



The Meeting House Inc

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Excursions

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Updated:

Aim: To ensure that excursions are planned and conducted in a safe manner, taking into consideration the age, skills and abilities of the children, the mode of transport to be used and the identified risks of such excursions.

Background Information:

Excursions are essential in the provision of high quality children's services programs. Well planned quality excursions should challenge, educate and expose children to a range of experiences and opportunities enabling them to extend their abilities and explore their world.

Important Notes:

For this policy "staff" refers to staff employed by The Meeting House Kindergarten.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following MHI policies:

- Sun Protection
- Water Safety

At no time are staff or educators to take children attending the preschool on an excursion for the purpose of water activities, such as swimming, fishing or boating.

Whilst excursions for this age are not to be conducted at a lake, river, or beach it is possible that another excursion will bring children into contact with bodies of water, such as the pond at the zoo. It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor/Director to identify these in the risk assessment and apply appropriate control to safely manage the children at this time.

The Education and Care Services National Regulations provide specific requirements in the conduct and preparation of excursions for all education and care services.

Relevant Legislation and Standards:

Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011. Children (Education and Care Services National Law Application) Act 2010 and Care Services National Regulations.

Practices:

An excursion is defined as an outing organised by The Meeting House Kindergarten. They may be regular outings undertaken on a regular basis to a particular place within the local community such as the local park or library or a one off excursion such as a visit to the zoo.

Planning of excursions:

When planning excursions staff and educators are to consider the appropriateness of such excursions, taking into account the following:

- Age and abilities of the children attending.
- The educational and/or recreational purpose of the excursion.
- Suitability of the venue and access including wheelchairs if required.
- Access to food, drink and other facilities.
- Where the venue is outdoors the amount of shade available.
- Any specific clothing, safety requirements and equipment needs.
- Any identified risks associated with the excursion.

Risk assessment

The preparation of a risk assessment is required to be conducted prior to an excursion being undertaken and permission sought from parents for the excursion to take place. This will help staff and educators to identify and assess any potential hazard, including water hazards, measure that risk and determine the level of required management associated with any excursion.

The Director in consultation with the Senior Co-ordinator is required to make a determination as to whether the excursion is to proceed based on the outcome of the risk assessment.

Staff and educators are required to be acquainted with the proposed venue and become familiar with the route to that venue before determining whether the excursion is appropriate.

All risk assessments should be based on the location and condition of the venue as well as hazards that are visible en route to the venue, manner or mode of transport to the venue and potential hazards within the venue. Consideration must be given but not be limited to the following:

- Proposed route and destination for the excursion.
- Any water hazards and associated risk.
- The mode of transport to and from the venue.
- The number of adults and children that will be involved in the excursion.
- Given the risks the excursion may pose, the number of educators or other adults that is determined to be appropriate to provide supervision and any specialised skills required.
- The proposed activity.
- The proposed duration.
- The items that should be taken on the excursion.

Other considerations may include:

- Weather conditions that may impact on the safety of the excursion
- The height and repair of any play equipment and surrounding fall zone.
- The safety of crossing roads and availability of pedestrian lights.
- The proximity to road hazards
- Appropriateness of fencing provided at the venue, such as a park.

Permission for excursions

Parents/guardians are to be given information about the proposed excursion and staff must obtain their written permission prior to their child being allowed to go on the excursion.

Written authorisation is to include:

- The child's name
- The date of the excursion

- The purpose of the excursion
- The proposed destination
- The method of transport or walking itinerary
- The activities to be carried out during the excursion
- The proposed length of time during which the excursion is to take place.
- The number of children that may attend the excursion.
- The number of adults to accompany and supervise the children (ratio of staff to children).
- If practical an emergency contact number for the excursion i.e. mobile phone number

Adult to staff ratios

When determining the number of adults required to attend an excursion, for the purpose of supervision, staff and educators are required to adhere to the ratios as detailed below:

0 - 3 year old 1:2, 3 – 5 year olds 1:4

If an excursion has been planned and the required number of adults is not available on the day the excursion is to be cancelled or postponed until such time as the required number of adults can be present.

Conduct of Excursion

Staff/educators are to ensure that the following information and equipment is taken on the excursion:

- A fully stocked first aid kit
- Individual Asthma medication for children who have submitted an Asthma Action plan.
- Individual medication for children who have been identified as anaphylactic
- A list of contact numbers for parents, emergency contacts.
- A mobile phone

Depending on the nature of the excursion

- Individual drinking bottles
- Hats, sunscreen & tissues
- Where snacks are to be provided a list of food allergies.
- Staff/educators will not change the itinerary of the excursion unless it is in the best interests of the children's safety.