

Excursions, Routine Outings & Extra-curricular Activities Policy

Policy Statement & Commitments

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require Brunswick East Primary School Outside School Hours Care Service (BEPS OSHC Service) to have in place policies and procedures in relation to excursions, including procedures for conducting risk assessment and authorisations.

BEPS OSHC Service is committed to:

- protecting the wellbeing and safety of children through assessing and controlling the risks associated with leaving the Service's premises or the school grounds
- extending the children's program to create a more holistic view of the children's environment in which they live
- supporting children, families and educators at BEPS OSHC Service in developing an awareness of community life, providing opportunities to children to strengthen their connection with and understanding of the community
- providing a change of routine that allows families and the wider community to become more involved with the children and BEPS OSHC Service.

Definitions

Excursion – An outing organised by an education and care service.

In-house Activities – Visitors to BEPS OSHC Service that add value to the educational program such as police, farm animals, puppet shows etc.

Extra-curricular Activities – An activity children attend outside of BEPS OSHC Service during service hours, usually on school grounds. Examples include Friday and twilight markets, music lessons, classroom expositions and presentations, three-way conferences, art classes, etc.

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Regular outing – A walk, drive or trip to and from a destination that BEPS OSHC Service visits regularly as part of its educational program, where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same on each outing.

Procedures for Planning an Excursion or In-House Activity

Conducting excursions, routine outings, or inviting visitors to BEPS OSHC Service can build valuable links between the school and the community, particularly when these are more than one off experiences.

- Any excursion, routine outing, or in-house activity must be carefully planned, which includes being tested, timed and all hazards considered.
- Excursions, routine outings and in-house activities will be designed to expand children’s understanding of the community and appreciation of the world around them.
- Every attempt will be made to ensure that the excursion does not take place at a venue that is likely to be overcrowded

Risk Assessment – Excursions & Routine Outings

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* requires BEPS OSHC Service to take reasonable steps to protect children from foreseeable risk of harm, injury and illness. The regulations require that BEPS OSHC Service conducts a risk assessment for each excursion undertaken.

Educators, in conjunction with the Coordinator, will complete a plan which includes a risk assessment for each excursion that will identify and assess risks that the excursion may pose to the health and safety or wellbeing of any child, and will specify how identified risks will be managed and minimised. The assessment will consider:

- the proposed route and destination
- transport to and from the destination
- proposed times of departure and return
- the number of adults and children involved
- the educator-child ratio required under the regulations
- an assessment on whether additional responsible adults are required to provide appropriate supervision
- any water hazards
- the proposed activities

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- items that should be taken on the excursion such as mobile phones, first aid kits etc.
- any contingencies for possible changes in weather and temperature
- sufficient shaded areas for protection from the sun
- safety measures and emergency plans, which identify:
 - who will deal with the emergency
 - who will supervise any remaining children
 - how families will be contacted
 - how children will be returned to the BEPS OSHC Service.

Risk assessments will be completed before authorisation from families is sought.

Authorisations & Communication with Families

Whenever an excursion, routine outing or extra curricular activity is to be undertaken, the families are to be given adequate prior notice before it actually takes place. All excursions will be publicised to all families with full details of:

- the destinations
- times of departure and return
- educators and volunteers attending
- any special items required, including information on whether the children are required to bring their own lunch, or if BEPS OSHC Service will be providing this.

There will be no change to the publicised itinerary unless the person in charge of the excursion decides it is necessary for the safety and wellbeing of children. Written permission will be obtained from families whose children are participating in an extra-curricular activity or excursion. The parent or guardian will also need to provide emergency contact details particular to the day of the excursion.

Excursions

- A notice will be provided two weeks before an excursion takes place. It must include all the information required on the excursion permission forms.
- Permission forms must be filled out for each child attending the excursion.
- Permission forms must be made available before the excursion to ensure they are signed before the excursion day.
- These forms must be signed by a parent, guardian or legally authorised person, as listed on the enrolment form.

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Routine Outings

- The parent, guardian or other authorised person’s authorisation for a regular outing is only required once in every 12 month period, provided that the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are the same in each outing.
- A notice must be displayed on the day that the routine outing will be taking place. It must include all the information required on the permission forms.
- Families will be asked to sign an acknowledgement on arrival at the OSHC Service to consent to the routine outing scheduled for that day.

Extra-Curricular Activities at the School

Consent to leave BEPS OSHC Service is essential and as per the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, and families must sign a consent form **prior** to the extra-curricular to enable their child to take part. The families signed authority will include:

- the child’s name
- the reason the child is being taken outside the premises
- the date, time and duration of the extra-curricular activity
- the name of the person running the activity
- a description of where the activity will be held
- the period the child will be away from the BEPS OSHC Service
- a parent or guardian signature.

The signed permission form must be returned to the service.

Permission forms

Consent to leave BEPS OSHC Service is essential and as per the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, and families must sign a consent form **prior** to the excursion to enable their child to take part. The families signed excursion authority will include:

- the child’s name
- the reason the child is being taken outside the premises
- the date of the excursion
- a description of the proposed destination
- the method of transport
- the proposed activities to be undertaken by the child during the excursion
- the period the child will be away from the BEPS OSHC Service
- the number of children going on the excursion
- the ratio of educators to children on the excursion

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- the number of other educators and responsible adults who will supervise children on the excursion
- notification that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available

Transport & Road Safety

Program staff members are not permitted to transport a child away from the program, even with a parent or guardian's authority.

- In the case of a medical emergency, if the Coordinator cannot contact the parents or guardian of the child, they will call an ambulance if they think it is necessary. Steps will be taken by the Coordinator to notify the parent or guardian as soon as is possible.
- If a child is not collected by 5.55pm, the Coordinator will attempt to contact the parents or guardian. If they cannot be contacted they will then attempt to contact the emergency contacts nominated on the enrolment form and leave a message for the parent or guardian. If this does not resolve the problem, a staff member will stay with the child until they are collected.
- The exception to this is excursions (see below).

A child can only be transported by their parents or guardian, or a person who has been nominated on their enrolment form. An exception to this is during a medical emergency, where an ambulance officer may transport the child without written permission. If a person has not been nominated on the enrolment form, the Coordinator must receive written permission (if possible) or a phone call from a parent or guardian. The person nominated must produce photo identification on arrival.

BEPS OSHC Service does not organise excursions involving private cars as this raises issues about liability, insurance, regulatory requirements and children's safety and wellbeing. BEPS OSHC Service will decide on appropriate transport for each planned activity taking into consideration children's ages and abilities, and will document the reason for the decision along with any additional safety requirements and risk assessment.

Children travel to venues either by public transport, a hired bus or walking. When hiring a bus a vehicle with seat belts is always requested and children are reminded and expected to stay in their seat at all times.

Traffic-related injuries remain one of the leading preventable causes of death and serious injury for young children. The most critical times of the day for road safety at BEPS OSHC Service are the children's arrival and departure times. While we promote road safety in

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discussions with families and children, excursions also provide children with the opportunity to practice walking safely with adults in typical traffic environments.

If travelling by bus, the excursion plan will include:

- whether the bus will have seats belts
- who will cover the cost of the bus
- in the case of an additional bus is required, how BEPS OSHC Service will meet adult-child ratio requirements
- the planned route to and from the destination
- a written agreement that volunteer drivers or contracted bus operators will be required to sign. The agreement will detail the responsibilities and requirements of the driver, which will include information confirming that:
 - the driver holds a current driver’s license with appropriate conditions
 - the driver operates the vehicle in accordance with Victorian Road Rules
 - the vehicle has a current registration and is insured
 - the vehicle is not driven in a unsafe or damaged condition
 - the vehicle is kept in a roadworthy condition as determined by Vic Roads.

If travelling by public transport, the excursion plan will include:

- whether the intended mode of transport is bus, tram or train
- who will cover the costs of the ticket, how these will be purchased and utilised on the day
- how BEPS OSHC Service will meet ratio and supervision requirements
- the planned route to and from the destination, including public timetable information

When using public transport, a staff member will notify the relevant transport company about the time of travel, the number of passengers, and the destinations of the out-bound and return journeys. Children will be reminded before they leave the program and before leaving the venue about appropriate behaviour on public transport.

When walking during outings, educators will talk to children about traffic and road safety, including:

- what to do when they cross the road
- Why they have stopped at the curb
- what they are looking for when they are crossing the road
- what sounds they are listening for when they are crossing the road

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- when it is safe to cross the road
- why they have to keep checking until they're safely on the other side.

Excursions in action

- On the day of the excursion, the **Excursion Information Form** must be filled out with all relevant information.
- Prior to leaving BEPS OSHC Service, the educator leading the excursion must prepare the volunteers and the children while the other educator prepares a pack to carry.
- The pack that must be taken with the group is to contain:
 - a copy of all emergency contact numbers, including emergency contact numbers for all adults assisting
 - the excursion information form
 - an emergency first aid kit, including any medication for children
 - at least one mobile phone
 - plastic bags to ensure any rubbish is disposed of appropriately
 - current action plans and medication for any children with allergies or medication requirements.
- The educators will sit all children and volunteers down and explain to them the expectations of the day ahead, including the pairing or grouping of adults with the children.
- The adults are all given a handout regarding their responsibilities for the day. This is to be reiterated with them prior to leaving.
- The children will be reminded, in front of the other adults, about expected behaviour. This ensures adults and children have heard the same rules.
- The educator in charge will ensure that all adults are familiar with their roles on the day – supervision, emergency procedures for a lost child, accident and injury procedures, and any other specific safety requirements.
- All adults assisting with the excursion must also complete an emergency contact form in case of emergency.
- Two educators must individually count the children on departure from BEPS OSHC Service, arrival at destination, departure from destination and arrival back at BEPS OSHC Service.

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- While outside of BEPS OSHC Service premises, educators will be aware where all children and volunteers are at all times. Educators will direct and guide the group as necessary; this may include giving the adults some direction.
- Children will have access to drinking water throughout the excursion.
- Food will be provided according to the time and length of excursion. This may include children bringing their own lunch and water bottle.
- Children will have regular access to toilet facilities and will be encouraged to utilise them when available.
- Children will have access to appropriate shaded areas to avoid excessive exposure to the sun.
- On completion of the excursion, educators are to complete an **excursion evaluation form** to see whether goals and expectations were met, or how improvements can be made for any future outings.

Cost

Any additional costs for excursions or in-house activities are determined prior to the experience and communicated to families. It is not always possible for BEPS OSHC Service to absorb such costs, so individual family and community circumstances will need to be considered.

The majority of BEPS OSHC Service's planned experiences do not incur additional cost. However, should the any *additional* cost be incurred by families, this will be billed separately to fees and charged to the family's account. These additional costs are on top of the usual fee and are not accountable to Child Care Benefit or the Child Care Rebate.

Educator-Child Ratio

The educators to child ratios will be maintained in accordance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

- There will always be a minimum of two educators with the children at all times.
- At least one of these educators must have first aid training, including emergency asthma management and anaphylaxis certification.
- At least one of these educators must be either certified supervisor or a nominated supervisor of BEPS OSHC Service.

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If an educator does not feel comfortable taking part in an excursion, they should discuss their concerns with the person in charge prior to the event.

Additional responsible adults may also accompany children on an excursion. The length and location of the excursion are taken into consideration when deciding whether more assistance is required. Any outing that uses public transport, involves crossing major roads or has a duration of two hours or more will require a higher ratio. The number of responsible adults required may also be influenced by group dynamics and the needs of individual children.

If more adults are deemed necessary there will be a request for volunteers from within the family group. If the additional numbers are unable to be met then the excursion will be cancelled.

In determining the required adult to child ratio for each outing the following will be considered:

- The age and the abilities of the children.
- The destination and length of the excursion.
- The methods of transport.
- The previous experience of the accompanying adults.
- The type of activities.

Volunteers

Family members wishing to volunteer on excursion with BEPS OSHC Service *must* hold a volunteer (V) Working with Children (WWC) Check Card.

Volunteers may apply for their own WWC check. The check reviews their criminal record for any specific criminal offences that pose a risk to the safety of children.

Forms are made available for families at the School Administration office, or you can collect a form from a participating Australia Post Offices.

There is no application fee for volunteers and the WWC check card for volunteers only applies to unpaid volunteer roles.

For more information, refer to the BEOS OSHC Service policy on the participation of students and volunteers.

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Lost children

In the unlikely event of a child wandering away from the group on an excursion, the following procedures will be enacted immediately to ensure the safety of all children:

- For each outing, a designated meeting point will be determined. This meeting point is to be used in the event that anyone should wander away from the group. This information will be communicated to the children and adults at the same time to ensure a consistent message.
- Children will be reminded about the dangers of wandering away from the group, and the necessary safety precautions should they become lost.
- Any educator noticing that a child appears to be missing from the group will let the educator in charge know immediately.
- Additional adults also have the above responsibility, however it will be considered that additional adults may not know all the children, therefore may not realise who is missing. For this reason regular head counts will be conducted during the outing.
- Educators will question the other children and adults regarding their last recollection of the missing child.
- One educator will check the designated meeting point for the lost child while the rest of the group stays together. This may be at the designated meeting point.
- The same educator will then search the area while the rest of the group continue to stay together at the designated meeting point awaiting the missing child's return to the group.
- Venue educators (if applicable) will be notified, and given a description of the child.
- All attempts will be made to locate missing children. In the most unlikely event that the missing child cannot be located, the educator in charge will contact the Coordinator at BEPS OSHC Service who will advise the next steps of appropriate action, which may involve contacting the child's family or the police.

Sources & Legislative References

Harrison, L 2007 *Promoting road safety in child care services*, extract from *Putting Children First*, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council, no. 23.

Kids and Traffic – *Key road safety messages for children, and Key road safety messages for adults who care for young children.* <http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au>

National Professional Support Coordinator Alliance 2012, *Getting started with policies for the NQF: Policies in Practice template – Excursions and Transport*, www.pscalliance.org.au

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Tansey, S 2005, *Supervision in children's services*, extract from *Putting Children First*, the Newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council, no. 15.

<i>Education & Care Services National Law Act Vic (2010) – Section 3(2)(a); 165; 169; 174</i>
<i>Education & Care Services National Regulations (2011) – Regulations 99, 100, 101, 102, 136, & 168 (2)(g)</i>
<i>National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care & School Age Care (2010) – Elements 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 6.1.2, 6.2.1, & 6.3.4</i>
<i>Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (2009) – Practice Principles</i>
<i>Framework for School Age Care in Australia (2012) – Outcomes 2, 3 & 4</i>
<i>Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic) – Management of personal information</i>
<i>Victorian Occupational Health & Safety Act (2004) – Providing a Safe environment</i>
<i>A New Tax System Act 2000 (Cwlth) – Family Assistance Administration</i>
<i>Working with Children Act 2005 (Vic) – Educators & Volunteers</i>