



Excursions Policy

(including Incursions and Overnight Camps and Retreats)

Policy Classification		
Policy Number:	Date of Origin: February 2010	By Whom Deputy Principal:
Policy Audience: Public Domain	Review Dates: February 2016 May 2018 May 2020	Next Review: 2022
Policy Approval: This Policy was approved by the Board, June 2020.		
This Policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters herein.		
This policy is in accord with the Safeguarding Standards of Catholic Professional Standards Ltd which align with the National Principles of Child Safe Organizations.		

1.0 Rationale

- 1.1 All incursions, excursions, and overnight activities such as camps and retreats involve risks and this policy is directed at managing such risks. School incursions are recognised as structured activities on-site that involve school visitors who provide a performance, lesson or service for students. School excursions are recognised as structured off-site learning experiences including but not limited to curriculum activities, community service opportunities and sports. Overnight activities such as retreats (religious education programme) and camps for purposes such as outdoor education and Duke of Edinburgh are also conducted off-site. Overseas tours and workplace learning (for example work experience and vocational education placements) are not covered by this policy.
- 1.2 As a registered and accredited school in NSW, it is essential to ensure compliance with the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools NSW Manual (March 2020, 3.6.1-3.6.3). As a result the College has in place and implements policies and procedures that provide a safe and supportive environment.
- 1.3 The College recognises the value of opportunities to augment classroom learning by incursions and taking students to suitable external learning experiences.

2.0 Guiding Principles

- 2.1 Oakhill College is committed to providing a safe, secure, disciplined and quality learning environment in which students can develop their individual talents, interests and abilities through a curriculum that fosters the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of the student.
- 2.2 Incursions, excursions, camps and retreats provide valuable teaching and learning opportunities integral to the curriculum in that they provide access to teaching content and learning experiences not available at the College.
- 2.3 While recognising the potential benefits of incursions, excursions, camps and retreats, the College must also recognise that such activities may interrupt regular learning routines of students. Accordingly, the Principal or his / her delegate must consider the educational value of all proposed incursions, excursions, camps and retreats in relation to the overall needs and resources of the school. The rationale for any incursion, excursion, camp or retreat should reference the school's objectives and should be relevant to their achievement.
- 2.4 Incursion, excursion, camp and retreat application forms should be lodged at least one Term before they take place for approval. For College budgetary and planning reasons most incursions, excursion, camp and retreat application forms are required to be lodged in the previous year. When a form has not been submitted, that activity will not take place, unless special circumstances are pending.
- 2.5 Risk assessments support better decision making by contributing to a greater insight into the potential risks and their impacts. Risk management supports better decision-making by contributing to a greater insight into the potential risks and their impacts.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Educational Value

Determining the educational value of an incursion, excursion, camp or retreat must take account of the needs and resources of the College, the needs of the students and the impact on the continuity of regular teaching and learning programs for participating teachers and students.

3.2 Inclusivity

- 3.2.1 Incursions, excursions, camps and retreats are inclusive, and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate.

- 3.2.2 Unless exceptional circumstances exist, all students should have the opportunity to participate in incursions, excursions, camps and retreats. Costs are to be organised to ensure that there is no undue financial burden imposed upon individual members of the group or their families. Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation, the College will endeavour to provide financial assistance.
- 3.2.3 The support needs of students with disabilities or medical conditions will require careful consideration and consultation with parents and caregivers. Appropriate adjustments must be implemented for these students so they can access the learning experiences available through incursions, excursions, camps and retreats.
- 3.2.4 Individual health care plans of students must be reviewed by the teacher in charge prior to excursions, camps and retreats to confirm that any necessary planning and emergency arrangements are in place.
- 3.2.5 Where a student provides evidence (e.g. medical) that they cannot participate in an excursion, alternate activities that provide for similar learning outcomes must be considered, particularly where an assessment task relates to this activity.
- 3.2.6 Nothing above is intended to prevent teachers or the College from selecting individual students or groups of students to represent the school at functions, events or competitions held at venues outside the school.

3.3 Teacher in Charge

A designated "Teacher in Charge" will coordinate each incursion, excursion, camp or retreat. The Teacher in Charge is responsible for submitting the application for the incursion, excursion, camp or retreat, conducting a pre-site visit where required, organising the staff who will be attending, ensuring arrangements such as bus and venue bookings are made, ensuring parent consent forms are distributed and returned, and completion and communication of the risk assessment plan. The Teacher in Charge must also provide the Student Services Office with a final student list. This list must also include the location of students not involved in the incursion, excursion, camp or retreat. A copy of this list should also be communicated to staff via email.

3.4 Duty of Care

A duty of care is owed to students while on an incursion, excursion, camp or retreat.

- 3.4.1 The College's Duty of Care owed to students for the duration of an incursion, excursion, camp or retreat cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers, volunteers or employees of external organisations unless this is clearly stated before the activity takes place and written consent is provided by the relevant parent. For example, an individual or small number of students may represent the College at a representative sports or community event and teacher supervision may not be provided.
- 3.4.2 The duty of care owed to students applies whether the school incursion, excursion, camp or retreat is held during school hours, after school, on the weekend or during school holidays.
- 3.4.3 Parents and / or caregivers are not to 'shadow' a school incursion, excursion, camp or retreat unless prior approval has been given by the Principal or his / her delegate as their presence may distract from the educational and learning opportunities for the student and also distract the duty of care boundaries for the College.
- 3.4.4 Teachers planning excursions must consider emergency response planning, including medical procedures, and should check relevant forecasts or other safety warnings, including fire bans, immediately prior to events. In consultation with relevant authorities, the College must be prepared to alter or cancel excursions due to emerging safety concerns. These decisions must be communicated to College staff, students and parents as soon as possible.

- 3.4.5 A first aid kit which must include a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen® and an ASCIA action plan (general use) for adrenaline auto injector must be taken on all excursions.
- 3.4.6 All school staff are required to have completed e-Emergency care training and anaphylaxis training. These qualifications must be current and comply with legislation.

3.5 Teacher to Student Ratio

- 3.5.1 The Principal or his / her delegate must be satisfied that there are sufficient teachers to maintain adequate control of the whole excursion. Teachers retain the ultimate responsibility for supervision.
- 3.5.2 The number of teachers to accompany the students for each excursion is to be determined by the Principal or his / her delegate. Decisions about the number of students and teachers should take into account factors such as the age of the students, their maturity, the location of the excursion, specific needs of students, anticipated behaviour and the nature of the activities to be undertaken.
- 3.5.3 Students on an excursion must be subject to direct adult supervision and should not be allowed to 'go off on their own'. For exceptional circumstances, see 3.7 below.

3.6 Overnight Excursions

- 3.6.1 On overnight and extended excursions, supervisory and accommodation arrangements are to be such that no staff member or accompanying adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. In particular, sleeping and washing arrangements should not place any adults in a situation where the propriety of their behaviour could be questioned. Likewise, for sleeping and supervisory arrangements every attempt must be made to ensure that there is no sexual contact between students.
- 3.6.2 For coeducational groups, male and female staff supervisors are required. This may be altered at the Principal's discretion.

3.7 Unsupervised Activities

On rare occasions, where it is proposed that an individual or a small group of mature students participate in a specialised excursion, it may be necessary for part of the excursion (e.g. independent travel) or all of the activity to take place without the direct supervision of a staff member. In such circumstances, it is imperative that parents or caregivers be fully informed of, and agree to the arrangements, and that the Principal and the teacher in charge of the excursion take all steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the unaccompanied students. These steps should be clearly outlined in the risk assessment plan.

3.8 Child Protection

- 3.8.1 The College has a mandatory Child Protection responsibility, and this is set out in the College Child Protection Policy. All staff are required to have current child protection training.
- 3.8.2 The same standards of conduct and the obligation to report suspected risk of harm to children and young people, including any allegation of child abuse or misconduct or improper conduct which may involve child abuse by an employee against children or young people, apply throughout all stages of an incursion, excursion, camp or retreat as they do in school.
- 3.8.3 The obligation to report suspected risk of harm to children and young people applies throughout all stages of an incursion, excursion, camp or retreat.
- 3.8.4 The Principal or his / her delegate (for example Director of Professional Learning) must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers accompanying school excursions complete a Working with Children Check. Volunteers are not to accompany the excursion if they refuse to complete the Working with Children Check.

3.8.5 The Principal or other delegated person (for example Director of Professional Learning) must ascertain if an employer or contractor providing a service to students during a school incursion, excursion, retreat or camp has verified the Working with Children Check number of their employees. The Principal or other delegated person (for example Director of Professional Learning) must ascertain that the employer or contractor has met their legal requirements as a child-related employer. If the employer or contractor has not registered as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian, in order to verify employee Working with Children Check identification numbers, they must not be used to provide a service to students until such time as they:

- register as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian
- have verified the Working with Children Check numbers of those staff considered to be engaged in paid child-related employment.

3.9 Risk Assessment and Management

3.9.1 A risk assessment must be carried out and a risk management plan completed on and submitted to the Principal or his or her Delegate (for example Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal – Curriculum, Assistant Principal – Pastoral Care) before final approval is given for any incursion, excursion, retreat or camp. A sample risk management plan proforma is provided in the procedures and guidelines section. The Work Health and Safety Act and Regulation require the Principal and teachers organising an incursion, excursion, camp or retreat to use risk management to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of students, staff and volunteers.

3.9.2 The risk assessment must identify and assess risks that the incursion, excursion camp or retreat may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child participating in the incursion, excursion, camp or retreat, and detail strategies for minimising those risks.

3.9.3 The risk assessment must consider the proposed route and destination for the excursion, camp and retreat, any water hazards and risks associated with water based activities, the method of transport, the number of adults and children involved in the excursion, camp and retreat, given the risk/s posed, the number of teachers or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any specialised skills are required to ensure children's safety (e.g. life-saving skills), the proposed activities, the likely length of time of the excursion, camp or retreat and the items that should be taken on the excursion, camp and retreat (for example a mobile phone).

3.9.4 The Principal or his / her delegate (for example the College Nurse) is to ensure that individual health care plans for students with health care needs or disabilities include provision for the management of such conditions on excursions, camps and retreats. A copy of this plan should be given to the teacher in charge of the excursion, camp and retreat and its implications discussed before departure with all accompanying staff.

3.9.5 Fundamental to effective excursion, camp and retreat risk management is the communication of risk management plans to those who need to know, including staff and other adults on the excursion, camp and retreat who may be instrumental in initiating an emergency response. Students should be informed of these plans where necessary.

3.9.6 Under work health and safety legislation, the College has an obligation to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of staff at work. Consequently, excursion, camp and retreat planning are to take account of staff health and safety issues in addition to those of students.

3.9.7 The extent of pre-excursion, camp and retreat planning will depend on the nature of the excursion, camp and retreat and its location. In many situations prior experience of the site or a briefing from a responsible person with a sound knowledge of the site will suffice. However, a visit to the proposed excursion, camp and retreat site is recommended when unfamiliar or potentially high-risk activities are contemplated for example wilderness camping or field trips to inhospitable terrain. In these circumstances, the pre- excursion, camp and retreat visit should address issues such as access, injury prevention and emergency evacuation.

- 3.9.8 All staff and students on an excursion, camp and retreat are to travel together for the duration of the excursion, camp and retreat unless prior approval has been given by the Principal or his / her delegate. Staff and / or students should not leave the excursion, camp and retreat group (for example return home early or make their own way home from an excursion, camp or retreat venue) without the authorisation of the Principal or his / her delegate.

3.10 Special requirements including special protective equipment

- 3.10.1 Where a particular excursion or camp activity requires special protective equipment or apparel (e.g. hard hats, fluoro vests), these must be used. Staff and student safety must not be compromised. Students and staff on outdoor excursions are to wear clothing that protects them from the sun, such as hats and apply at least a 30+ sunscreen. Students and staff are also to be encouraged to carry water in a non-breakable container.
- 3.10.2 Staff planning excursions which involve visits to industrial sites must establish the particular requirements relating to site induction by industry employees and the wearing of personal protective equipment, including footwear, by staff and students while on the site.

3.11 Swimming and Water Activities

- 3.11.1 Any excursion involving swimming or water activities and any excursion involving overnight stays, must include a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency care.
- 3.11.2 Parents must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent for students to participate in excursions, camps or retreats involving water activities.
- 3.11.3 When planning excursions or camps involving aquatic activity other than swimming such as boating, sailing or board riding, the teacher in charge is to investigate requirements relating to the provision of personal flotation devices (such as lifejackets, buoyancy vests or buoyancy garments) and ensure all students and staff comply.

3.12 Additional Activities

Students participating in an excursion, camp or retreat must not be permitted to engage in additional or alternative activities, which were not originally scheduled in the program, and for which parental or caregiver approval would normally have been necessary (for example horse riding or water activities)

3.13 Parent Consent

- 3.13.1 Parents or caregivers must be informed in writing of the details of any excursion, camp and retreat, including details of all planned activities, their educational value, the method of transport and level of supervision. In most cases signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in excursions, camps and retreats are to be obtained from parents or caregivers.
- 3.13.2 As a general rule, students without a signed consent form from a parent or caregiver must not be permitted to participate in a school excursion, camp or retreat. In circumstances, where it is not possible to obtain signed consent forms from parents or caregivers, verbal approval can be sought. Consideration should be given to confirming in writing the verbal consent provided using, for example, a return email or text message.
- 3.13.3 Excursion, camp and retreat consent forms do not create any waiver of rights by the parent or the caregiver in relation to their child. The main purpose of consent forms and information forms is to give enough detail to parents and caregivers to allow them to make an informed decision about whether their child should attend the excursion. It is also to assist the parent or caregiver to provide relevant information to the school about the child's needs.

- 3.13.4 In addition to excursion, camps and retreats, occasions for leaving the school grounds for brief, local, spontaneous educational activities will arise from time to time. The value of such visits is recognised and on rare occasions there may be insufficient time to obtain the permission of parents or caregivers prior to the visit. Such visits may only take place at the discretion of the Principal or his / her delegate, who must ensure as far as possible the safety, welfare and wellbeing of students.

3.14 Medication

- 3.14.1 In general, Oakhill College does not administer medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition. In some cases, the medical practitioner may not write a prescription for such medication because it may be available over the counter. NSW Health advises that this does not mean that the medication is not potentially harmful and that schools should follow the same procedures for such medications as for 'prescribed medications'.
- 3.14.2 Students may need access to non-prescription medications at particular times and for particular events, for example, a student with a tendency for travel sickness who is going on an excursion, camp and retreat involving coach travel. Key points to remember:
- Parents must complete a written request for the administration of the medication.
 - Students must not self-administer or carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parents.
 - It is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication to the school in a timely manner. If the Principal agrees, this responsibility may be fulfilled by the student, but this will be dependent upon the maturity of the student, parental consent and any other issues that could affect the safety of the individual student or others in the school environment.
 - The College should not supply medications for administration to students on excursions, camps and retreats.
- 3.14.3 For many excursions, it will not be necessary to collect a new medical information form. Medical information held by the school should, however, be updated by parents before the excursion occurs and take account of activities proposed for the excursion.
- 3.14.4 Information identifying food or other allergies, special dietary needs and other health care related issues (including prior conditions such as medical procedures in the last 12 months), must be provided by parents or caregivers. This information will assist planning to support students and minimise risks, including the risk of exposure to allergens for students at risk of anaphylactic reactions.

3.15 Film Screenings and Live Performances

- 3.15.1 Prior to approving excursions involving film screenings and live performances, the Principal or delegate must give careful consideration to the appropriateness of the film or performance for the proposed viewing group.
- 3.15.2 The College will not arrange for students to attend any film or view a video or DVD that is classified R 18+. Films classified MA 15+ are also legally restricted.
- 3.15.3 Parents and caregivers are informed of the classification of the film and provided with the opportunity to withdraw their child.

3.16 Transport

- 3.16.1 Safe transport and / or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.
- 3.16.2 Public transport (government bus, rail and ferry services, or private bus and ferry services) are to be used for school excursions, wherever appropriate. Seatbelts must be worn on buses and coaches

when they are available. The College should attempt to hire buses with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel.

- 3.16.3 The transporting of students in the cars of staff members, parents, caregivers or volunteers should only occur in those circumstances where there is no feasible option available to provide alternative transportation. This may only occur under the following conditions:
- Written permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained;
 - The driver is licensed;
 - The vehicle is registered;
 - The number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number of seatbelts;
 - Current driver's licence and car registration details are sighted by the school prior to giving permission for students to be transported in the vehicle;
 - Comprehensive insurance is not generally required. Nevertheless, comprehensive insurance is required if a member of staff is authorised to use his or her vehicle for official business and wishes to make a claim for the payment of mileage;
 - The Principal or his / her delegate must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars have completed a Working with Children check.
- 3.16.4 The Principal or his / her delegate may approve air travel in Australia to enable students and teachers to travel to distant centres. The Principal may also grant approval for use of aircraft for short flights for specific curriculum activities. Preference must be given to scheduled airline flights over chartered flights. Where approval is given for short flights, the Principal or his / her delegate must satisfy themselves that the operator carries relevant public liability insurance.

3.17 Student Uniform and Behaviour

- 3.17.1 School uniform is to be worn on day incursions and excursions unless there is a specific reason given as to why it shouldn't be worn (for example the nature of the incursion or excursion) and approval has been given by the Principal or his / her delegate.
- 3.17.2 Students must behave appropriately at all times while on incursions, excursions, camps and retreats. Prior to incursions, excursions, camps and retreats, students are to be reminded of expected standards of behaviour and the application of the school's discipline code. Where relevant, students are to be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals.

3.18 Reporting of Incidents

Staff leading school incursions, excursions, camps and retreats are required to report incidents occurring while on incursions, excursions, camps and retreats to the Principal or his or her delegate. In broad, such incidents are those:

- which cause disruption to the incursion, excursion, camp or retreat;
- create danger or risk that could significantly affect individuals participating in the incursion, excursion, camp or retreat;
- impact on the effective operation of the incursion, excursion, camp and retreat;
- attract negative media attention or a negative public profile for the College;
- which WorkCover describes as a 'serious incident' which must be reported by law.

3.19 Retention of Records

- 3.19. The Principal or his / her delegate ensures that records of all excursions, camps and retreats are maintained. The record must include a copy of any advice given to parents or caregivers, costs and approval letters and administrative, supervision and travel details.
- 3.19.2 In the event of an injury to a student or third party or property damage during the course of an excursion, camp and retreat, all records relating to the particular student as well as any general information about the excursion, camp and retreat are to be retained permanently.

4.0 Policy Review

The College regularly reviews and updates its procedures for the safe conduct of excursions on the basis of implementation experience, systemic and locally produced risk profiles and the evaluation of teaching and learning outcomes. Staff de-briefing following excursions, camps and retreats should occur to provide an opportunity to identify successful practice as well as areas for improvement

This policy is reviewed by the Principal and the Senior Leadership team every two years.

5.0 Explanatory Notes and Definitions

Incursion:	Incursions are structured activities organised on-site that involve school visitors who provide a performance, lesson or service for students.
Excursion:	Excursions are activities organised by the school where the students are taken out of the school grounds (for example, a curriculum excursion, a camp or school sports competition)
Duty of Care:	A legal obligation to ensure the safety or well-being of others.
Risk Assessment:	A systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.
Risk Management:	The systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of establishing the context, identifying, analysing, assessing, treating, monitoring and communicating.

6.0 Supporting Documents Procedures and Guidelines

External Documents

Depending on the type of excursion, the following documents will contain useful guidance and advice:

1. Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools and associated webpages on the student health section of the Public Schools website
2. Sport & Physical Activity, Safe Conduct Guidelines
3. Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A summary and consolidation of Policy
4. Student Health website

Internal Documents

1. Overseas Tours Policy
2. Child Protection Policy
3. Staff Code of Conduct

Procedures and Guidelines

1. Procedures for Oakhill Excursion Applications
2. Oakhill Excursion Application – User Workflow
3. Excursion Application Form
4. Incursion Application Form
5. Risk Management Plan Proforma
6. Excursion Note to Parents Proforma (Consent Form)