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EXCURSION POLICY

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

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National Quality Standard (NQS)

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety		
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children protected from harm or hazard
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011

Children (Education and Care Services) National Law 2010	
99	Children leaving the education and care premises
100	Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion
101	Conduct risk assessment of excursion
102	Authorisation for excursion
168	Policies and procedures are required

"Excursions and Incursions provide the opportunity to expand and enhance children's experiences, explore different environments and engage in meaningful ways with their communities." Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW)

Excursions will be conducted with the children's safety and wellbeing in mind at all times. We will regularly schedule excursions, incursions and visitors to our Service. We will adhere to the National Regulations and Service policies and procedures.

Introduction

Excursions and Incursions are a valuable experience for children, families and educators of Woden Early Childhood Centre (WECC). Excursions require appropriate planning and risk management to ensure the best experience and enjoyment for all. WECC is committed to providing excursions that are well considered and planned, provide meaningful experiences and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children and educators at all times in accordance with National Legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

Goals – What are we aiming to do?

WECC will:

- make excursions a part of the program of education and care at WECC
- plan for excursions with careful consideration of the safety of children and adults
- allow children to attend excursions only where full documentation and permissions have been completed and obtained
- undertake full risk assessments, consideration of value of educational excursions, and plan for first aid requirements

Strategies – How will it be done?

Planning and preparations:

All excursions will be planned in advance to:

- maximise both children's developmental experiences and their safety
- reflect the age, capacity and interests of the children
- ensure they are properly supervised, are within ratios and conducted in a safe manner
- be conducted only with fully informed written parental permission

All excursions will be thoroughly researched to ensure:

- supervision is adequate, so children cannot be separated from the group
- access to hazardous equipment and environments is minimised
- there is adequate access to food, drink and other facilities (toilets, handwashing, etc)
- consideration is given to the mobility and supervision requirements of children with additional needs
- that adequate sun protection is available

When planning for an excursion educators will:

- assess the requirements for the excursion
- conduct a risk assessment

- book transport and venues, if bookings are taken
- make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions
- inform families, in writing via a notice in the child's room of the details of the excursion including destination, objectives and outcomes, and what the child should bring
- provide parents or legal guardians with an excursion permission form to complete to authorise their child's participation in the excursion
- request additional adult participation on the excursion where required, and invite all parents to attend if they wish
- arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen and asthma kit) and mobile phone to be taken on the excursion

Educators must make alternate arrangements for any children who are not attending the excursion, and ensure that any dialogue or pre-planning for the excursion does not alienate these children from social networks.

Additional factors need to be considered in the planning of excursions for children with additional needs. Where possible, WECC will uphold the right for all children to access all excursions and to engage in meaningful ways while on excursions.

Risk assessment

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will ensure a risk assessment is conducted prior to any excursion to identify and assess any and all risks the excursion may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child whilst on the excursion. The assessment will specify how WECC will manage any risks identified in the process.

The risk assessment conducted will consider:

- destination and duration of the excursion
- potential water hazards or any hazard associated with water based activities
- specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised
- transport to and from destination
- number of educators, responsible persons and children involved
- proposed activities
- items to be taken on the excursion e.g. emergency contact numbers, mobile phone, first aid kit, medical plans etc.

If the excursion is a regular occurrence a risk assessment will only be carried out once, provided the circumstances around the excursion have not changed in any way since the initial risk assessment was conducted.

The Nominated Supervisor or Director will also appoint a Certified Supervisor to be in charge of the excursion.

Authorisation for excursions

The Room Leader will ensure that prior to all excursions parents or legal guardians will be notified of the excursion permission form with full details of the excursion including:

- the child's name
- date, description, duration and destination of proposed excursion
- method of transport to be used
- reason for the excursion and proposed activities to be conducted on the excursion
- the anticipated adult: child ratio – outlining number of educators and other adults attending
- a statement that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at WECC for parents to view upon

- request
- the anticipated number of children

If the excursion is a regular outing, authorisation is required once in a 12-month period. All parents or legal guardians will be asked to sign permission forms for regular excursions on enrolment and the beginning of each subsequent year.

No child will be taken on an excursion unless written permission from parents or legal guardian has been received. If a child without permission is at WECC on the day of the excursion, the Nominated Supervisor, Director or Room Leader may email the parent/s to seek authorisation for the child to attend the excursion via email.

Families and volunteers

Families will be encouraged to participate in excursions to assist in maintaining suitable child to adult ratios. If the parent needs to bring their child's sibling/s because they cannot find suitable care, the sibling/s must be included in the ratios.

If additional adults are required volunteers will be invited. Volunteers will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out of WECC.

Family members/volunteers will not be left in sole charge of children and must be supervised by a WECC educator at all times. All volunteers/family members' details will be entered into the appropriate educator record for that day.

Transport and traffic

Safety of children will be considered in the choice of route and mode of transport. WECC will follow all applicable ACT road rules as well as the Kids and Traffic¹ best practice recommendations for transporting young children safely in buses. All children must sit on seats, preferably with, or close to, an adult. Seat belt guidelines must be followed depending on the bus. If the bus has seat belts, they must be worn at all times. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Educators will ensure children obey road rule and cross roads at a crossing or light where available, and will remain vigilant to ensure no child runs ahead or lags behind the group.

Supervision

Supervision on excursions will ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children for the duration of the excursion, taking into account ratios and all risk and hazards likely to be encountered. The venue will be assessed as safe for all involved on the excursion and will be easily supervised and accessible.

Water hazards

No excursions will be conducted to swimming pools or other sites of water related activity. Where there are significant water hazards (such as river, lakes or beaches), risk management strategies will be identified and implemented.

Conducting the excursion

¹ <http://www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au>

All educators, volunteers and children attending will be informed of excursion timetable/itinerary, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.

A list of children on the excursion will be left at WECC and a copy carried by the delegated Certified Supervisor.

Before leaving on any excursion, a notice will be prominently displayed at WECC which includes:

- itinerary and timetable
- mobile phone contact number

Items to be take on excursion include:

- a suitably stocked first-aid kit including EpiPen and asthma kit (where appropriate)
- a mobile phone
- children's emergency contact numbers
- children's medication, if required
- other items as required e.g. sunscreen, drinking cup, jackets, etc.

In the event that a child is lost on an excursion, the Senior Educator will contact the police to start the search for the missing child. If appropriate, and ratios allow, other educators may search the area. Meanwhile, the Senior Educator will then notify the centre and let the Nominated Supervisor or most Senior Educator know. The Nominated Supervisor or Senior Educators who will then go to the location of the excursion to support the educators and children, they may bring additional educators, so the rest of the children can return to the centre. The Nominated Supervisor will stay on site until the child is located. The family of the missing child will be informed immediately by the Nominated Supervisor. The incident will be reported to Children's Education and Care Assurance.

Educators, parents and volunteers are not permitted to smoke whilst on excursions.

Insurance

Management must review their insurance policy prior the excursion to ensure liability is protected by the Service.

Evaluation

All excursions are conducted in a safe manner and evaluated. Any improvements identified in the risk assessment prior to conducting the excursion or in the evaluation of the excursion are addressed and actioned to ensure children's safety.

Related policies /documents

- *Smoke-free environment*
- *Sun protection*
- *Supervision*
- *Volunteers and students*
- *Water safety*

Statutory legislation and considerations

- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2001

Sources and references

- The Business of Childcare, Karen Kearns 2004
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standards
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Revised National Quality Standards

Authorisation

John Rothwell

President

2017-18 WECC Management Committee