Sunshine Heights Primary School
Draft - Excursion Policy

Rationale:

Excursions capture the notion of curiosity and exploration. Our goal as a school is to provide every child with the opportunity to experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of their learning, and personal and social development. Learning is more than the acquisition of facts and knowledge. It is also about improving understanding and personal development.

Learning experiences outside the classroom provide a vehicle to develop a student's capacity to learn. They provide a framework for learning that uses the surroundings and communities outside the classroom. This enables students to construct their own learning and live successfully in the world that surrounds them.

Learning experiences outside the classroom are often the most memorable and remain with a student into their adulthood. They enable a student to transfer learning experienced outside the classroom to the classroom and vice versa.

Definition:

An excursion is defined as any activity beyond the school grounds.

Implementation:

School councils are responsible for approving overnight excursions, camps, adventure activities, interstate and overseas trips, excursions involving sea or air travel, and excursions involving weekends or vacations. In approving a camp, excursion or trip, school councils must be satisfied that adequate planning and preparation has been taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the students involved. The DEECD approved document must be completed by the teacher in charge of the activity and submitted to school council for approval. The proforma is located on the Departments website. The proforma details the minimum requirements for approval and should be submitted to the principal. The above information will be provided to the Principal at least a week before the School Council meeting date.

Three weeks prior to the excursion teachers must also submit a Notification of School Activity form (secure website - user name PIN and password required).

Planning Summary:

The planning summary provides an overview of four issues that will be considered before undertaking detailed planning of an outdoor or adventure-based program. This summary is used in the initial stages of planning for the proposed excursion or program, and before bookings are made and dates are confirmed.

Prior to departure, prepared documentation that might assist with emergency management will be lodged with the principal and the designated 24-hour school contact person.

Purpose:

Teachers will consider the educational benefits that students will gain and how they relate to the school's curriculum.
Environment:

The environment in which an activity is conducted is one of the most dynamic elements of the excursion. Teachers will assess the opportunities and challenges that are reasonably foreseeable in the environment in which the excursion will be operating.

Transport arrangements will comply with Schools Reference Guide 4.10 (Transport) (PDF - 57Kb) and VicRoads regulations.

Activities:

The activities undertaken as part of the program will support the educational purpose. Teacher in charge will follow specific guidelines for any activity they will be offering students, to carefully develop detailed risk management plans.

People:

Teacher in charge will ensure students have the capacity to manage the range of challenges that the proposed experience may present. They will prepare them adequately, and provide information that will allow for informed consent to be provided. Effective supervision and instruction framework will be developed. The school council must give formal approval for your detailed plans.

Documentation that would assist with emergency management must be prepared and lodged with the principal and a designated 24-hour school contact person prior to your departure.

The schedule of excursions, including costs, will be distributed in a February edition of the school newsletter, and will be updated on a needs basis.

School Council will determine an ‘Excursions Levy’ each year. Parents can bulk pay for the year’s excursions or pay for individual excursions as they occur. To assist in this matter, parents a have an opportunity to sign over their “EMA” cheque if applicable.

All endeavours will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend an excursion, will be required to discuss their individual situation with the Principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Principal on a case-by-case basis.

Payments for excursions need to be finalised by the due date stated on the permission form.

All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for excursions.

Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide classroom teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.

A designated ‘Teacher in Charge’ and/or Team will coordinate each excursion.

Prior to any child attending an excursion, parents/guardians must have provided to the school a signed permission form, a signed “Confidential Medical Information” form, and must have paid the costs involved (unless other arrangements have been made).
Classroom teachers will be given the first option to attend excursions.

The school will continue to provide the opportunity for staff to update their first aid skills.

The school will provide a mobile phone and a first-aid kit for all excursions.

Copies of completed Permission forms, and signed “Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved Excursions” forms must be carried by excursion staff at all times.

A senior staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from any out-of-school-hours excursion. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person with regards the anticipated return time.

**Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement in an excursion will depend on:

- Type of excursion
- Student ratio

When deciding on whether parents will be required to attend an excursion, the Teacher in Charge will take into account:

- Any valuable skills the parents have to offer. e.g. bus licence, first aid etc
- The need to include both male and female parents.
- The special needs of particular students.
- Parent has a ‘Working with Children’s Check’.

Parents selected to assist with an excursion may be required to pay costs associated with the excursion.

Only children who have consistently demonstrated the values of the school will be invited to participate in school excursions. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the student, student’s parents, classroom teacher and the Teacher in Charge. Factors that will be taken into account when excluding a student include: safety of self, safety of others.

**Evaluation:**

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

*Policy ratified by School Council on:*

*Policy to be reviewed in 2014*