

ARMIDALE OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Excursion Policy (Incorporating Safe Transportation of Children)

Related Policy/policies:	Water Safety, Sun Safe, Administration of First Aid, Authorisations and Refusals, Providing a Child Safe Environment.
Regulation/s/ Standards:	Education and Care Services National Regulation 4 (1), 99, 100, 101(2),102 (4). National Law 165, 167, 174. National Quality Standards 2.3, 6.1 & 6.3
Related procedures:	Work Health & Safety
References:	ACECQA <i>Safe Transportation of Children</i> , Kidsafe NSW
Date Effective:	November 2023
Date for review	November 2025
Purpose	Excursions and regular outings are an important part of our educational program, providing opportunities for the children to build connections with the local community and contributing to their sense of belonging and connection with the world around them. Transportation may present additional risks to children – Armidale Out of School Care acknowledges its duty of care for the health and well-being of all children at all times that they are in care.
Responsibility	Board of Directors, Management, Nominated Supervisor & Educators

Key information:

- Children’s safety, health and wellbeing is paramount, and all experiences for the service, including excursions and regular outings, will be conducted in a way that minimises and addresses any risks identified.
- Armidale Out of School Hours care Educators will ensure that Management, the Nominated Supervisor and educators are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to excursions and regular outings.

Regular Excursions:

- A regular excursion is defined as an excursion that is a regular part of the Educational programme; e.g. transport of children from Armidale schools to the service.
- Initial authorisation is obtained from families upon enrolment for their children to participate in regular excursions.
- Written authorisation will be obtained from all families annually, prior to the commencement of Term 1.

- Armidale Out of School Hours Care will conduct Risk Assessments for Regular Excursions annually, prior to the commencement of Term 1.
- The notified itinerary for planned excursions must not change unless all families are given 24 hours' notice of the change.

Non-Regular Excursions:

- A non-regular excursion is not a part of the service's normal regular programme, e.g. Visits to Armidale Library or NERAM.
- A thorough risk assessment must be undertaken by a Responsible person at least 24 hours prior to the conduct of the non-regular excursion.
- Permission must be obtained from the family of each child attending the excursion prior to the activity's commencement.
- Non-regular Excursion Permission forms will include information regarding the approximate number of children attending the excursion, the number of educators supervising the children, the route to be taken to and from the excursion and the time frames involved, as well as the activities to be undertaken by the children during the excursion.

Educator to Child Ratios during Excursions:

- An Educator will accompany the bus driver on all regular excursions on Armidale Out of School Hours Care Bus – providing an Educator to child ratio of 1 to 10.
- Educator to child ratios on non-regular excursions will be 1 to 8.
- Where water hazards are present, the educator to child ratio will be 1 to 5.

Risk Assessments:

- Risk assessments will be carried out prior to all excursions unless the excursion is a regular outing for which a risk assessment has already been conducted less than 12 months prior.
- Risk assessments will identify and assess risks that may be posed to children's health and safety (specifically in relation to transportation) and specify how those risks will be managed and minimised.
- When there is a change in circumstances relevant to the risk assessment for a regular outing, Armidale Out of School Hours Care will update the risk assessments and authorisation forms. Examples of changes in circumstances include additional children attending, when there is a change in the location, or there are changes to the route taken to and from the outing.
- Excursions will not go ahead if there is any concern about the venue or Armidale Out of School Hours Care's ability to manage the risks presented.

Information to be considered in Risk Assessments:

- The proposed route and duration of the transportation.
- The proposed pick up location and destination.
- The means of transport.
- Requirements for seat belts and safety restraints.
- Any water hazards.
- Number of children and adults involved in the transportation.
- Number of adults or responsible persons appropriate to provide supervision and whether adults with specialised skills are required.
- Process for entering and exiting means of transport and how each child will be accounted for on embarking and disembarking.

Information to be included in Parent Authorisations for the transport of children:

- The child's name.
- The reason the child is being transported.
- If the authorisation is for regular transportation, the reason the child is being transported.
- If the excursion is a non-regular excursion, the date upon which the child is to be taken on an excursion.
- A description of the proposed pick up location and destination.
- The means of transport.
- The period of time during which the child is to be transported.
- The anticipated number of children likely to be transported.
- The anticipated number of staff members who will accompany and supervise children during transportation.
- Requirements for seat belts and safety restraints.
- That a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service, along with written policies and procedures for Excursions and the Transport of children.

Record Keeping

- Copies of all Excursion Risk Assessments and Parent Authorisations will be maintained securely at AFDC Coordination Unit premises for a period of 3 years in all cases.
- Should a child have been involved in an accident or incident, records will be maintained for a period of 19 years, or until the child is 24 years old.
- In the case of the death of a child, records will be maintained for a period of 7 years.

Essential Elements for Excursions:

- At least one Educator attending an excursion must have current First Aid qualifications.
- Educators must carry a basic first aid kit, a mobile phone and emergency contact details for all families whilst on excursions.
- Action Plans for children with a medical condition must be carried on excursions.
- The venue must have vehicle access and mobile reception.
- Weather and seasons need to be considered before the excursion occurs. Families should be requested to provide children with suitable clothing such as jackets, hats, shirts with sleeves and covered shoes.
- Site assessment needs to take place on arrival to define boundary areas.

Transport of Children in the Motor Vehicles of Armidale Out of School Hours Care Staff:

From time to time it may be necessary for Management and the nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to seek permission from families for their children to be transported in the motor vehicles of staff members. These instances may include, but not be limited to assistance to transport children to a non-regular excursion or if a child's requirement for an additional day's care in after school care has not been communicated to the service and the child has missed the OSHC bus. In these instances:

- Written family permission will be sought prior to the transportation.
- The staff member must be appropriately licenced for the vehicle they are driving.
- Vehicles must be registered in accordance with RMS legislation.
- The staff member must comply at all times with the traffic laws in New South Wales.
- Staff should be aware that vehicles are part of their workplace if they transport children, and as such vehicles need to be regularly maintained and inspected.
- Staff must report any accident or incident to the Nominated Supervisor.

- All children must be seated in the back seat prior to the front seat being used. If all of the back seats are occupied by children, a child can be seated in the front, they must be at least 7 years old.

Child Restraints and Seating Arrangements:

- Children aged between 4 and 7 years must be restrained in an approved forward facing restraint or booster seat that is properly fitted to the vehicle, and adjusted to fit the child's body correctly. Children aged between 4 and 7 years must not travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows unless all the other back seats are occupied by children who are also under 7 years and in approved child restraints.
- A booster seat should be used until a child's shoulder no longer comfortably fits within the seat or when their eye level is higher than the back of the seat.
- Booster seats should feature high backs and sides, and are to be used with an adult lap sash seatbelt/seat belt sash guide.
- Where the motor vehicle is fitted with front seat air bags, only children of an age at which they do not require child seats or booster seats may be transported in the front seat. If a child were to sit in the front seat, then the adult seat needs to be positioned as far back as possible. In NSW it is illegal to use a child restraint in a front passenger seat if there is a passenger side airbag. A booster seat can be used in the front seat if it doesn't have a tether strap.

Safety in the proximity of Motor Vehicles:

- Children must alight from the vehicle on the kerbside.
- Children must never to be left alone in a Motor vehicle, unless staff member or responsible adult is in the immediate proximity of the vehicle, i.e. loading and unloading children;
- The staff member or responsible adult should remove the ignition keys from the vehicle prior to alighting from the vehicle and the vehicle should be locked when unattended.
- Educators count the children on and off the bus.