Introduction

Bega Valley Shire Council education and care services recognise that children are connected to the community in many different and important ways. Excursions and incursions offer families and children an opportunity to explore, engage with and extend their links into the diverse people, resources and services that make up our community.

Strategies

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor will:

- Ensure excursions and incursions are undertaken following the established procedures and processes for risk assessment, planning, authorisation and approval.

Decide on an excursion

Excursions/incursions will be decided based on discussions with children, families and educators. In these discussions consideration will be given to the opportunities, benefits, disadvantages and risks associated with the proposed excursion. All excursions/incursions must be approved by the Nominated Supervisor. The following steps should be implemented to facilitate all excursions and incursions.

Planning

The Educational Leader will

- Undertake a risk assessment for each excursion or incursion.

The risk assessment will identify and assess the risks to the safety, health and well-being of any child or adult participating in the excursion and include measures to manage and minimise any identified risks. The risk assessment for each excursion or incursion will identify:

- The proposed venue and activities
- The time and duration
- The route and method of transport (where applicable)
- Any possible environmental risks for people taking part eg road safety, water activities or hazards, water safety, playground safety, dog attacks, medical emergency responses, sun-safety
- Numbers of children who can safely take part at any time
- Facilities available including food, drink, first aid, toilets
- Group dynamics that may impact on the excursion
- Required educator/ child or adult/ child ratios necessary to meet the National Education and Care Services Regulations
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o The Educational Leader/ Responsible Person who will go on the excursion
o Educator who will be designated as First Aid Officer for the excursion
o Telephone and emergency contact arrangements
o First aid kit and other resources that will be needed

The Educational Leader/ Responsible Person will:

• Submit the written risk assessment and action plan to the Nominated Supervisor for approval.
• Provide all educators and volunteers undertaking the excursion with a written copy of the excursion plan, risk assessment and management procedures
• Brief all educators and volunteers about their responsibilities within the plan
• Ensure that each educator or volunteer taking part has signed the written excursion or incursion plan indicating that they understand their role and responsibilities.
• Ensure each educator, performer or volunteer has undertaken the required Working with Children Checks.

The Nominated Supervisor will:

• Review the risk assessment and make any recommendations to improve the health, safety and well-being of participants
• Review the required staff numbers and identify any limitations on approval
• Approve or reject the excursion
• Advise the Approved Provider of the Excursion Plan and the decision to approve or reject.

Child staff ratios

The National Law and Regulations does not define educator: child ratios for excursions. The risk assessment should identify the number of adults: children based on learning outcomes, group and individual support needs and identified risk management strategies.

A guide provided by Bega Valley Shire Council education and care services to Educational Leaders undertaking a risk assessment for an excursion is as follows:

• one adult for each 2 children who are under 3 years of age
• one adult for each 5 children who are 3 or more years of age
• one adult for each 10 children who are attending school

>>> Unless otherwise indicated by the risk assessment.

Major roads

The required adult/child ratios for excursions that involve using public transport or crossing a major road will be:

• one adult for each 2 children who are under 3 years of age
• one adult for each 4 children who are 3 or more years of age
• one adult for each 10 children who are attending school

>>> Unless otherwise indicated by the risk assessment.
Water

The required adult/child ratios for excursions that involve a beach, river, lake or other place where there is a significant water hazard will be:

- one adult for each child who is under 3 years of age
- one adult for each 2 children who are 3 years of age or more
- one adult for each 5 children who normally attend school

>>> Unless otherwise indicated by the risk assessment

In addition at least 2 of the adults accompanying the children must have:

- a current senior first aid course (with resuscitation undertaken in the last 12 months)
- a Royal Life Saving Bronze Medallion Award or equivalent
- current knowledge and the ability to implement water safety procedures.

Organising and conducting

The Educational Leader/Responsible Person will ensure:

- The organising and conducting phase will consider transport, road safety, costs, resources, authorisations and briefing requirements for the excursion or incursion.

Transport requirements

Transport used for any excursion must meet travel safety standards. This means that all vehicles must be registered, insured, maintained, and have restraints approved by the Roads and Traffic Authority. Any driver of a vehicle must have a current approved licence.

Road safety requirements

All adults and children taking part in an excursion must practise road safety at all times. This means crossing roads and driveways at safe crossings, exiting vehicles on the safe side, holding hands with children and walking not running. Children will not be allowed to cross a road unless accompanied by an adult.

Costs

Some events may require families to make a small contribution towards the cost of the excursion or incursion. This will not be mandatory and no child will be excluded from an excursion or incursion because a contribution is not provided by their family.

Authorisations

All Educational Leader/Responsible Person will:

- provide all families with information about the excursion or incursion
- ensure all families have authorised their child’s participation prior to taking part. The authorisation will include:
  - The date, time and duration of the excursion or incursion
  - The size of the group taking part in the excursion or incursion
  - The venue, destination and purpose of the excursion or incursion
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- A description of activities that children may be involved in while on the excursion or incursion
- The method of transport and route that children will take on the excursion
- The educator: child ratio and number of additional adults who will accompany children or take part in the excursion or incursion
- The names of adults involved in the excursion or incursion
- An emergency contact number
- The name of the qualified First Aid person for the excursion or incursion
- Any costs associated with the excursion or incursion
- Notice that a risk assessment for the excursion/ incursion has been prepared and is available at the service

All families will

- be required to sign the excursion permission form and also authorise the staff of the child care centre on the excursion to obtain emergency medical, dental, and hospital treatment, and ambulance service for their child should this be necessary. No child can take part in an excursion or incursion without signed consent for the excursion/ incursion and for emergency responses by staff.

The Administrative Officer will:

- ensure all excursion records are filed and kept following records storage policy.

Where an excursion is a regular event, authorisation will be required once in each 12 month period.

Resources

The Educational Leader/ Responsible Person for the excursion will:

- Take an emergency first aid kit that also contains attendance roll and emergency response phone numbers and any child health emergency requirements (eg asthma, epilepsy, diabetic medications)
- Ensure all children and adults follow sun safety practices as detailed in the Bega Valley Shire Council’s SunSafe policy
- Provide identifying vests for educators involved in the excursion and name tags for children and other adults
- Take a roll before leaving, before returning and after returning from an excursion or incursion.

Briefing adults and children

The Educational Leader/ Responsible Person for the excursion will:

- Brief children and adults about the excursion and ensure each person is clear about directions, safety, expectations, behaviour and responsibilities.
- Designate a leader and rear walker if the excursion is on foot.
- Inform all children and adults will be informed of whose hands they will be holding, the safest route and any identified hazards or risks.
- Assign a support person to any child with additional support requirements. This person will be provided with instructions about how best to provide support to the child
- Advise all adults and children not to approach or interact with stray animals
Evaluating

Children, families and adults will:

- Review and evaluate each excursion after completion. The evaluation will consider:
  - the value and benefits of the excursion
  - the opportunities for additional learning, networking or exploration offered by the excursion
  - any problems, risks or hazards
  - any improvements for future excursions
- Make recommendations to the Nominated Supervisor and the Approved Provider about future excursions based on the review.

Evaluation

All excursions and incursions are beneficial to children’s learning and community connections. Excursions are conducted in a safe manner and evaluated by participants.

Legislative requirements

- Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011.

References

- Bega Valley Shire Council, Child protection policy, Operational Draft, June 2012
- Bega Valley Shire Council, Acceptance and refusal of authorisation, Operational Draft, June 2012
- Bega Valley Shire Council, Workplace health and safety. Online: www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au
- Community Child Care Co-operative, Sample Policy, Excursions