

2.28 EXCURSION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Lindfield Montessori is committed to providing excursions that are well considered and planned, provide meaningful experiences, and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times.

It is important that Lindfield Montessori make the necessary considerations to ensure that excursions and transportation are compliant with the National Law and Regulations. The regulations relating to excursions are regulations 100, 101, 102 and 168(2)(g).

PURPOSE

Excursions are a valuable experience for children, families and staff of Lindfield Montessori. Excursions provide the opportunity to enhance and expand children's experiences, explore different environments, and engage in meaningful ways with their communities. Excursions require appropriate planning and risk management to ensure the best experience and enjoyment for all.

STRATEGIES

Planning

When planning for an excursion, staff will:

- Check current government advice and restrictions consider how this may impact excursion planning.
- Assess the requirements for the excursion.
- Conduct a risk assessment.
- Book transport and venues.
- Make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions.
- Inform families 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 to participate on the excursion.
- Collect completed permission forms for each child attending the excursion.
- Request additional adult participation on the excursion where required.

- ❑ Arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen) and mobile phone to be taken on the excursion.
- ❑ Educators must make alternative arrangements for any children who are not attending the excursion and ensure that any dialogue or pre-planning for the excursion does not alienate such children from social networks.
- ❑ Additional factors need to be considered in the planning of excursions for children with additional needs. Where possible, Lindfield Montessori will uphold the right for all children to access all excursions and engage in meaningful ways while on the excursion.

Risk Assessment

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:

- ❑ A responsible person is appointed for the excursion.
- ❑ A risk assessment is conducted prior to any excursion to identify and assess the risk the excursion may pose to the safety, health, and wellbeing of any child whilst on the excursion and will specify how Lindfield Montessori will manage any risks identified.
- ❑ Once risks have been identified, they will be categorised as high, medium, or low and management of the risks will be detailed.
- ❑ Educators and any responsible adults attending the excursion are aware of Lindfield Montessori's policy and procedures that set out the instructions of what must be done in the event of an emergency (Reg. 97(1)(a) and are aware of the risk assessment for the excursion.
- ❑ Before departing for the excursion, risks are checked including the weather to assess any increases to the level of risk and whether the excursion can proceed.

The risk assessment conducted will consider:

- ❑ Proposed route and destination for the excursion
- ❑ Any water hazards
- ❑ Any risks associated with water based activities
- ❑ Current drivers licence
- ❑ Method of transport to and from the proposed destination, including:
 - The means of transport and any requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported.

- The processing for entering and exiting Lindfield Montessori and the pick-up location and destination, and
 - Procedures for embarking and disembarking the means of transport, including how each child is to be accounted for on embarking and disembarking.
- Number of adults and children involved in the excursion
 - Given the risks posed, the number of educators and other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required to ensure children's safety.
 - Proposed activities
 - Proposed duration of the excursion
 - Items that should be taken on the excursion
 - Access for emergency services
 - Availability of toilets, hand washing and shade
 - Adequate mobile phone coverage
 - Strategies for accounting for all children on the excursion, particularly during transition times, such as ensuring all children have been transported to the destination and have been returned to Lindfield Montessori at the conclusion of the excursion. It is good practice for every approved provider, nominated supervisor and educator to apply the new safety requirements for regular transportation to all periods of transportation including single trips.
 - If the excursion is a regular occurrence, a risk assessment will only be carried out once in a 12 month period, where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are substantially the same on each outing.

Regular Outing

A regular outing means a walk, drive, or trip to and from a destination.

- a) That the service visits regularly as part of its educational program, and
- b) Where the circumstances relevant to the risk assessment are substantially the same on each outing.

Authorisation for Excursions

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:

- For all excursions parents or legal guardians will be given an excursion permission form with full details of the excursion including:
 - The child's name;
 - Date the child is to be taken on the excursion, description, duration, and destination of proposed excursion;
 - If the excursion involves transporting children, the means of transport and any requirements for seatbelts and safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported;
 - Reason for the excursion, and proposed activities to be conducted on the excursion;
 - The anticipated adult to child ratio – outlining number of educators and staff and other adults attending;
 - A statement that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service for parents to view.

In the event an authorisation is given that authorisation must be given by a parent or other person named in the child's enrolment record as having authority given by a parent to authorise a child to participate in the excursion and/or transportation. The child's enrolment record must include this other person's name, address, and contact details.

- If the excursion is a regular outing, authorisation is required once in 12-month period. All parents or legal guardians will be asked to sign permission forms for regular excursions on enrolment and at the beginning of each subsequent year. This permission forms will include a description of when the child is to be taken on the regular outings.
- No child will be taken on an excursion unless written permission from parents or legal guardians has been received.

Staffing Arrangements

- Educators attending the excursion will be no less than the number prescribed in the Education and Care services National Regulations and depending on the supervision requirements and additional hygiene procedures, they may need to be higher to ensure adequate supervision.
- The number of educators will also be adequate to supervise any responsible adults who volunteer to assist with the excursion.
- Consideration will be given to the number of educators who required first aid qualifications and the number of educators required to educate and care for children who remain at the service.
- Where a group of children are taken on an excursion while a number of children remain at the service, at least one educator who holds the following qualifications must be in attendance at both the excursion and at the service where children are being educated and cared for and must be immediately available in an emergency. At least:

- Staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who holds a current approved first aid qualification.
 - Staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken current approved anaphylaxis management training.
 - Staff member or one nominated supervisor of the service who has undertaken approved and emergency asthma management training [reg 136(1)].
- All educators attending the excursion will be made aware of Lindfield Montessori's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency [regulation 97(1){a}] are aware of the risk assessment for the excursion.

Families and Volunteers

- Families will be encouraged to participate in excursions to increase the number of responsible adults and assist in ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of children.
- Families and volunteers cannot be counted to meet ratio requirements under the Education and Care Services National Regulations.
- Family members wishing to attend will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out of Lindfield Montessori. If the responsible adult needs to bring their child's sibling because they cannot find suitable care, the responsibility provided to this adult will be adjusted accordingly and considered in the risk assessment.
- Family members/volunteers will not be left in sole charge of children (including their children) and must be always supervised by an educator.
- All responsible adults attending the excursion will be made aware of the service's policy and procedures that set out the instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency [regulation 97(1){a}] and are aware of the risk assessment for the excursion.

Travel Arrangements

Travel arrangements are made based on individual excursion requirements. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury. The following forms of transport are used:

Walking

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

Public Transport (buses, trains etc)

- All requirements for seatbelts or safety restraints under a law of each jurisdiction in which the children are being transported will be checked and followed for any

- transport being used.
- Every child will wear a seatbelt where one is fitted.

Conducting the Excursion

- All educators, volunteers and children attending will be informed of the excursion itinerary/timetable, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.
- A list of children on the excursion will be left at the service and a copy carried by the delegated responsible person.
- Before leaving on the excursion, a notice will be prominently displayed at the service which includes:
 - Itinerary and timetable
 - Mobile contact number
- Items to be taken on the excursion include:
 - A suitable stocked first aid kit including EpiPen
 - Hand sanitiser and any items to support hygienic practices
 - An operating mobile phone with an appropriate telephone network
 - Children's emergency contact numbers and the child's registered medical practitioner or medical service
 - Children's medication if required
 - Other items required such as sunscreen, drinking cups, jackets, hats etc.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Provider

- Ensuring that a child does not leave the service premises on an excursion unless prior written authorisation has been approved by the parent/guardian or person named in the child's enrolment record, and that the authorisation includes all details required under Regulation 102(4).
- Ensuring that educator-to-child ratios are always maintained including during excursions.
- Ensuring a staff member or nominated supervisor (other than the driver) being present at the service to account for all children as they embark and disembark at the service premises and keep a record of how each child was accounted for.
- Ensuring a check of the interior of the vehicle to ensure there are no children being left behind.
- Ensuring that parents/guardians, volunteers, students, and all adults participating in an excursion are adequately supervised at all times and are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children.

- Ensuring the risk assessment identifies and assesses the risks, specifies how these will be managed and/or minimised, and includes all details required by regulation 101.

Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person

- Implementing Approved Provider responsibilities as delegate (see above).
- A nominated supervisor or staff member (other than the driver) must:
 - be present when children embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises.
 - account for each child when they embark and disembark a vehicle at the service premises.
 - Complete a check of the interior of the vehicle after all children have disembarked at the service premises to ensure there are no children left in the vehicle.
- Ensuring that each child's personal medication and current medical management plan is taken on excursions and other off-site activities.
- Ensuring that a portable first aid kit (including required medication for dealing with medical conditions) is taken on excursions and other off-site activities.
- Ensuring a mobile phone, the emergency contact details for each child and the contact details of their medical practitioner are taken on excursions for notification in the event of an incident, injury, trauma, or illness.
- Ensuring an accurate roll of attendance is taken and checked regularly.

Early Childhood Educators

- Adhering to this policy.
- Checking that a parent/guardian or person named in the child's enrolment record has completed, signed and dated the excursion/service event authorisation form prior to the excursion.
- Allowing a child to participate in an excursion or service event only with the written authorisation of a parent/guardian or person named in the child's enrolment record.
- Ensuring an accurate roll of attendance is taken and checked regularly, including embarking and disembarking any means of transport.
- The records must be made immediately and include the time, date, full name, and signature of the person/s responsible for:
 - Accounting for the children during embarking and disembarking of the vehicle
 - Conducting the vehicle check after children have disembarked

- Always Maintaining the required educator-to-child ratios, and adequately supervising children during excursions and service events.
- Adequately supervising parents/guardians, volunteers, students, and all adults participating in an excursion, and ensuring that they are not left with sole supervision of individual children or groups of children.
- Undertaking a risk assessment for an excursion prior to obtaining written authorisation from parents/guardians.
- Ensuring the risk management identifies and assesses the risk, specifies how they will be managed and/or minimised, and includes all details required by regulation 101.
- Including all children in excursions and service events regardless of their abilities, additional needs, or medical conditions.
- Taking each child's personal medication and current medical management plan on excursions and other off-site activities.
- Taking a portable first aid kit (including all required medication for dealing with medical conditions) on excursions and other off-site activities.
- Taking an anaphylaxis EpiPen and asthma kit.

Families

- Completing, signing, and dating excursion /service event authorisation forms.
- Providing written authorisation for their child to leave the service premises on routine outings.
- Reading the details of the excursion or service event provided by the service and asking for additional information if required.
- Understanding that, if they participate in an excursion or service event, as a volunteer, that they will be always under the immediate supervision of the Responsible Person.

Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this policy every two years.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R.172 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.

Relevant Legislation	Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. Reg. 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 123, 168(2){g} Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 Work, Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011 Work, Health and Safety (WHS) Regulation 2011 Education and care Services National Amendment Regulations 2020 under the Education and Care services National Law Early Childhood Legislation Amendment Act 2022
Related to NQS QA	2.2 2.2.1 7.1.3
Related Policies	Work, Health and Safety Child Protection Water Safety First Aid Family Participation and Communication
Sources & Further Reading	Adapted from Community Early Learning Australia (CELA)

POLICY REVIEWED	MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE
May 2021	Checked regulations, updated copy	2023
October 2023	Updated copy in line with NQF updates	2025