



Policy Name: Educational Visits and Field Trips (Excursions)	
Policy Code:	ED19
Approved in:	June 2014
Next Review in:	June 2017
Cross References: Volunteers (2013); Public Service Management Law (2010 Revision)	

INTRODUCTION:

The Ministry of Education recognises that the experiences of students outside the school grounds contribute to the development of their understandings, skills and attitudes. The provision of opportunities for students to learn from the wider community builds on and reinforces the school curriculum. Excursions are an important means of providing such opportunities.

The Ministry of Education encourages schools to conduct well planned off school site activities that are integrated with learning programs. Activities conducted outside the relatively protective environment of the school site involve greater risk. Therefore particular attention must be given to ensuring the safety and welfare of all excursion participants.

Aims:

This policy aims to clarify the procedures to be followed in the provision of excursions to ensure that they are safe and educationally beneficial.

Policy Statement:

1. The Ministry of Education recognises an excursion as any student-learning activity conducted off the site of the school, at which the student is enrolled, that is organised or managed by a member of the teaching staff employed by the Ministry of Education or managing authority and has gained the appropriate approval(s).
2. This policy governs excursions which are usually taken during the normal school year (September to June inclusive). Excursions taken during vacations, organised through the school Parent Teachers Association or other body, are not authorised by the Ministry, and cannot be advertised as such in the name of the school.
3. The minimum level of approval for all excursions is that of the Principal.
4. For an international excursion, the additional level of approval required is that of the Chief Education Officer.
5. Any unauthorized excursions organised and/or conducted by government staff in the name of the school will be classified as misconduct on the part of the members of staff involved.
6. Parents or guardians of students must be given clear and comprehensive details of the excursion and their consent for the participation of their children must be obtained before the excursion.



7. Principals are responsible for ensuring that the management plan for an excursion addresses the risk factors that may exist for both students and supervisors.
8. Demonstrable efforts should be made to make authorized trips affordable and accessible to all students.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Ministry of Education will:

- Establish educational policy in relation to school excursions, in consultation with key stakeholders;
- Provide guidance documents and advice to support implementation of this policy by the Department of Education Services and schools;
- Ensure endorsement of the policy by Education Council prior to implementation;
- Distribute and promote awareness of this policy, related guidance documents and procedures.

The Department of Education Services will:

- Ensure the effective implementation of this policy by:
 - Establishing clear expectations, timelines and accountabilities for DES officers and school staff;
 - Monitoring the compliance of schools with this policy and taking action to remediate non-compliance;
 - Reporting any issues arising from the implementation of this policy to the Ministry in a timely manner;
 - Brokering any additional support required.

School leaders will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the national policy and its implications for their practice;
- Ensure all staff have access to copies of the national policy;
- Develop a school excursion code of practice, in consultation with their school community, particularly the Parents and Teachers Association, that conforms to the remit of the ministry excursion policy and procedures;
- Ensure their school's excursion code of practice is consistently implemented within their school
- Document, and communicate to their Senior School Improvement Officer, any significant issues arising from the implementation of this policy.

School staff will

- Make themselves aware of the national policy and its implications for their practice;



- Support the effective implementation of the policy and school's code of practice and fulfil their identified roles.

GUIDANCE

1. General

1.1 The principal must authorise a teacher to be in charge of an excursion and approve the management plan for the excursion.

1.2 The teacher-in-charge is required to prepare an Excursion Management Plan for the proposed excursion, which will provide an account of the:

- risks relevant to the:
 - environment;
 - transport arrangements;
 - students' capacity in relation to activities;
 - capabilities of the supervisor/supervisory team; and
 - involvement of external providers.
- supervision strategies;
- means of identifying excursion participants;
- information to be provided to parents/guardians for their consent;
- communication strategies;
- emergency response planning; and
- briefing for excursion participants

1.3 The teacher-in-charge must complete the checklist (Appendix A) and submit it to the principal for endorsement.

2. Assess risks

In the Excursion Management Plan, the teacher-in-charge is required to conduct a risk analysis of the:

- A. environment;
- B. transport arrangements;
- C. level of each student's capacity in relation to activities to be conducted;
- D. capabilities of the supervisor/supervisory team;
- E. involvement of external providers.



A. Assess the environment

A.1 The teacher-in-charge must determine the suitability of the venue relative to the students' skills and experience, the planned activities and the supervision required.

The Teacher-in-Charge may make inquiries about venue conditions by contacting:

- the Department of Environment or the National Trust (for natural sites such as beaches or forests);
- the tour organiser(s)
- the environmental health or building services department;
- Fire and Emergency Services or the Police Service;

A.2 It is recommended that commercial buildings used for an overnight accommodation have illuminated exit points.

A.3 The food preparation areas should be clean and the sleeping areas well ventilated. A sufficient number of well maintained toilet facilities should be available.

A.4 When for a venue is selected for an overnight stay, and it is not known whether rooms have smoke detectors or carbon monoxide detectors, the school should communicate this to the parent or guardian and require a signed waiver of responsibility.

A.5 Where students are to be billeted, the teacher-in-charge must:

- advise the parent in the host family of their responsibilities;
- receive a statement from the parent in the host family giving an assurance to provide a safe and secure home environment for each billeted student including undertakings that:
 - for host families that reside in The Cayman Islands each adult in the household who performs duties for the billeted child must have applied for, or hold a valid Police Clearance;
 - for host families that reside outside of The Cayman Islands, each member in the household must comply with the relevant child protection legislation in the state in which the excursion is occurring;
 - the household members do not have criminal convictions that may preclude the host family from billeting a student;
 - the accommodation includes:
 - private bedroom or one shared with one or more students of the same gender;
 - private bathing and toilet facilities;
 - consideration is given to any special requirements (e.g. avoidance of asthma triggers);
 - the student will not be exposed to passive smoking; and
 - a nominated member of the supervisory team will be notified of any travel by the student involving an overnight stay during the period of the billet.
- ensure that a nominated member of the supervisory team:



- is contactable for the duration of the billet;
- contacts the student(s) regularly during the period of the billet; and
- has access to transport in order to visit the student(s) at short notice.

B. Assess transport arrangements

B.1 The teacher-in-charge must:

- make arrangements for the safe transport of excursion participants;
- include details for transporting students to and/or from the school/venue(s) in the information for parents/guardians.

B.2 The nominated member of the supervisory team must:

- acknowledge the arrival and approve the departure of the student from the venue when parents/guardians have given approval for their child to make their own transport arrangements to and/or from a venue;
- be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the student to safely reach their destination, if a student is required to leave an excursion prior to the scheduled time.

B.3 The principal must:

- verify that school staff who drive student buses and minibuses hold a valid license;
- confirm that Department vehicles including buses and motor vehicles are only driven by authorised Department staff;
- authorise any use of private vehicles for student travel;
- submit a claim to Risk Management if an accident occurs;
- verify that employees using their own vehicles to transport students have comprehensive motor vehicle insurance cover;
- verify that written permission from the parent(s) of the student(s) being transported has been obtained
- verify that transport by air is confined to recognised commercial operators

B.4 In the case of bus travel, it is recommended that at least one supervisor travel on each bus, in addition to the driver.

B.5 Private vehicles should only be used when there is no other option.

B.6 It is recommended that all school-owned buses, and charter buses hired for excursions, should be seat belt compliant. If such a bus is not available, the principal should make a risk assessment of use of a non-seat belt compliant vehicle.



C. Assess the students' capacity

C.1 The teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the excursion activities do not exceed the skill level of students.

C.2 The teacher-in-charge must be aware of student health care maintenance and/or intensive health care needs.

C.3 A reassessment of students' capacity must be undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the excursion activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the environment, or in the medical fitness (e.g. conditions such as asthma or epilepsy) or capacity of the students to undertake the activity.

C.4 Alternative activities or extra support must be arranged for those students who wish to take part in the excursion but do not have the prerequisite skills for the planned activity.

C.5 Alternative arrangements are to be made for any student who does not participate in an excursion. In the planning and conduct of an excursion, the teacher-in-charge must take into account students' cultural requirements.

D. Assess the skills of the supervisor/supervisory team

D.1 The teacher-in-charge must ensure that there is a supervisor/supervisory team with appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during an excursion. Adults, who are not teachers, but who possess the appropriate experience, competencies and/or qualifications, can be supervisors.

D.2 Collectively, the supervisory team must have the skills to:

- identify and establish a safe activity environment;
- effect a rescue and render emergency care (at a minimum have a current first aid certificate);
- monitor and respond to weather and environmental conditions before and during excursion activities; and
- monitor and assess the physical well being of the students.

D.3 Where a member of the non-teaching staff, an external provider or a volunteer agree to perform tasks that require them to personally care for students in the absence of a member of the teaching staff, the teacher-in-charge must consider the suitability of that adult for the task being assigned taking into account the:

- number of students involved;
- age, experience and capabilities of the students;
- activities to be undertaken;
- characteristics of the venue; and



- health status, skills, and experience of the adult.

D.4 Non-teaching staff, volunteers and external providers have a right to refuse a request to personally care for students and to have their decision respected by members of the teaching staff. However, a member of the non-teaching staff may have limited scope to refuse a request from a member of the teaching staff to personally care for students if, by reason of their Job Description Form, the request relates to a task that he or she is required to perform as part of his or her normal duties.

D.5 Principals must confirm that all Department employees, volunteers, visitors and external providers in child-related work have been requested to provide assurance of a valid Police Clearance (Appendix E).

D.6 The role of supervisors will be determined by the teacher-in-charge.

E. Assess the involvement of external providers

E.1 Where an external provider is engaged, the teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the external provider is competent.

E.2 For on-island excursions, external providers (and their staff) involved in activities with students, must have a current Police Clearance. This includes bus drivers.

E.3 The teacher-in-charge and the manager of the venue/external provider must clearly establish the respective responsibilities of their staff.

E.4 For on-island excursions, the teacher-in-charge must inquire whether the selected external provider(s) has the appropriate level of public liability insurance.

E.5 Excursions may involve use of the services of other government agencies or private companies. In such cases staff must not sign indemnities, disclaimers or other documents provided by the agencies or companies which absolve them from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions.

3. Develop means of identifying excursion participants

3.1 The teacher-in-charge is to decide on a suitable system(s) of identification for excursion participants based on the assessment of the environment, students' skills, the type of activities to be undertaken, and the number of students.

3.2 Systems for identifying students include the wearing of:

- school shirts, uniforms
- school hats
- name tags
- neoprene armbands



3.3 Each identification system may be used in combination with others.

4. Provide information and seek consent

4.1 Parent/guardian consent (see Appendix B) is required for all excursions. Information must be provided to parents/guardians to enable them to make informed decisions about their children's participation in an excursion (see Appendix C). This provides them with the opportunity to exclude their children and helps protect school personnel because parents have been made aware of the nature of the excursion. While written parental consent is necessary, this consent does not indemnify the school nor relieve supervisors of their duty of care responsibilities.

4.2 Where it is not possible to obtain parental/guardian consent because of the living arrangements of a student, consent can be sought from any other person considered appropriate by the principal. If no other person is available, the principal may exercise his/her discretion to allow the student to agree to the conditions pertaining to the excursion. The reasons for exercising such discretion must be exceptional.

4.3 Consent for recurring excursions to specified venues may be obtained at the beginning of the year or at the commencement of the particular unit of study to which the excursions are related. The teacher-in-charge should be mindful of the possibility of changes to students' health from one week to the next.

4.4 Parents/guardians must be given information related to any proposed excursion well in advance of the date of the excursion. This information must include full details of:

- the purpose of the excursion;
- date(s);
- activities to be undertaken;
- duration of activity(s);
- location of activity(s) (including alternative venues);
- student contact arrangements during the excursion;
- transport arrangements;
- cost;
- supervision to be provided (number of supervisors and number of students);
- staff action in case of student accident or illness on the excursion;
- liability for loss or damage to student property and medical costs incurred in case of accident or illness; and
- special clothing or other items required.

4.5 Students participating in an excursion must not be permitted to engage in additional or alternative activities for which parental approval has not been gained.

Parents/guardians must be reminded to provide information about any changes to their children's health or fitness prior to the commencement of an excursion.



4.6 Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation, schools should endeavour to seek financial assistance.

4.7 The teacher-in-charge should ensure that parents and guardians of culturally and linguistically diverse students are provided with all necessary information regarding the excursion.

5. Develop communication strategies

5.1 Excursion management planning must include the development of a communication strategy that enables regular communication amongst all members of the group. The strategy must clearly identify a signal for gaining the full group's attention.

5.2 An emergency signal must be selected and explained to all participants, and responses to it rehearsed both before and immediately prior to commencement of the excursion.

The communication strategy must enable contact with on-site and off-site support services. An alternative mode of communication must be available in case of the failure of the primary communication method.

6. Complete emergency response planning

6.1 The teacher-in-charge must develop or obtain a response plan that will ensure access to emergency support without compromising the safety and welfare of the group or of a casualty.

6.2 The teacher-in-charge is to ensure that emergency procedures, including emergency signals, are clearly understood by all students and supervisors.

6.3 All supervisors must be familiar with the evacuation procedures to be followed and, where appropriate, the location of emergency equipment.

6.4 During an excursion a nominated supervisor must have ready access to:

- a list of the names of participating students and their parent/guardian contact telephone numbers;
- the Student Health Forms (Appendix D) and Health Care Authorisations of those students who are known to have particular health requirements; and
- relevant health information of supervisors.

6.5 A copy of all planning documents must remain with the school.



6.6 For excursions involving an overnight stay, the teacher-in-charge must ensure that a copy of the planning documents, including all Student Health Forms and Health Care Authorisations, are taken on the excursion, with a further copy being provided to the principal.

6.7 For excursions undertaken during school vacations, students' names, addresses (home and away), contact telephone numbers and the itinerary for the excursion are to be provided to the Department of Education Services.

7. Brief students and supervisors

7.1 The teacher-in-charge is responsible for ensuring that all relevant information about respective responsibilities and obligations is clearly communicated to students and supervisors. Topics that must be included are:

- emergency procedures and signals;
- methods of communication;
- appropriate use of any equipment;
- roles of supervisors;
- the system for identifying students and supervisors;
- areas demarcated specifically for identified student groups; and
- standards of acceptable behaviour.

7.2 Special information sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory excursion briefings.

7.3 The consumption of alcohol or of drugs that will impair the judgement of supervisors during an excursion is prohibited.

7.4 The policy for the use of tobacco during an excursion must be consistent with those that apply in the school setting.

8. Retain record of excursion(s)

8.1 Details relating to all excursions are to be retained by the school). Details of the Excursion are to include the:

- signed management plan;
- names of planning and authorising staff;
- names of participants;
- a brief description of the excursion; and
- parent consent forms.



9. Gain approval(s)

9.1 The written endorsement of the principal of the school attended by participating students must be obtained for an excursion to gain approved status.

9.2 Proposals for international excursions must additionally gain the written approval of the Chief Education Officer

9.3 For all excursions the documentation provided, must include:

- a brief description of the purpose of the excursion;
- a detailed plan regarding the travel, accommodation (where appropriate) and supervisory arrangements, to include the procedures to be followed in the event of termination of a student's participation on an excursion.
- the individual cost, and source of funding for the excursion;
- names, addresses (home and away), and contact details of students and supervisors;
- (For international travel) details of medical and other insurances for all excursion participants
- relevant medical action plans for each student and supervisor undertaking the travel;
- a copy of the Checklist for Excursions (see Appendix A) bearing the principal's signature;
- a supporting statement from the principal;
- an out-of-hours (including holiday) contact telephone number of a member of the teaching staff (not on the excursion) who is familiar with the excursion participants and itinerary details.

9.4 The principal of the school attended by participating students (and in the case of overseas excursions, additionally the CEO) must:

- be satisfied that the plan appropriately addresses safety standards and duty of care responsibilities before forwarding the information to parents/guardians;
- be satisfied that the teacher-in-charge has the appropriate skills and experience to organise the excursion and provide for the management of events that may arise during the excursion;
- be satisfied that the student(s) is sufficiently responsible and reliable to participate in the excursion;
- Have ensured that that a list of students participating in the trip has been submitted to Risk Management before the excursion (domestic & international) in order for the student travel accident policy to apply.

9.5 The consent form (Appendix B) bearing the parent/guardian(s) signature must be returned to the school and subsequently, it (or a photocopy), forwarded to the teacher-in-charge. A copy must be retained by the school.

9.6 For overseas excursions the names, addresses and contact details of all participants must additionally be lodged with the DES.



9.7 Police clearances are not required for external providers who reside and provide services overseas. However, the teacher-in-charge should indicate to the principal of participating schools the steps that have been taken to establish the propriety of such providers.

9.8 The teacher-in-charge of an international excursion is not required to provide evidence enquire of the level of public liability insurance of external providers located overseas but should take steps to establish the propriety of such providers.

9.9 Where there are concerns related to the state of the international political climate which may lead to the decision to postpone or cancel an International Excursion, then the decision to proceed, postpone or cancel an International Excursion should be made by the principals of participating schools in consultation with parents/guardians of the participating students and the Department of Education Services.

9.10 Where the Department of Education Services does not deem the destination to be a risk to participants but parents/guardians do, their consent for their son/daughter to participate may be withdrawn.

9.11 Where a Government school employee has responsibility for organising an approved international excursion that involves students from Government schools, CIG public liability insurance may apply. Please note that Public Liability is subject to North American exclusion, so liability arising from trips to the USA and Canada are excluded, save Workers' Compensation/Employer's Liability.

9.12 Where a non-Government school employee has responsibility for organising an international excursion that involves students from Government schools, the public liability insurance for that excursion will not be supplied by CIG public liability insurance.

9.13 Volunteer workers who, with the approval of the principal, have a supervisory role during an educational excursion are not covered during performance of duties by CIG personal accident insurance or by public liability insurance. There is no insurance cover for loss of or damage to their personal property. Appropriate, externally provided, cover should therefore be obtained.

9.13 Participants (teachers, other adults and students) on those excursions that do not gain the appropriate approval(s) do not access the CIG insurance policy. Liability rests with the organiser. Wherever possible in such cases recognition that liability does not rest with the CIG should be obtained through a signed waiver returned to school principal.

9.14 Teachers who arrange excursions without ensuring this policy is followed could be individually liable in the event of an accident. In such circumstances, if it can be shown that staff have acted in 'bad faith' (see Public Service Management Law (2011) section 64 and 65) they may not be afforded the Department's protection under the principle of vicarious liability (i.e. where an employer bears the cost of damages resulting from an employee's negligence). Similarly, staff may not be covered by Workers' Compensation if they are injured while involved in an excursion activity that does not have the official approval of the principal.



MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT
& GENDER AFFAIRS
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Government Administration Building Box 108
133 Elgin Avenue Grand Cayman KY1-9000
CAYMAN ISLANDS
t. (345) 244 2417 f. (345) 949 9343
www.education.gov.ky

10. Privately arranged activities

10.1 Principals must ensure that staff and parents are aware of the distinction between “approved” excursions and privately arranged activities. In particular, principals must ensure that staff and parents/guardians are aware that privately arranged activities are not approved by the school and that, accordingly, neither the school nor the Department of Education Services will accept any responsibility for students or staff members who choose to participate. Rather, the responsibility for the activity will rest entirely with the individual who arranges the activity in his/her private capacity.