the experience of staying with you.

Please retain this section for future reference.

Yours sincerely

Principal

Date

----- ✕ ----- Return the completed slip below to: _____ -----

Undertaking to provide a billet

In support of the commitment of the NSW Department of Education and Training to provide a safe environment for students, I agree to provide appropriate accommodation for student(s) during the _____ being held from _____ to _____.

I advise that there is nothing in my history, or the history of the people within this household that would preclude our hosting the student(s) during this visit.

I undertake to provide a safe and secure home environment for the student(s) and to do my utmost to ensure that the student(s) is/are not exposed to harm.

All adults and adolescents in this household have read and are aware of this undertaking.

Signed Name

Relationship to student Date

PLANNING AN OVERSEAS EXCURSION

Helpful hints for teachers, students and parents

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a significant growth in the number of students travelling to overseas countries on excursion. These excursions include sister-school or other exchanges, sporting or cultural visits or language study programs. This growth in overseas travel by students raises a number of planning and safety issues for the students, their families and their schools.

This guide provides assistance for teachers, students and their families to prepare for such travel. It is not an exhaustive checklist for student tours. It is an aid to planning an overseas study experience, which will be memorable, informative, pleasurable and safe.

2. GENERAL HINTS FOR ORGANISING AN OVERSEAS EXCURSION

If you are considering an overseas excursion you will need at least 12 months to plan it adequately. At the very outset you should conduct a risk assessment of your proposed tour and endeavour to incorporate measures to deal with those risks. The following general guidelines may be helpful.

2.1 Preliminary tasks

- Obtain the formal approval and support of your principal.
- Note that approvals for teachers travelling overseas as supervisors or caretakers must be obtained in accordance with section 6.2 of the [Travel on Official Business guidelines](#).
- Ensure that you have adequate numbers to participate in a study tour. You may consider combining with another school.
- If you think that you will have more participants than you can take, determine a selection method and consider a reserve list.
- Gather as much information as possible about the area you wish to visit. Other teachers who have already organised tours are a valuable source of information.
- Plan your proposed tour in detail e.g. what, when, where, how, why?
- Submit a *Notice of intention to plan an overseas excursion* to the Director, Public Schools NSW.
- Ensure that you are familiar with all current Department policies relating to your tour and implement them in your planning e.g. *Excursions Policy*, *Memorandum 97/138 Welfare of students while engaged in activities under the auspices of the school*.
- Check the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) website for [country-specific travel advice](#) on risks to Australian travellers overseas (www.dfat.gov.au/travel).
- Choose a reputable travel agent who is experienced in the country of your destination and, where possible, experienced in dealing with school excursions. The company you use must be a registered Australian company.
- Ensure that the travel agent uses a reputable airline, guides and drivers who can provide a proper standard of care for the group.
- On the basis of the information received from your travel agent, prepare a budget for the total trip and work out the cost for each student.
- Following approval from the principal, hold a meeting with all interested students and their parents/caregivers. Advise them of dates, costs and itinerary. Also be prepared to discuss potential risks and dangers of the proposed tour such as refraining from drinking local water, touching animals or leaving luggage unattended.
- Obtain written commitments from intending participants along with the deposit for the study tour.
- Prepare a list of participants and a reserve list (if appropriate).
- Consider ratio and gender of accompanying adults/teachers.
- Set deadlines for tasks to be completed e.g. collection of money.

- Consider the possibility of fund raising events to reduce the cost of the tour for each student. These activities need to be consistent with the policy and practice for fund raising at your school.

2.2 Three - six months before departure

- Ensure that all details pertaining to the excursion e.g. swimming, hiking, skiing or any other physical activities have been included on the consent form and that this form has been signed by the legal guardian/s of the student. This form must be retained by the school.
- Ensure that all students have a valid passport that will allow them entry to the country of your destination and re-entry to Australia. Determine whether any student has special requirements relating to visas.
- Ensure that all students have had relevant child protection training e.g. have they covered the relevant topics in Child Protection Education Curriculum Material to support teaching and learning in Personal Development, Health and Physical Education?
- Ensure that all staff and other accompanying adults have had relevant child protection training.
- Prepare your students for their overseas experience e.g. pre-trip information, clothing and equipment requirements, maps and known cultural differences that will be experienced. Students also need to seek medical advice from their local doctor with regard to medication and vaccinations.
- Students should be briefed on the expectations of behaviour while out of Australia and on cultural expectations of the country to be visited. Students should have participated in teaching and learning about protective strategies and recognising and responding to unexpected situations and risks in a cross-cultural context. Assistance from teachers with cross-cultural training would be an advantage.
- Confirm ticketing and travel insurance arrangements.
- Submit the completed *Submission for approval of overseas excursion* to the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW for approval.

2.3 One month before departure

- Ensure that all appropriate forms and administration are completed.
- Ensure that all students have travel and medical insurance. Obtain a copy of each student's policy.
- Ensure that the host family, if applicable, is aware of any allergies, medical conditions suffered by the student and the preferred ways of managing these conditions.
- Consider the roles of accompanying teachers e.g. who will stay behind if a student cannot continue travelling with the group.
- Devise a contingency plan for illness/injury of students e.g. carry medical history of each student and a list of prescribed medications.
- Buy a basic first aid kit to be taken on the tour.
- Designate a non-travelling person from your school e.g. the principal or a senior staff member, who can be contacted at any time while the group is travelling.
- Consider the possibility of students carrying a mobile phone.
- Compile a list of names and addresses of participants and a contact number for their parents/caregivers while the group is travelling. Give a copy of this list to your designated contact person.
- Photocopy the front page (i.e. the photo page) of each student's passport and airline ticket and take these photocopies with you on your tour. Leave a set of photocopies at your school as well.

- Organise another meeting with the students and their families to confirm final arrangements. Provide the parents/caregivers with the means to contact you while the group is overseas.
- Ensure that all group members are fully briefed concerning the laws and customs of the country of your destination. Impress upon students the importance of obeying laws and customs and any excursion rules and of not taking risks.
- Discuss with students safe ways of carrying passports, money and travellers' cheques.
- Confirm ticketing and travel insurance details with your travel agent and arrange foreign currency.
- Networks of support need to be established. Strategies for support need to be clear including access to trusted adults including interpreters, if needed. If students feel unsafe at any time, they should know what to do, how to support each other and who to approach for assistance. This advice should also be given to students in written form.
- Students should be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Reference should be made to the memorandum, *Cruelty to animals* (96/169) when considering the content of the briefing for students. In some overseas countries, rabies is a problem and advice may need to be obtained about the need for additional precautions.

2.4 While you are overseas

- Carry with you:
 - ⇒ the phone number of the Australian Embassy or consular representative in the country in which you are travelling.
 - ⇒ contact details for the parents/caregivers of each student.
 - ⇒ details of your emergency contact person in Australia.
 - ⇒ passport details of accompanying students.
 - ⇒ medical details of each student.
- It is recommended that you take a mobile phone with international roaming.
- Ensure that students know:
 - ⇒ how to telephone their parent/caregiver if they need to.
 - ⇒ how to contact the accompanying teachers at all times.
 - ⇒ what to do if they lose their way or feel at risk.
- Familiarise your students with the "buddy system" and implement it. Students should not carry out any activity on their own.
- Impress on students the need to take care of their belongings, especially plane tickets, passports and travellers' cheques. Make sure the numbers of all travellers' cheques are recorded and kept with the bank's emergency overseas phone number in case they are lost or stolen. You might consider collecting the tickets and passports and keeping them in a safety deposit box.
- Have sufficient funds to deal with a minor emergency.
- Have regular meetings with the group so that they are all properly informed of proposed activities.
- Do not allow students to carry out any activity that has not been approved by their parents/caregivers.
- Encourage students to take a copy of their family Medicare card. Some countries have reciprocal agreements with Australia for medical and hospital cover. This should be researched in advance.
- Retain receipts for any expenses incurred in an official capacity.

3. ACCOMMODATION HINTS

3.1 Using hotel accommodation

3.1.1 Conduct of students

- When negotiating a “code of conduct” with your students, agree on what is considered appropriate behaviour in hotel rooms.
- Plan (before departure, if possible) how your students will be accommodated e.g. Which students will be rooming together; the proximity of boys’ rooms to girls’ rooms; the location of the teachers’ rooms.

3.1.2 Safety and security issues

- Emphasise the need to keep rooms locked and belongings secure. Encourage the use of the hotel safe.
- Ensure that:
 - ⇒ a check has been made of the security/fire arrangements of the hotel.
 - ⇒ every member of the group fully understands the security/fire arrangements.
 - ⇒ the students are aware of the room and telephone number of teachers.
- Warn students to be cautious about over-friendly hotel employees or other hotel guests and to set appropriate limits on social interactions with people they don't know well.
- In hot climates students will wish to swim. If parents have permitted this activity, check that the hotel pool is of an acceptable standard (water clarity, deep and shallow end displayed, resuscitation instructions visible) and that supervision is adequate.

3.1.3 General issues

- Make yourself accessible to your students so that if a student needs to speak to you privately or in confidence, they will be able to do so.
- Make students aware that loss of the room key often involves a heavy fee.
- Explain to students that using the hotel phone can be quite expensive. However, make sure they do know how to phone home if necessary. Encourage them to make only short necessary calls, as phoning home too often can cause homesickness. Examine the possibility of using phone cards.

3.2 Using homestay accommodation

- Although homestays are a cheaper alternative to hotel accommodation and offer a richer cultural experience, they raise issues that require careful consideration. Familiarise yourself, and act upon CHECK “Good practice in billeting” as outlined in Memorandum 99/089 Guidelines for billeting students. The following guidelines will also prove helpful.

3.2.1 Preparation of students

- When selecting students for the excursion consider the student's suitability as a billet e.g. adaptability to new situations, willingness to try new experiences.
- Ensure that students who are to be hosted are aware of the possible risks/problems/tensions involved in staying with a host family.
- Ensure that students are aware that life with their host family may be quite different from life in Australia. Before departure, inform them of likely cultural differences. Encourage them to accept and tolerate these differences.

- Ensure that students know what is considered inappropriate behaviour on the part of a member of the host family. Ensure that all of them have received relevant child protection training.
- Have students prepare a “self-profile”. Where appropriate, this could be in the form of an exercise in the target language. With the permission of your students, make this information available to the coordinator at the host school so that a suitable/compatible host family could be found.
- Encourage students to bring an appropriate gift as a token of thanks for their host family.

3.2.2 Responsibilities of the host family

- Ensure that the head of the host family understands the expectations of the Department in relation to the welfare of the hosted student. The heads of the host families should sign a document, written in their own language as well as in English, that acknowledges this understanding. See CHECK “Acknowledgement of Billeting Conditions by Billeting families” in Memorandum 99/089 Guidelines for Billeting Students.
- Give the host family an itinerary of activities to be undertaken during the period of the homestay.

3.2.3 General issues

- Meet the students at the beginning of each day to raise issues and discuss problems being faced. At this meeting students should be able to speak to you privately, if necessary.
- Ensure that the students can contact you at any time should a problem arise.
- Plan alternative arrangements in case a student has to leave the host family.
- Ensure that the parents/caregivers of the students are able to make contact with them while they are staying with the host family.
- Ensure that students are able to contact their family in Australia while staying with the host family. However, warn them that in some countries, making phone calls can be a financial burden for the host family and so should be limited. Phone cards may provide a better option.
- If students are in a homestay, encourage parents/caregivers to contact the student at pre-arranged time from Australia. This will reduce the financial burden on the host family.
- Ensure that students are carrying with them the name, address and phone number of the host family, as well as the name, address and phone number of the school they are attending.

4. ORGANISING A LANGUAGE STUDY PROGRAM

- The following points may help with planning and preparing for a successful and safe language study program. These should be read in conjunction with any grants, awards or scholarships provided by the Department.

4.1 Commercial language schools

There are large numbers of commercial language schools offering “in-country” tuition.

- Make your choice of language school from the list of bona fide private language schools provided by the Department.
- If you choose a school not on the Department’s list, ensure that the teachers of that school are aware of Department requirements regarding child protection.
- Even if a private language school’s credentials have been accepted by the Department, advise students that they should always be vigilant about their personal safety e.g. stay with the group, do not put yourself in a position where you are alone with a stranger.
- Ensure that you are with your students or that they know exactly how to reach you if they need to.

4.2. Sister school / Other school visits

The use of sister schools is a viable, often cost effective option for students.

- Establish a contact person at the school. (Eg. Principal or language teacher)
- Ensure that the principal of your sister school understands the Department's requirements regarding child protection.
- Advise students that they should always be vigilant about their personal safety and they should never put themselves in a risky situation.
- Clearly set out to students and parents the nature of the language learning experience that will be provided by the school.

5. GENERAL HINTS FOR STUDENTS TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

5.1 Before you leave

- If you are travelling to a country where English is not the main language, prepare yourself for your overseas experience by trying to learn as much of the language as you can before you leave Australia. If you study that language, practise saying the things you are most likely to be asked e.g. your name, age, where you live, your hobbies. Buy a small dictionary. Prepare your own phrase list.
- If you are staying with a host family, prepare to take along some books, pamphlets, photos, stories, songs, and maps to introduce Australia. Put together a self-introduction album to introduce your way of life to your host family and your friends at school. This could also be on CD ROM. Prepare a self-introduction speech to use in classes and school assemblies. Your teacher may advise you to take your school uniform for formal occasions.
- You must take out travel and medical insurance and give a copy of the policy to the teacher who is accompanying you. Also give your teacher a copy of the front page (the photo page) of your passport and information concerning your medical requirements.

5.2 What to take

- Although you are allowed to carry 20 kilos of luggage, it is wise to have less than this on your outward journey. Remember that you will have the responsibility of carrying your entire luggage, so try to keep it to a minimum. Listen to your teacher's advice concerning items of clothing that will be necessary.
- If you are taking any electrical appliances check the kind of adaptor that you will need for your country of destination.
- If you are staying with a host family, you should take an appropriate gift to thank them for their hospitality. Also take some small gifts to give to friends you make and to your teachers e.g. kangaroo and koala pins, stickers, sweets, calendars, plush toys/animals.
- As you are going on a learning excursion and not a shopping tour, you do not need to take a large quantity of money. Be guided by your teacher's advice on the amount of money to take.
- Please take any prescription medicines with you in your hand luggage (in case your suitcase goes astray). If you suffer from asthma, take adequate supplies of medication, as the stress of travelling can precipitate an asthma attack. You may need documentation from your doctor to support carrying certain medications with you.
- Also take first-aid items e.g. band-aids, antiseptic cream, sunscreen and an adequate supply of medicine for minor ailments such as a headache. In some countries, personal hygiene products, such as tampons are not readily available. Take your own supply, even if you do not think you will need them and ask your teacher about appropriate methods of disposal.
- No sharp objects can be carried in hand luggage during air travel. All scissors, nail files etc must be placed in suitcases for all flights.

- Consider taking a mobile phone. Discuss this with your teacher.

5.3 How to behave

- You must adhere to the standards of behaviour that have been set down for your group. Not doing so could jeopardise not only your own safety and wellbeing but also that of the whole group.
- Remember that you are an ambassador for Australia, and act accordingly at all times.
- Be prepared to experience homesickness and "culture shock". Don't expect everything to be like home. Consider this experience a unique opportunity to observe and participate in another culture. If you are distressed about something, discuss it with your teacher.
- Be tolerant. Remember that to gain the most from this experience you need to be accepting of change, and eager to learn the way of life of other cultural groups. Consider other peoples' ways as "different", not "wrong".
- Get involved, embrace new experiences, and smile a lot. The best advice is to adopt a positive attitude. It may be considered rude to reject food. You might want to take some Australian snacks. If you don't participate, you may not enjoy your stay.
- Be observant. If you watch the behaviour of those around you, you will also learn how to behave e.g. what to wear when you go to the bathroom to take a bath, how to behave at the table. Take your cue from others, or if your language is good enough, ask! And remember, if you do make a mistake it is more likely to be funny than disastrous.
- You should ring your family in Australia to let them know that you have arrived safely. You may wish to take a phone card for this purpose.
- If you are staying with a host family, you should either reverse charges, use a phone card or email. Alternatively, arrange for your parents/caregivers to call you. Ringing or emailing home often is not recommended as it may offend your host family and make you more homesick. You should also refrain from ringing friends.

5.4 Safety issues

- When you are in unfamiliar surroundings, safety is a very important issue. Your teacher will have already discussed with you the need to be even more careful than when you are in Australia. You may be totally unaware of potential danger when travelling in a foreign country.
- Traffic rules vary in other countries. For instance, in some countries traffic does not travel on the left hand side as in Australia, so it most important that you know from which direction to expect the traffic to come when you cross the road. Traffic rules and pedestrian rights and responsibilities are not the same everywhere, so don't assume the rules will be the same as at home. Think about your own safety and also that of the group.
- In some countries a female would never be out alone in the dark. It would be customary for her to be accompanied. Streets are not always well lit and drains are not always well placed and, as a foreigner, you have no idea of how safe an area is. If being out in the dark is a necessity, a good torch and a companion are essential. If you are on an excursion with your teacher, being out alone is not an option but it may occur if you are in a homestay situation.
- In case you lose your way or have an accident, always carry with you necessary contact details i.e. the address and phone number of your hotel or host family, the school where you are studying. If you are in a country that uses a scripted language, e.g. China, Japan, Korea, make sure you have the contact details written clearly in the script.
- You must be aware of the laws of the country you are visiting and obey them. These laws are not necessarily the same as the laws in Australia. For example, in Japan smoking and drinking alcohol are illegal under the age of 20.

- When you make a purchase while you are travelling, it is important that you do not show a wallet which is bulging with notes, or you may become the target of a pickpocket. Take care with your money and your wallet. Other valuables e.g. passport and travellers cheques, should be safely tucked away in a money belt, not left in your hotel room.

6. HINTS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS OF STUDENTS TRAVELLING OVERSEAS

6.1 Before the tour

- Ensure that you know all the details of the tour, including its purpose, transport to be used throughout the tour, activities to be carried out and accommodation details. Also determine whether you have confidence in the teachers who are organising the tour. This will help you assess the risks and make an informed decision about allowing your child to participate.
- Contact the teacher in charge of the tour if there are any details that you need to have clarified.
- Sign the consent form for parents/caregivers.
- Be aware of the agreed deadlines by which you must pay for the trip.
- Agree upon the arrangements to be made in case your child needs to be sent home early.
- Complete all necessary documentation concerning passport and visas, and give passport details to the teacher in charge (photocopy of first page of the passport).
- Ensure that the teacher in charge is aware of any health or personal problems which might affect your child while he/she is overseas.
- Ensure that your child is insured and give a copy of the insurance cover document to the teacher in charge.
- Consider the possibility of giving your child access to a credit card, which can be used overseas if necessary.
- Consider giving your child a mobile phone to be used in the case of an emergency.
- Prepare your child for the study tour by reinforcing the need to adhere to the negotiated rules. Ensure that your child thoroughly understands his/her responsibilities.
- Ensure that your child knows what to do should an emergency arise while travelling.
- Encourage your child with his/her preparations e.g. creating a personal profile, preparing a collection of family and other photographs and learning useful vocabulary, so that the benefits of the experience can be maximised.
- Ensure that your child has packed all items that will be needed on the tour.

6.2. While your child is overseas

- Ensure that you have a detailed and accurate itinerary.
- Know how to contact your child and his/her teacher in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure that your child and the teacher in charge can contact you in the event of an emergency.