

EXCURSIONS POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Excursions and outings provide opportunities to expand children's experiences, explore different environments, participate in a range of activities and develop new skills.

Aim

- To ensure compliance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, specifically Part 4.2 Children's Health and Safety, Division 6 Collection of children from premises and excursions, clause 99 Children leaving the education and care service premises, clause 100 Risk assessment must be conducted before excursion, clause 101 Conduct of risk assessment for excursion, and clause 102 Authorisation for excursions.
- To keep children in care safe during outings with the educator.
- To protect the educator from the possibility of litigation in the event of an injury to a child.
- To protect and enhance the professional reputation and public profile of individual educators and the Clarence Family Day Care Scheme.

Rationale

Excursions and outings away from the registered care premises are encouraged to assist the extension of children's educational and developmental experiences. Where possible these experiences should be in line with children's interests or developmental needs and should provide opportunities for children to connect with local communities and culture.

A Family Day Care home, like any other home, has normal social contact with the outside world through visitors and by means of outings and excursions. In addition, Clarence Family Day Care provides opportunities (eg: playsessions) for the social and educational development of Family Day Care children and for the benefit of the educator.

Safety and close supervision of children must be the principal responsibility for Clarence Family Day Care educators. CFDC educators must strive to portray a positive and professional image and engage in appropriate adult-child interactions at all times, particularly whilst visiting public places with children in their care. Written parental permission and completion of a detailed risk assessment are prerequisites for taking children out of the approved care environment.

Policy

Clarence Family Day Care promotes appropriate outings and excursions as a valuable and interesting part of the lives of children in Family Day Care, providing the opportunity for social and educational development, allowing the children to experience routine and special activities, and giving both educator and children a variety of experiences. Outings and excursions which comply with safety policies and regulations and have the approval of parents and which have been notified to the nominated supervisor of the service are encouraged.

Routine Excursions are defined as activities that are undertaken routinely, (ie: at least once per month) are listed on the educator's Routine Excursions List, are approved by parents and have the consent of the nominated supervisor of the scheme, are within reasonable proximity of the Family Day Care home and which may or may not involve the use of transport, for example:
an outing within walking distance of the educators home. eg: a nature walk
to collect and drop off children to or from home or school
to the park
to the local shops (for child focused and programmed purposes)
to attend playgroups/playsessions
to visit other registered educators

Non-Routine Excursions are defined as special or unusual outings and activities that are not a regular part of the educator's routine, which may or may not be within a reasonable proximity of the Family Day Care home and are likely to involve the use of transport.

Procedures - General

Whilst appropriate excursions are encouraged, educators who take children on excursions must ensure that there is a balance between going out and staying at the approved care premises.

Educators must ensure that there is adequate and effective supervision of children by educators, approved educator assistants, parents or CFDC staff when on an excursion.

The adult/child ratios of 1:4 children under school age applies to all excursions except excursions outlined in the **Pool and Water Safety Policy** where ratios of adults to children are higher.

Educators are to keep and maintain an accurate and up-to-date record of routine excursions normally undertaken by the educator and the children in his/her care (Routine Excursions List).

Educators are to discuss with parents, prior to the commencement of care, the details of routine excursions.

Parents of children participating in excursions (that is, any circumstance where a child in care is taken out of the approved, designated care area) are to provide written authorisation to the educator prior to the excursion taking place.

Details of excursions and relevant parent authorisations are to be obtained and kept by the educator in the booklet, Authority for Car Travel and Excursions (Routine and Non-routine).

Where the planned outing involves transport of children by motor vehicle, a parent or guardian of all children participating in the excursion may give authority for their child/ren to travel by motor vehicle, by completing the Parent Permission to Transport by Motor Vehicle form.

A written evaluation of an excursion is to be completed by the educator on the Excursion Evaluation form whenever a near-miss or unforeseen incident occurs during an excursion.

Procedures – Routine Excursions

Educators are to discuss details of routine excursions with their coordinator, and supply a copy of their Routine Excursions List and applicable risk assessments to the nominated supervisor of the service at least once in each twelve month period, (normally with the Annual Safety Audit) and again whenever the list is altered.

Prior to undertaking a routine excursion the educator is to complete a risk assessment and give the parent of each child likely to attend the excursion the opportunity to view the risk assessment.

The educator must then obtain written parent authorisation for each routine excursion destination, using the Notice of Routine/Non-Routine Excursions form.

The risk assessment, together with written parent authorisation is to be lodged with the nominated supervisor **prior** to undertaking the excursion.

In the case of routine excursions, completion of a risk assessment and written parent authorisation is required at least once in each 12 month period.

A new risk assessment is to be completed and lodged whenever the environment or other circumstances relating to a routine excursion destination change. Whenever a new risk assessment is completed, the educator is to seek and lodge written parent authorisation with the nominated supervisor.

Procedures – Non-Routine Excursions

Prior notice must be given to parents of the details of any planned non-routine excursions and prior written authorisation (on the Notice of Non-routine Excursion form) must be obtained from parents for each individual excursion.

The Notice of Non-Routine Excursion must include:-

- (a) the child's name; and
- (b) the reason the child is to be taken outside the premises; and
- (c) the date the child is to be taken on the excursion; and
- (d) a description of the proposed destination for the excursion; and
- (e) the method of transport to be used for the excursion; and
- (f) the proposed activities to be undertaken by the child during the excursion; and
- (g) the period the child will be away from the premises; and
- (h) the anticipated number of children likely to be attending the excursion; and
- (i) the anticipated ratio of educators attending the excursion to the anticipated number of children attending the excursion; and
- (j) the anticipated number of staff members and any other adults who will accompany and supervise the children on the excursion; and
- (k) that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service.

A copy of the completed Notice of Non-routine Excursion is to be supplied to the nominated supervisor of the service, together with a completed risk assessment, **prior** to the non-routine excursion taking place.

The educator is not to undertake the excursion without acknowledgment from the nominated supervisor that the required documentation has been received, viewed and approved.

The nominated supervisor may request further information prior to making a decision regarding the excursion.

If, after viewing the risk assessment, the nominated supervisor deems that the risks associated with the planned non-routine excursion have not been identified and appropriately minimized or managed the nominated supervisor reserves the right to withhold consent for the excursion.

Procedures – Conducting a Risk Assessment

When conducting a detailed risk assessment the educator must first visit the proposed excursion destination without children, to allow an opportunity to fully assess the potential risks associated with the proposed excursion.

A risk assessment for an excursion must—

- (a) identify and assess risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child being taken on the excursion; and
- (b) specify how the identified risks will be managed and minimised.

In addition, a risk assessment must consider—

- (a) the proposed route and destination for the excursion; and
- (b) any water hazards; and
- (c) any risks associated with water-based activities; and
- (d) the transport to and from the proposed destination for the excursion; and
- (e) the number of adults and children involved in the excursion; and
- (f) the ages of the children involved in the excursion; and
- (g) given the risks posed by the excursion, the number of educators or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide adequate and effective supervision and whether any adults with specialised skills are required; **Example** Specialised skills could include life-saving skills. and
- (h) the proposed activities; and
- (i) the proposed duration of the excursion; and
- (j) the items that should be taken on the excursion.

Example A mobile phone and a hardcopy of emergency contact numbers for children on the excursion.

Procedures – Health and Safety

A first aid kit must be taken on all outings and excursions.

If available, a mobile phone with parents contact numbers and emergency numbers should also be taken on all trips away from the home.

Educators are to instruct children in the rules of road safety as set out below:-

- a) Holding hands or stroller to cross the road. Stop, look, listen, think, look again before crossing the road.
- b) Departing a vehicle on the passenger/curb side.
- c) Wearing a seatbelt/car restraint.
- d) Staying with the educator when loading children into the car, ie. not running onto the road.
- e) Sit quietly or talk softly but do not distract the driver.

Educators are to ensure correct fitting and adjustment of approved child car restraints when transporting children by car. Selection of car restraints is to be discussed with parents prior to transporting children. (see Transport by Motor Vehicle Policy)

Educators must ensure, prior to conducting any excursion, that the planned destination is safe for children. Generally, excursions should not be planned to destinations where hazardous environments exist. eg. water hazards (see Pool and Water Safety policy). Representatives of the scheme may periodically attend excursions with educators and children to ensure compliance with regulations and that excursions are conducted in a safe manner.

Educators must ensure that adequate shade is available at excursion destinations. The Clarence Family Day Care Sun Safety Policy requires that sun-safe practices are observed by educators and children throughout the year, ie. shade, appropriate hats and clothing (and sunscreen when parent permission is provided).

Educators must ensure that drinking water is available for the children at all times.

Relevant Legislation

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011;

Links to other policies

Scheme Philosophy

Transport by Motor Vehicle Policy

Sun Protection Policy

Pool and Water Safety Policy