National Quality Standard Related Standards/ Regulations

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| Regulation 99 | Children leaving the education and care service |
| Regulation 100 | Risk assessment must be concluded before excursion |
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Aim

The purpose of these guidelines is to minimise the risks of accidents and injuries on excursions and promote awareness for staff, parents, and children of likely safety issues and procedural requirements of the ELC.

Explanation

At times throughout the school year, excursions will be used to support a relevant Unit of Inquiry being studied in the classroom. In addition, Early Learning Centre students will also often attend activities and functions at the Junior School. Excursions and special events are important educational experiences, enabling children to feel more a part of their local communities. Opportunities to use local community facilities enhance children’s life experiences and understanding of the world around them. To ensure the safety of all children during set excursions, clear procedures and policies must be enforced to minimise any possible risks.

Practice

Visiting the Junior School

Children at the Early Learning Centre frequently visit the Canberra Girls Grammar School Junior School as part of regular routines and experiences. Visits to the Library, Music rooms and “buddy” classrooms are examples of such experiences. These visits are not considered “excursions” as children remain on the Canberra Girls Grammar School site at all times (NQF Resource Kit, pg. 70). In most circumstances, children will walk to and from these experiences at the Junior School. In situations of unexpected inclement weather, school buses may be used to transport children between the school campuses. A risk assessment has been conducted regarding the use of buses in these circumstances, and will be reviewed and updated annually. At the beginning of each school year (during their child’s time at the ELC only), parents/guardians will complete a permission form regarding the use of buses for transport between the Junior School and ELC, covering the upcoming 12 month period.
Regular Local Outings

Children at the Early Learning Centre are fortunate to be surrounded by an interesting array of natural and manmade landscapes. It is important that young children are able to engage with their environment and explore their surroundings in order to truly appreciate and understand the world around them.

From time to time during the course of the school year, individual classes will leave the ELC premises to explore their local environment. Through these experiences, the children will have opportunities to make connections between the learning occurring within the class program, particularly in the Units of Inquiry, and the world around them. These outings will occur within a 1km radius of the ELC (diagram below), within the suburban environment and parks directly around CGGS.

A risk assessment has been conducted regarding these local outings, and will be reviewed and updated annually. At the beginning of each school year (during their child’s time at the ELC only), parents/guardians will complete a permission form regarding regular local outings, covering the upcoming 12 month period.

Class teachers will communicate with parents in advance when these outings will occur, either via email, a note in the diary or a sign at the classroom door. Teachers may request parent helpers for these outings and we welcome parent participation. As per the National Regulations, a minimum adult:child ratio of 1:11 will be maintained at all times, with lower ratios determined by class teachers according to the needs of individual classes and the intended route of the walk.
Non-Routine Excursions

Non-routine excursions are defined as off-site excursions that are not part of the normal routine, but rather are intended to extend or promote learning. In undertaking non-routine excursions, Early Learning Centre staff will systematically work through the following: planning and approval, undertaking a risk assessment, obtaining parent permission, First Aid requirements, adult:child supervision, acknowledgement of likely water hazards, transport and insurance.

Planning and Approval
Non-routine excursions must be directly related to the children’s learning. Before initiating an excursion, staff need to define the rationale for having an excursion, and identify the purpose and desired outcomes for the children. Teachers must discuss any proposed excursions with the Director of Junior School (ELC) and Director of Learning and Innovation, and complete and submit the required online form, at least two weeks in advance of any proposed excursion.

Risk Assessment
Once approved, teachers must ensure a risk assessment is carried out for the proposed excursion and submitted to the Director of Junior School (ELC) before any further arrangements are made. To complete the risk assessment, teachers will need to familiarize themselves with the excursion site to ensure they are able to assess its suitability in terms of safety, facilities, and accessibility for all children.

Obtaining Parent Permission
A permission form must be completed for each child participating in the excursion. The form must include the following information:

- the child’s name; and
- the reason the child is to be taken outside the premises; and
- the date the child is to be taken on the excursion (unless the authorisation is for a regular outing); and
- a description of the proposed destination for the excursion; and
- the method of transport to be used for the excursion; and
- the proposed activities to be undertaken by the child during the excursion; and
- the period the child will be away from the premises; and
- the anticipated number of children likely to be attending the excursion; and
- the anticipated ratio of educators attending the excursion to the anticipated number of children attending the excursion; and
- the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children on the excursion; and explanation risk assessment has been done and a copy is available at centre
- parent/guardian signature

This form will be emailed to parents at least 1 week prior to the date of the excursion. Parents will be provided with a printed copy by Class Teachers/Coeducators which must be signed and returned no less than 24 hours prior to the excursion.

Under no circumstance can a child participate in an excursion if a parent/guardian has not given written permission for the child to do so. Permission must be obtained for each individual excursion, and is to take the format of a standard form for each child attending. Each permission form will be retained in the child’s file.

First Aid Requirements
At least one primary contact staff member attending the excursion must have an approved First Aid qualification (HLTAID004). A suitably equipped and well stocked First Aid Kit/s must be taken on all excursions. If several groups are going on an excursion simultaneously, sufficient First Aid Kits must be carried to ensure all groups have quick and easy access (ie. one kit per group). Prior to every excursion, the kit/s should be checked to ensure that none of the contents needs replenishing.
Individual Class Teachers/Coeducators are responsible for ensuring that any additional medication or equipment required for individual children’s medical needs (from their class) is taken on the excursion (Epipen, antihistamine, asthma medication etc.). Copies of relevant Action Plans for allergies and asthma for individual children must also be taken on the excursion.

**Adult/Child Ratios and Supervision**

"While an increased educator to child ratio for excursions is not specified in the National Regulations, there is a requirement to adequately supervise children at all times. A thorough risk assessment should determine whether minimum ratios are sufficient to provide adequate supervision while attending an excursion.” (Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 [June 2014], pg. 71).

At an absolute minimum, a ratio of one adult for every 11 students must be maintained at all times. However, Class Teachers, in consultation with the Director of Junior School (ELC), must determine an appropriate ratio, which may be lower than 1:11 according to the needs of their class and the intended destination.

Accompanying adults (parents/family members) should be assigned specific children to their care. Expectations of adults and objectives for children should be explained clearly to accompanying adults by the relevant Classroom Teacher prior to leaving the Centre. Ultimately it is the Classroom Teacher who is responsible for the care of all children. Accompanying adults who are not members of staff should not be left unsupervised with children. A member of staff must remain with the children at all times. Adults assisting with school events on a regular basis must hold a valid Working With Vulnerable People card.

A list of children attending the excursion is to be taken on the excursion, and checked periodically during the time out of the centre.

When children with identified needs are participating in the excursion, additional adults should be included in the ratios, dependent upon the needs of the child. This is to ensure both the child’s safety, and that they benefit from the excursion. Teachers may request that a parent/family member known to the child attend the excursion to provide one on one attention and care.

One ELC staff member, who is not included in adult:ratios, will attend each excursion. They will travel to the excursion in their own vehicle. The role of this person is to assist with any emergency situations or unforeseen circumstances.

**Acknowledgement of Water Hazards**

To ensure the safety of all children, excursions to swimming pools (public or private), lakes or rivers will not take place. In situations where there are other water hazards (eg. pond), water transport will be used.

**Transport**

In situations where transport to/from the excursion is via bus, only buses with seatbelts fitted will be used. The Classroom Teacher will ensure that the seating capacity, as displayed on the compliance plate, is not exceeded and that all children sit on seats with seatbelts fastened.

No private vehicles will be used for transporting children on excursions, unless a child is unable to access or travel on the transport mode provided (physical impairment, missed the departure time). In these circumstances, the child’s parent/guardian will be required to transport the child to/from the excursion location in his/her private vehicle. If this occurs, the parent retains duty of care for the child while in transit.

**Insurance**

When planning and booking an excursion, Teachers/ELC Clerical Assistant must check that the excursion provider/location hold the necessary public liability insurance.