STUDENT SUPERVISION – OFFSITE ACTIVITIES

Offsite activities include:

- excursions
- camps (includes study camps and any activity involving overnight stays)
- tours
- off-campus activities such as attendance at sporting fixtures Eg. M.C.G

Offsite activities must be prepared well in advance so that adequate time is given to the thorough planning of all aspects of the activity. Teachers planning such an activity must fill in an “Approval Form for Excursions” available in the staff handbook.

The duty of care of a teacher to protect students in his or her charge from risks of injury that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen applies during offsite activities. There are numerous examples of teachers and schools being held negligent, e.g. for students being injured when unloading equipment from a trailer; for students being injured on bush walks; and for students being burned when a tent catches on fire.

During any offsite activity the teacher has responsibility for the safety of the students from the moment of departure to the moment of dismissal from the activity, which usually occurs when the students are returned to their parents/guardians.

The necessity to provide a duty of care should be a guiding factor in the planning of all offsite activities.

Procedures

- A tour leader and deputy tour leader who are teachers on staff have been appointed.
- Supervisors’ duties and responsibilities to have been documented.
- Appropriate and minimum staff/student ratios have been established, including for adventure activities, taking into account extra staff that may be required for foreseeable emergencies.
- A list of participating students and accompanying supervisors has been compiled.
- Details of home contact names, addresses and emergency phone numbers for students and supervisors have been compiled.
- Details of all transport arrangements including phone numbers of providers have been documented.

It also shows that the activity has been sufficiently planned and prepared for and is in accordance with relevant guidelines.

During the planning phase, consideration should be given to the following main elements:

- teaching and learning
- risk management
- emergency management
- human resources
- physical resources (i.e. equipment).

Teaching and learning includes:

- establishing the purpose of the activity
- determining the educational program.

Risk management includes:

- identifying and assessing risks and hazards associated with the activity and designing appropriate management strategies
- being well prepared
- preventing accidents/incidents
- responding to circumstances
- recovering from accidents/incidents.

Emergency management includes:

- establishing contingency plans that document the arrangements to cancel, relocate, recall or otherwise change the offsite activity in the event of extreme weather (including bushfires)
- entering details of the offsite activity into the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Student Activity Locator database.

Human resources includes:

- ensuring that at all times there is a teacher in charge and there are sufficient numbers of staff present
- ensuring that the ratio of staff to students reflects the nature of the risks involved
- ensuring that staff or volunteers of both sexes are present if students of both sexes are participating
• ensuring that all volunteers have undergone a Working with Children Check and, if necessary, a National Criminal History Record Check
• making satisfactory arrangements for those students not attending the activity, including sufficient work and adequate supervision by a teacher.

Physical resources includes:

• preparing an equipment inventory, which includes any equipment provided by students or others.