



APPLICABLE TO	Rosary Park Catholic School Branxton		
DOCUMENT OWNER	Director of Schools		
SCHOOL ACTIONS	Schools are to ensure their practices are consistent with these procedures.		
APPROVAL DATE	May 2020		
APPROVED BY	School Executive		
LAST REVIEW DATE/S	2017	NEXT REVIEW DATE	2023
RELATED DOCUMENTS	School Excursions and Immersions Policy 2018 Snow Skiing Excursions Toolkit (Forms and templates) Overseas Excursions and Immersions Toolkit (forms and templates) Code of Conduct 2017 School Community Code of Conduct 2018		

Purpose

These procedures are designed to ensure schools:

- Have a clear and consistent process for planning excursions and immersions
- Understand excursion safety and security measures and requirements
- Conduct excursions and immersions in a safe and positive environment, and enhance participation, enjoyment and health and wellbeing
- Outline the particular mandatory procedures that apply to excursions involving water activities, snow sports, overnight and overseas travel.

The procedures are to be read in conjunction with the School Excursions and Immersions Policy.

Supporting documents, forms and templates associated with these procedures are found in relevant excursion toolkits.

Scope

These procedures apply to all schools in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle undertaking excursions and immersions in Australia and overseas and include snow and skiing activities. The following additional documents are also applicable in the relevant circumstances:

- In relation to overseas excursions, the Overseas Excursions and Immersions Toolkit; and
- In relation to excursions involving snow skiing activities, the Snow Skiing Toolkit.

The Business Travel Policy and procedures apply to staff travel on school excursions.

Definitions

Overseas excursions: Overseas programs including:

- Immersion programs
- Student exchange programs
- Sporting tours
- Cultural tours
- Study tours

Depending on the nature of the overseas excursion, students may, individually or as a group, be sent overseas:

- with one or more teacher from the school.
- with or without parents in attendance.
- as part of a tour organised through a tour operator.
- as part of a tour organised through a host school overseas.
- as part of a homestay program organised through a homestay operator.
- billeted with one or more host family (whether or not as part of an exchange involving overseas students visiting Australia at the same time).

Terms not defined in this document are defined in the School Excursion and Immersion Policy.

Responsibilities

Catholic Schools Office

It is the responsibility of the CSO to ensure that:

- the implementation of the School Excursions and Immersions Policy and associated support documents are monitored.
- there is a timely response to any application for excursions requiring Director or Assistant Director approval.

School Principal

It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that:

- the excursion is directly related to the curriculum and not predominantly recreational. Excursions are generally considered to be an optional enrichment activity.
- an Excursion Risk Management Plan has been completed by the teacher in charge before seeking approval for any excursion. The Risk Management Plan must include strategies to manage identified risks and requires that private providers are able to meet the following criteria relevant to the excursion activity and any risks involved:
 - the provider's staff are trained to the industry standards required to supervise the activity and accreditation is sighted
 - the provider meets industry standards and accreditation is sighted
 - the provider has a risk management and/or safety plan relevant to the activity and it is sighted
 - the provider has appropriate insurance including at least a \$20 million Public Liability cover for any one event.
- parents are aware that an excursion is generally an optional enrichment activity and that parents will have to cover the costs incurred.
- all accompanying adults know the requirements of this policy and other relevant and school policies, supervision requirements and safety procedures and the consequences of non-compliance.
- parents, caregivers and other volunteers that agree to accompany an excursion must agree to be bound by the terms of this document, the School Excursion and Immersion Policy and any other relevant policy document.
- parents are aware of any disclaimer statements from private providers and make their own informed decision about whether to participate.

- supervision is adequate in relation to the number and needs of students, their maturity, anticipated behaviour and the activities planned.
- arrangements are made for any student unable to participate in an excursion by having alternative activities and/or strategies available. Students with a disability should have an equal opportunity to participate in excursions. Principals must therefore consider what reasonable adjustments may be made to allow a student with a disability to participate in an excursion.
- accompanying adults are aware that they must not drink alcohol during hours of duty or when they have a continuing responsibility for students. This includes school excursions/outdoor adventure activities and any other school activity that may be held outside ordinary school hours. They must not offer students alcohol under any circumstances even when a student is over 18 years of age.
- accompanying adults are aware that they must not smoke near students and any smoking must take place outdoors and in accordance with local smoking laws. They must not offer students cigarettes under any circumstances.
- copies of emergency contacts and procedures and contingency plans are kept in the school and by the teacher in charge of the excursion, and students have emergency contacts and an understanding of emergency plan processes.

Teacher in Charge

It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge to:

- know and comply with the requirements of the School Excursions and Immersions Policy and appropriate procedures.
- complete an Excursion Risk Management Plan.
- ensure that students and parents are aware of supervision and transport arrangements.
- where private or hire vehicles are used, to advise the owner and/or driver to have appropriate insurance cover, registration papers and a current Working With Children Check number.
- give consideration to those occasions when it is desirable for a participating staff member to have a current first aid certificate and an appropriately stocked and maintained first aid kit to be carried.
- ensure that all accompanying adults are appropriately screened, qualified and/or experienced and are advised of their responsibilities and relevant diocesan and school policies and safety procedures.
- gain informed consent by ensuring that parental information, medical and consent forms are issued where appropriate and completed and returned prior to the excursion.
- ensure Excursion Medical Information and Consent Forms are provided to parents are carried on extended day or overnight excursions and to be aware of relevant medical conditions for excursions within the diocese.
- develop emergency contacts and procedures for all excursions and to take these contacts and procedures on overnight and extended day excursions.
- to ensure that male and female students are not accommodated in the same rooms during overnight excursions.
- ensure that students over 18 years of age are asked to indicate in writing their preparedness to accept the recommended procedures and supervision necessary for the safety and comfort of the group.

Accompanying Adult

It is the responsibility of accompanying adults to:

- exercise their duty of care throughout an excursion and ensure that diocesan and school policies are followed and appropriate standards of conduct observed.
- take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of students.
- assist and support the teacher in charge at all times.
- observe standards of safe practice in any activity established by accredited organisations and other specialist instructors.
- have knowledge of any relevant student medical information.
- be familiar with emergency procedures in the event of a critical incident.
- be aware of first aid procedures.

Step by Step

1. DETERMINE THE EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Excursions and immersions must have a clear and explicit curriculum and educational justification. The educational value of an excursion must take account of the needs and resources of the school, the needs of the students and the impact on the continuity of regular teaching and learning programs for participating teachers and students.

2. IDENTIFY EXCURSION PARTICIPANTS ENSURING INCLUSIVITY

Unless exceptional circumstances exist, all students should have the opportunity to participate in an excursion. Costs should 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, schools must endeavour to provide financial assistance.

The support needs of students with disabilities or special learning needs, including those with medical conditions will require careful consideration and consultation with parents and caregivers. Consideration must be given to making reasonable adjustments to enable a student with a disability to participate in an excursion where necessary, including thoughtful selection of excursion venues and activities in the first instance.

3. UNDERSTAND YOUR DUTY OF CARE

A school's duty of care to its students exists whenever the school ought reasonably to exercise control over students, including when they are on school excursions and immersions. The duty of care applies whether the school excursion or immersion is held during school hours, after school, on the weekend and during school holidays.

Schools must conduct a risk assessment and develop a risk management plan even if venue or activity operators have their own risk management plans in place. A school's duty of care is non-delegable. Whilst all parties involved in excursions and immersions including teachers, service providers and venue operators owe a duty of care to participants, a school cannot delegate its responsibility to another individual or body.

Under work health and safety legislation, the school has an obligation to do what is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of staff at work as well as its volunteers. Consequently, excursion planning is to take account of staff and volunteer health and safety issues in addition to those of students.

4. ASSESS AND MANAGE RISKS

A risk assessment is to be conducted and a Risk Management Plan developed by the teacher in charge before approval can be given for any excursion.

Risk Management Process

The risk management process for excursions and immersions should include:

- Collaborating with all stakeholders (internal and external) including parents, staff, venue operators and the CSO (if applicable)
- Establishing the context within which the activity will take place. Where will you go? When will you go? What will you do? What are your educational goals? What are the skill and ability levels of the students?
- Conducting a risk assessment in order to
 - identify potential risks
 - analyse your risks to determine the potential consequences and the likelihood that these consequences will occur

- evaluate the adequacy of any existing treatments, assess available resources and set priorities
- Implementing a risk treatment plan which sets out the ways risks will be managed, also known as controls
- Establishing a system for regular monitoring and reviews.

Risk Management Plan

The Risk Management Plan:

- Should be completed by the teacher in charge well in advance of the excursion and submitted with the request for approval
- Is best approached collaboratively
- Should be applied to all elements of the excursion or immersion, not just those activities perceived to be high risk
- Must be well communicated to all stakeholders including teachers, students and parents
- Is not a static process. Circumstances are constantly changing and evolving and therefore it requires regular monitoring and reviews
- Must be appropriately documented and aligned with relevant CSO and school policies.

The *Excursion Risk Management Plan* sets out the major steps in the risk management process and risk management considerations as they relate to school excursions. A sample risk management plan for excursions is provided in the Schools Excursion Toolkit.

Costs and budget

Parents and caregivers should be advised as to the cost of the excursion at or around the time that their consent for their child to participate in the proposed excursion is requested. Parents and caregivers should also be advised as to what additional costs they will be responsible for (e.g. travel insurance, vaccines, updating passports etc) and the estimated amount of spending money that is recommended that their child should bring to cover sundries.

Parents, caregivers, volunteers and other adults accompanying an excursion should be advised that their costs will not be paid by the school and that they will be responsible for their own costs. It may be necessary for schools to give sufficient information to such persons to assist them with budgeting for their costs in accompanying the excursion, particularly if it is an overseas excursion (e.g. details as to what flights and accommodation will need to be booked as well as other travel expenses).

Special requirements

Where a particular excursion activity requires special protective equipment or apparel (e.g. hard hats, helmets), it is mandatory these items are used.

Swimming and water activities

Any excursion involving swimming or water activities, must follow the eight elements of the Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activity (venue selection; parent/caregiver consent; staff supervision; risk management; staff induction; student induction; testing student proficiency; and classifying students) and include a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Snow Ski Excursions

The relevant requirements set out in the **CSO Snow Sports Excursion: Additional Procedures** must be followed when students are engaged in snow sports.

5. TRANSPORT OPTIONS

Bus, rail and ferry services should be used for school excursions, wherever appropriate.

In some circumstances where the site of the excursion is close to the school, it will be appropriate for students and their supervisors to walk to the site. The decision to walk should be preceded by a risk assessment and the route should be determined consistent with the objective of ensuring staff and student safety.

Informed written parental consent must be obtained for travel by public transport, government plated and private plated buses, or by private car.

Bus and train travel

Schools should attempt to hire buses or coaches with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel outside urban areas. Seatbelts must be worn on buses and coaches when they are available. If students with disabilities are participating in an excursion ensure accessible transport is organised.

Car travel

The transporting of students in the cars of staff members, parents, caregivers, and volunteers should only occur in those circumstances where there is no feasible option available to provide alternative transportation.

Air travel

Principals may approve commercial carrier- air travel in Australia to enable students and teachers to travel to distant centres.

6. GAIN RELEVANT APPROVALS

Excursions involving snow sport activities require approval of an **Assistant Director** following a submission that has been endorsed by the school principal. See **Snow Sports Excursions: Additional Procedures**.

All other school excursions within Australia must be approved by the school principal and, when more than one school is involved, the principals of all participating schools.

Overseas excursions and immersions require the approval of the Director of Schools following a submission from the principal which must be endorsed by the Assistant Director. **See Overseas Excursions: Additional Procedures**.

7. ESTABLISH SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

The number of teachers to accompany students for each excursion is to be determined by the school principal. 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.

Excursion Category	Gender Balance	Minimum Supervision Ratios
Vicinity of the school/ variation to normal activity	Not required	1 teacher per class group
Within the diocese	To be considered by principal	2 adults per class group including 1 teacher
Same day travel beyond the diocese	To be considered by principal	2 adults per class group including 1 teacher

Parents or caregivers will frequently volunteer to assist in excursions. The number of parents or caregivers who might be of assistance will vary according to circumstances.

Parents and caregivers may be used to meet the supervision requirement provided the principal is satisfied that there are sufficient teachers to maintain adequate control of the whole excursion. Teachers retain the responsibility for supervision.

Principals must ensure that volunteers accompanying the excursion including any parents and partners of staff members have completed a Working With Children - Volunteer Check.

Overnight excursions

There are minimum gender and supervision requirements for overnight excursions, as follows:

Excursion Category	Gender Balance	Minimum Supervision Ratios
Overnight accommodation: single gender	there must be at least one teacher of the same gender as the students	1 adult per 20 students with a minimum of 2 adults per excursion
Overnight accommodation: Mixed gender	male and female staff supervisors are required	Teachers must comprise at least half the number of accompanying adults

Parents, activity leaders and volunteers may be used to meet the gender balance requirement provided they have been clearly briefed on their role, responsibilities, duty of care and the risk management plan.

Supervisory and accommodation arrangements for overnight and extended excursions must be considered and documented in the Risk Management Plan to minimise the likelihood of potential for allegations of improper conduct - in particular, sleeping and washing arrangements.

Any excursion involving overnight stays, must include a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Unsupervised activities

Students on excursion must be subject to direct adult supervision and should not be allowed to 'go off on their own'. On the rare occasion where it is proposed that a student or group of students will participate in an independent activity without the direct supervision of a staff member, it is imperative that the parent or caregiver is fully informed of, and consents to, the arrangements.

8. PROVIDE INFORMATION AND SEEK CONSENT

Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in an excursion or immersion and a medical information form are to be obtained from parents or caregivers before the commencement of an excursion.

Parents are to be provided with all necessary information, including the most up-to-date safety advice available, to enable them to make an informed decision about consent for participation in an overseas excursion.

Excursion 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 about the child's needs. **(See Schools Excursions Toolkit: School Excursion Parental Undertakings, Consent and Acknowledgement form.)**

What happens if parental consent cannot be obtained?

When it is inappropriate to obtain parental or caregiver consent, the consent can be sought from any other person considered appropriate by the principal. In particularly contentious situations, principals may wish to seek legal advice.

If parents or caregivers do not permit participation of a student in an excursion, the school will make available a sound alternative educational experience which provides for similar learning outcomes, particularly where an assessment task relates to the excursion. For the avoidance of doubt, a student is not to be allowed to attend an excursion or immersion if the necessary consent forms have not been signed and returned by his or her parents or caregivers. If a parent or caregiver has indicated that they do not give consent for a particular activity to be undertaken by his or her child, this direction must be complied with (e.g. if a parent indicates that they do not consent for his or her child to participate in swimming or water activities because the child is a non-swimmer, the teacher in charge must ensure that the child does not undertake such activities).

Medication

In general, schools do not administer medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition.

If students need access to non-prescription medications at particular times and for particular events, eg, a student with a tendency for travel sickness who is going on an excursion involving coach travel, then schools must obtain:

- a written request for the administration of the medication from the parent or caregiver.
- a written agreement between the school and the student's parents if students are to carry or self-administer medication.

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 at least annually and as required and take account of activities proposed for the excursion.

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), should 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.

Collection of Personal Information

Collection of personal information such as consent and medical information should be consistent with the *CSO Privacy Management Policy and Procedures*.

9. COMPLETE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

Schools must adopt a risk management approach to emergency response planning and should check relevant forecasts or other safety warnings, including fire bans, immediately prior to events. In consultation with the **Assistant Directors**, schools must be prepared to alter or cancel excursions due to emerging safety concerns.

The teacher-in-charge must have a list of the names of participating students, contact telephone numbers, student medical information and relevant health information of supervisors. Principals should ensure that individual health care plans for students with health care needs or disabilities include provision for the management of such conditions on excursions. A copy of this plan should be given to the teacher in charge of the excursion and its implications discussed before departure.

School staff on excursions must have current qualifications in emergency care training and anaphylaxis training and have access to an appropriately equipped first aid kit (accompanying adults must be advised by the teacher in charge of the location of the first aid kit). Additionally, subject to the risk management plan, an adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen®) and ASCIA action plan may be required.

Students participating in an excursion 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 required (e.g. horse riding or water activities).

10. BRIEF STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be briefed on arrangements prior to the excursion and sign to say they are aware of the risk management plan, accommodation arrangements, supervision details and the itinerary.

Students must be briefed prior to the excursion, on expected standards of behavior and the application of the school's excursion code of conduct. The excursion code of conduct must be signed by each student and parent or guardian.

Inappropriate student behaviour must be reported to the principal and to the Director of Schools via the Assistant Director.

Arrangements will be made to facilitate the return, to their parents, of any student who exhibits behaviour that seriously endangers themselves or others. Parents will be required acknowledge and confirm their agreement of the arrangements proposed, including additional costs and whether the student will be accompanied for this journey.

11. CHECK TRAVEL INSURANCE

Where intrastate, interstate and overseas excursions involve travel by air, parents or caregivers should arrange travel insurance for students, including appropriate cover for personal property. Volunteers, parents and caregivers who accompany staff and students on these excursions should also arrange travel insurance at their own cost, including appropriate cover for personal property. Proof of that cover must be provided to the principal prior to the excursion.

The CSO and its schools will not generally accept liability for the loss of, or damage to students', parents', caregivers' or volunteers' personal property brought on excursions or for personal items purchased while on excursions and this should be made clear to accompanying parents, caregivers and volunteers prior to commencement of the excursion.

Staff members accompanying students on excursions are covered by the CSO's insurance arrangements. Information concerning insurance arrangements for excursions is available from CCI.

12. LODGE EXCURSION RECORDS

Details of final itinerary, insurance details, rules, medical forms, emergency contact details (phone, fax etc.), supervision, a full list of all students, teacher and helper names and addresses and any other related documents must be lodged with the Principal and Assistant Director at least two weeks prior to departure.

13. REPORT INCIDENTS OCCURRING WHILE ON EXCURSIONS

Staff leading school excursions are required to make a report to <<their principal>> if any of following incidents occur while on excursion. An incident which:

- causes disruption to the excursion
- creates danger or risk that could significantly affect individuals participating in the excursion
- impacts on the effective operation of the excursion
- attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the school or the Catholic Schools Office
- is an incident which WorkCover describes as a "serious incident" which must be reported by law.

It may be necessary to make reports to authorities at times, e.g. a report to the Police if there has been a theft. Such incidents should also be reported to <<**their principal**>>.

13. CHILD PROTECTION

All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, and to provide support to children and young people throughout all stages of an excursion, as they do in schools. All staff are required to have current child protection training.

Refer to the CSO's *Working with Children Procedure* and *Reporting Concerns of Children Policy* and procedures for further advice regarding roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. Zimmerman Services can offer further advice about child protection issues.

14. OTHER INFORMATION FOR STAFF

Staff members choose to take part in such excursions, and there is no obligation on staff to participate in or to organise such excursions. No extra remuneration, other than reimbursement of genuine pre-approved expenses, is to be paid in respect of such excursions.

The CSO's *Business Travel Policy and Procedures* apply to all business related staff travel and should be read in conjunction with the Excursions Policy and Procedures.

All teaching staff need to be aware that if they arrange activities within an overseas excursion without ensuring relevant policies are followed, they could be individually liable in the event of an accident.

Staff must be advised that they may not be covered by workers' compensation if they are injured while involved in an excursion activity which has not been given official approval prior to the departure of the excursion group.



14. SNOW SPORT EXCURSIONS: ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES (A-Z)

There are additional mandatory procedures for snow skiing excursions undertaken by Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the School Excursions and Immersions Policy.

As part of the student learning experience and skill development many schools engage in snow ski excursions. Ski trips can also provide an opportunity for students to develop a range of personal and group skills in an environment which many students would otherwise not experience.

Following on from a 2011 Coroner's report into the deaths of two students involved in school skiing accidents and the very significant cost to the system of Workers' Compensation payments where skiing incidents has resulted in a number of physical injuries for staff in our schools, these guidelines have been developed in consultation with secondary principals.

The 2011 Coroner's determination and updated guidelines from the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) provide direction to schools on how they may minimise the risk of injury to students on school skiing excursions.

(<http://www.sports.det.nsw.edu.au/spguide/activities/snowsports/snowsports.php>)

We recommend schools pay close attention to these recommendations and DEC guidelines when organising skiing excursions.

Approval process

Excursions involving snow sport activities require approval of an **Assistant Director** following a submission that has been endorsed by the school principal.

Principals are required to submit a **Notice of Intention to hold a Snow Sport Excursion**, with the appropriate rationale and a detailed risk management plan to the school's Assistant Director. This should be at least six months prior to the activity being held. **See Snow Sport Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 2.**

An Application for Approval of a Snow Sport Excursion is to be submitted to the Assistant Director of Schools responsible for the school (**see Snow Sport Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 3**). The application should include the following:

- A detailed Excursion Risk Management Plan prepared by the Excursion Coordinator and signed off by the Principal and Assistant Director.
- Permission notes from parents for students to attend the excursion.
- The provision of morning and afternoon lessons each day.
- Absence from lessons because of existing ability approved by a qualified ski instructor/s.
- Additional letter from parents authorising their child's skiing on Intermediate (Blue) runs if selected by qualified ski instructors.
- Students, chosen by qualified ski instructors, deemed to be able to ski on Blue Runs have their names recorded by Teacher in charge of Excursion and witnessed by another teacher.
- Students attempting Intermediate (Blue) runs skiing in groups of at least 4 and supervised by teachers with equal or superior skill levels.
- Students not nominated for Blue Runs to remain on Green Runs.

A Confirmation of Snow Skiing Excursion Application form endorsed by the Assistant Director and Director of Schools will be provided to the school when the application has been approved (**see Snow Sport Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 4**).

Coroner's recommendations

1. Where possible all students on school snow sport excursions to be closely and directly supervised by either teachers capable of skiing with them on the ski run they are skiing on, or by qualified ski instructors. (Please note the qualification in Recommendation 5)
2. All students on school ski excursions must have ski lessons each morning of every ski day. (Please note the qualifications in Recommendations 4 and 5)
3. Encourage students of beginner and intermediate level to have a second ski lesson in the afternoon.
4. Students only to be excused from ski lessons if qualified instructors or appropriately qualified and experienced teachers assess that the students are capable of skiing safely and in control on the ski runs where they are allowed to ski.
5. If schools conducting ski excursions take the view that students may ski without close and direct supervision by teachers or appropriately qualified persons, the Coroner recommends the following requirements be adhered to:
 - a) Written and informed consent must be given by their parents.
 - b) The students can only ski on runs where they have been previously taken by ski instructors or other qualified supervisors.
 - c) The students ski in groups of at least 4 and NEVER leave a fellow student alone.
 - d) The students ski within the ski resort boundaries.
 - e) The students should be told to always stay in control and be able to stop and avoid other people or objects.

Students should be assessed at the commencement of any snow sport program and where practicable, participate in daily skiing lessons each morning of the program. The DEC, the Coroner and the CSO also endorses additional afternoon lessons in the program for beginner level students.

Skiers, including staff, should be limited to the Green Runs. If the school principal makes the decision to allow students to access the more challenging Blue Runs the notification of intent to the Assistant Director must address the following points.

- A signed permission note from the student's parents acknowledging that they are a proficient skier and capable of handling a Blue Run safely.
- A recommendation by a qualified Ski Instructor that the student demonstrates the ability to negotiate a Blue Run Safely.
- The students will ski the Blue Run in groups of four with a teacher of equal or superior skiing skills
- The students will be directly supervised by a member of staff during such runs.

No students or staff to ski on the Black Runs.

Students should not ski alone, should be in groups of at least 4 and should be supervised by an appropriate member of staff with at least their level of skiing.

Only students and staff members of the school are to travel on the excursion. Family members of staff are not included on the excursion.

Obtaining consent

Parents/carers must be provided with the School Excursion Parental undertakings, Consent and Acknowledgement form (**see Snow Sports Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 5**), which is to be signed and returned to the school. The Coroner made specific recommendations about the level of informed consent parents must give, if a school decides that students may ski without close and direct supervision:

- Parents/carers must provide written and informed consent that includes parental information and medical information.
- Informed consent must include details as to the location of the event.
- The students can only ski on runs where they have been previously taken by ski instructors or other qualified supervisors. See **Snow Sport Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 6**.
- The students must ski in groups of at least four and never leave a fellow student alone (emphasis in original).
- The students must ski within the ski resort boundaries.
- The students should be told always to stay in control and be able to stop and avoid other people or objects.

Risk Management Plan

The Excursion Risk Management Plan must be reviewed by the **Assistant Director/CSO Risk Officer** prior to departure to take account of any changes in local conditions that have occurred since the initial assessment. Refer to **Snow Sport Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 8**: 'Excursion Risk Management Plan' and the sample Excursion Risk Management Plan provided in **Snow Sport Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 9**.

11. OVERSEAS EXCURSIONS AND IMMERSIONS: ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES (A-Z)

There are additional mandatory procedures for overseas excursions undertaken by Catholic schools in the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. These procedures are to be read in conjunction with the School Excursions and Immersions Policy and Procedures.

In planning excursions, principals and staff need to be conscious of the legal and moral responsibility for student welfare that they accept. Arrangements for care and supervision must reflect the greater degree of risk to students that can exist when visiting overseas destinations.

Approval process

Approval for an international excursion must involve consultation between the principal and the Assistant Director in the first instance using the *Notice of Intention to Plan an Overseas Excursion* (see Overseas Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 1). The *Application for Approval of Overseas Excursion* must be endorsed by the principal and Assistant Director and provided to the Director **at least 6 months** prior to planned travel (see Overseas Excursion Toolkit - Appendix 2).

An application should clearly demonstrate that the activities planned are not available in Australia, that they occur substantially in vacation time, and that participation would not place undue financial burdens or safety risk on students or families.

The following information is to be provided to the Director of Schools with the *Application for Approval of Overseas Excursion* form:

- The major learning outcomes and relevance to the curriculum
- Number and year level of students
- Number of accompanying staff and other adults (see 'Supervision Requirements')
- Risk Management Plan
- Copies of information to parents including medical form, consent form, proposed itinerary, accommodation arrangement and costing

Arrangements with third parties

Overseas excursions may require schools to enter into contracts and agreements with third parties. This includes travel agents, tour operators, hotels and other accommodation providers etc. Schools should review any contracts to which they are a party to ensure the terms are acceptable.

Behaviour

Students should be instructed on appropriate behaviour. A code of conduct must be drawn up by the school, and signed by each student and parent or guardian.

Students participating in excursions to communities which are culturally different from our own should be briefed on cultural sensitivities (e.g. dress) and appropriate communication in cross cultural contexts.

Inappropriate student behaviour must be reported to the principal and to the Director of Schools.

Arrangements need to be in place to facilitate the return to their parents of any student who exhibits behaviour that seriously endangers themselves or others. Written confirmation from parents must be obtained prior to departure of the excursion to acknowledge agreement to the arrangements proposed.

Billeting and homestays

Some schools have ceased to billet their students to host families due to child protection risks, particularly in the absence of any direct teacher or parental supervision.

If a school wishes to billet its students to overseas host families for the purposes of exchange or immersion programs, it must assess and manage the risks arising from such activities.

This is a sensitive issue given that billeting relies on the goodwill of host families offering to accommodate visiting students, usually without financial compensation.

The school should set clear expectations for families hosting students, including that the home is accessible and has particular amenities and that students will have a safe, secure and private bedroom. If the local standards are deemed inadequate, schools should consider whether there are additional measures that should be implemented e.g. criminal history record checks (if available) or billeting in pairs etc.

Written contracts should be entered into between the schools and the host families and/or host schools to ensure that all parties understand their rights and responsibilities, in particular, their duty of care over students. See the **Overseas Excursion Toolkit - Overseas Excursion Hosting Deed template**.

The school should ensure that all adult residents undergo relevant screening and be provided with training and briefings by the school in their welfare expectations.

Where processes to screen the accommodation and the billeting families are difficult to arrange, alternative accommodation may be more appropriate.

An alternative to billeting includes homestay arrangements organised through specialist companies. Companies that offer services that organise exchange programs for students in different countries and these companies have the expertise and resources to determine and recommend suitable homestay arrangements. From a duty of care perspective, engaging an experienced, specialist company to arrange homestays might be preferable to schools individually organising billeting of their students overseas.

Child Protection

Students should be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, and about positive strategies and avenues for support should concerns arise. Organising staff should take the time to work with students to consider unexpected situations and risks that might occur during the excursion and to discuss strategies for eliminating or controlling risks.

All staff are required to have current child protection training. Principals must ensure that volunteers accompanying the excursion including any parents and partners of staff members have completed a Working With Children Volunteer Check.

All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, and to provide support to children and young people throughout all stages of an excursion, as they do in schools. See the **CSO's Working with Children Procedure and Reporting Concerns of Children Policy** and procedures for further advice regarding roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. Zimmerman Services can offer further advice about child protection issues.

Compliance with overseas laws and customs

When preparing for an overseas excursion, a school should have some working knowledge of any applicable laws and customs that could apply in relation to the children and staff travelling overseas. If necessary, a school may need to seek local advice, advice from DFAT or advice from the subject country's embassy when preparing for an overseas excursion.

Emergencies

There must be a plan of action and agreed notification procedure approved by the principal prior to departure, in case of illness, accident or other emergency. Any such protocol should include capacity to contact relevant local authorities (Police etc.), and, if required, contacting DFAT to trigger a consulate response.

Every staff member must have a mobile phone that will operate in the countries visited – either an Australian SIM card with global roaming or a SIM card bought in the countries visited. Students are to be given these phone numbers. At least one staff phone number must be known prior to the group leaving Australia and provided to the school and to parents prior to departure. This will be the emergency contact phone and must be left on 24 hours a day. Parents should also be given an emergency contact number for the school for the full period of the excursion.

Emergency Response Planning

Schools must adopt a risk management approach to emergency response planning and should check relevant forecasts or other safety warnings, including DFAT travel advices, 2 weeks prior and again immediately prior to departure. In consultation with the **Assistant Directors**, schools must be prepared to alter or cancel excursions due to emerging safety concerns.

Excursion Records

The principal must ensure that all records of the excursion are retained. This includes a copy of any advice given to parents, costs, permission forms and administrative and travel details. In the event of an injury to a student or property damage, records relating to the excursion must be retained until the injured party reaches the age of 25, or for seven years, whichever is the greater.

First Aid

A first aid kit must be taken on all excursions and all accompanying adults and students should be told where the kit is kept and by whom. All staff members of the excursion group must have a current qualification in First Aid and CPR. At least one staff member must hold a current Senior First Aid Certificate.

Fringe Benefits Tax

If staff receive funding for such a trip they should be aware that Fringe Benefit Tax may apply to any portion of the trip that is not part of the group itinerary. A full travel diary, noting each work activity, the nature of that activity, the duration, where and when it took place and the date the entry was made, and all relevant receipts, will need to be kept to substantiate the non-payment of Fringe Benefit Tax. See the **Business Travel Policy and Procedures** for further information and sample Travel Report.

Medical Forms

An updated school medical form must be obtained for each student and taken with staff on the excursion. Prior to departure the staff member organising the excursion must read each medical form so that he/she is aware of potential medical emergencies that may arise such as asthma attacks or serious allergies. An appropriate plan of action in such an event should be discussed with the principal prior to departure. See **Attachment xx Overseas Toolkit for a model medical and parent authority and consent form (currently missing from pack)**.

Medications

The organiser of the excursion must ensure he/she has a medical certificate or certificates to cover any prescribed medication being taken on the excursion. The student/teacher/helper taking the medication is required to obtain this certificate from their medical practitioner. The medical practitioner will need to check that the particular medication is permitted to be brought into the country concerned. The prescription for the medication should also be carried either by the student or a member of staff for the duration of the excursion. Although Australian issued prescriptions cannot be used overseas, it will enable a doctor to write a new prescription in the event that the medication is lost. Students should be responsible for their own medication.

Parents, Caregivers and Volunteers

Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be briefed on arrangements prior to the excursion and sign to say they are aware of the risk management plan, accommodation arrangements, supervision details and the itinerary.

On the rare occasion where it is proposed that a student or group of students will participate in an independent activity without the direct supervision of a staff member, it is imperative that the parent or caregiver is fully informed of, and consents to, the arrangements.

Final Plans Details of the final itinerary, medical forms, emergency contact details (phone, email etc), a full list of all students, staff and volunteer names and addresses and any other related documents must be lodged with the principal and schools consultant at least six weeks prior to departure. Staff and volunteers accompanying the excursion must read the policy, procedures and risk management plan prior to departure. The documentation should be reviewed prior to departure and changes communicated.

Passports and visas

The principal and the staff member responsible for organising the excursion must check each participant's passport and visas (if required). Passports must be current and the expiry date must not be within six months of the date that the excursion will arrive back in Australia. Any necessary visas must be valid for the dates of the excursion. If more than one country is to be visited more than one visa may be required. Principals should be aware that for students travelling on non-Australian passports there may be different visa requirements, including the need for a visa to re-enter Australia.

Careful consideration must be given to ensuring the security of passports whilst the group is overseas. This might involve staff members collecting and holding student passports. The decision about who will hold passports will depend on the size of the group, the countries visited and the age of the students.

Each staff member is to have in their luggage a full set of copies of the passports of each member of the excursion group. This may be in the form of photocopies or on a USB Flash Drive. A full set must also be held at the school.

Report

Upon completion of the excursion, a summary report must be submitted to the principal together with any photographic or film record which may be required for the school magazine or website.

Risk Management

A risk assessment is to be conducted and a Risk Management Plan developed by the teacher in charge before approval can be given for any excursion. See **Overseas Excursion Toolkit - Overseas Excursions Risk Management Plan** for detailed guidance on how to approach risk assessment for excursions of this nature.

School groups on overseas excursions must register prior to departure with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Register of Australians travelling overseas.

Overseas travel will not proceed, regardless of the proximity to the date of departure and other organisational matters, if the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has recommended against travel. Advice regarding travel to particular countries is on the DFAT web site at: www.smartraveller.gov.au.

At least four weeks prior to departure, the **Overseas Excursion Risk Management Checklist (Overseas Excursion Toolkit - Attachment 3)** must be completed by the teacher in charge and presented to the principal for sign-off and a copy of the signed checklist forwarded to the **<<Assistant Director / CSO Risk Officer??>>**. Principals should ensure that all risk management documentation is retained to assist with future planning of excursions or to support an investigation process should a serious incident occur.

Staff costs

Proposals must show how the fares of tour organisers, leaders and other accompanying adults are to be met. Students' participation costs are not to be increased to cover the costs of these organisers, leaders and other accompanying adults without express written acknowledgement of the parents of the participating students.

Refer to the **Business Travel Policy and Procedures** for staff eligibility for reimbursement of reasonable business-related travel costs.

Student expenditure and travel money

It is recommended that personal spending money is taken in the form of a prepaid travel card issued by financial institutions. It is expected that the travel card is used to cover expected personal expenditure that is unable to be covered prior to departure or incidental personal expenditure.

The student is fully responsible for their own card and for following instructions on its use provided by the financial institution. Students may access automatic teller machines whilst on the excursion and therefore are responsible for complying with security measures required by the relevant financial institution. Backup cards are to be lodged with a designated staff member for safekeeping.

Supervision

As with all excursions, the decision about the number of teachers to accompany the students is to be determined by the principal. There must be sufficient numbers of appropriate teachers to ensure adequate supervision.

There must also be a minimum of two teachers travelling with any excursion group no matter how small the group. It is preferable for there to be three teachers travelling to ensure adequate supervision in the case of illness of either a student or a staff member.

Accommodation and bathroom arrangements are to be such that no staff member or other accompanying adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. For co-educational groups, male and female teachers are required.