

RISK INFORMATION – SCHOOLS OVERSEAS TRIPS

Overseas trips are offered by schools to enable students to participate in learning experiences outside of the usual classroom environment. As a consequence of not being in the classroom, new and unusual risks may be encountered and will need to be managed in order that students and staff remain safe.

The Risk Information contained in this paper is intended to assist schools in establishing safe procedures for conducting overseas trips.

This document should be read in conjunction with Risk Information Schools – Parental permission Forms, available on the Baptist Insurance Services website.

Duty of care applies; the school (and teachers) must take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of students under their care.

Define educational expectations of the trip.

Plan the trip including an overall risk assessment of the trip.

Ensure all school internal approval processes have been completed prior to advertising the trip to parents and students.

Arrange an Information evening for parents and students who are considering participation on the trip. The meeting should outline educational objectives, itinerary, cost etc. It should also provide a frank outline of risk and proposed risk mitigation plans. Copies of the information will need to be provided to all potential participants who may not be able to attend the information meeting.

Allow adequate time for families to budget for the trip.

Obtain parent permission for trip (provide sufficient information for informed decision to be made, including the nature of any significant risks and proposed control measures).

Obtain student agreement to “abide by behavioural expectations”.

Ensure each participant has appropriate Travel Insurance, including unlimited Medical Benefits cover with full Medical Evacuation cover. If this has not been arranged by the school, ensure that a Certificate of Currency or Policy Schedule has been sighted for each participant.

Ensure health and vaccination requirements are satisfied, documentary evidence should be sighted.

The information provided is of a general nature only and may not identify all matters that need to be included in the design of effective controls for the subject area. Professional advice should be obtained on individual circumstances.

RISK INFORMATION – SCHOOLS OVERSEAS TRIPS

Passport and visa details should be confirmed before departure (in time to allow follow-up, if necessary).

Register the trip with DFAT.

Subscribe to DFAT automatic travel advice updates.

Prepare an emergency response plan; include actions to be taken in the event of teacher / leader incapacity.

The travellers should have reliable communications equipment; utilise locally purchased Sim or satellite phone.

Comply with DFAT Travel advisories.

Leaders should take copies of each student's registration form

Ensure that there is an adequate leader to student ratio; minimum of 2 teachers. For more than 20 students, there should be a minimum ratio of 1 leader to 10 students or part thereof. Other accompanying adults may substitute for some teachers (no more than 50%). A male teacher should accompany male students; a female teacher should accompany female students.

All accompanying adults are to undergo police and working with children checks prior to departure.

Ensure students with disabilities are appropriately supported.

Develop, communicate and enforce standards in relation to:

- Culture
- Security
- Appropriate attire
- Behaviour

Activities arrangements (including supervision) must take into account the age, maturity and ability of students. Where swimming or water sports are involved, students' swimming competency must be certified by parents.

Prepare separate risk management plans for any planned "adventure" activities; ensure such activities are covered by travel insurance.

Staff / Leaders must be suitably skilled for their role.

At least one teacher must be first aid trained and a first aid kit must be carried.

RISK INFORMATION – SCHOOLS OVERSEAS TRIPS

Where students are to be billeted, the following conditions must be met:

- Proposed arrangements must be agreed to by parents
- Home hosts must be deemed suitable by the host school
- Host contact details must be provided to parents
- Single gender sleeping arrangements should be provided including access to private washing and toilet arrangements
- Accompanying teacher(s) should monitor billeting during the trip – either by visiting or phone calls; contact should be daily
- Emergency arrangements (including contact) should be provided to students and parents prior to the trip

Any proposed use of private motor vehicles should be clarified for parents and leaders before leaving. Minimum requirements should be determined for each category set-out below (to be enforced by Leaders):

- Driver experience / competence
- Vehicle roadworthiness
- Number of passengers per vehicle
- Written parental permission for private vehicle travel
- Licence and insurance appropriate

Refer to the article by David Ford (see References below) for a discussion of the risks of off campus activities in general.

RISK INFORMATION – SCHOOLS OVERSEAS TRIPS

References

“Safety, Emergency and Risk Management”, Victorian Department of Education and early Childhood Development,

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursionsafety.aspx>

“Overseas Excursions Policy”, ACT Education and Training,

http://www.det.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/19477/Overseas_Excursions_Policy_updated.pdf

“Overseas excursions advice and application pack”, NSW Education & Communities,

http://www.docstoc.com/docs/30141897/os_excursdoc---NSW-Department-of-Education-and-Training-Home-Page

David Ford, “Beyond the Campus: Is it too risky?”, May 2005, Emil Ford & Co – Lawyers,

<http://www.emilford.com.au/imagesDB/wysiwyg/BeyondtheCampus.pdf>