BERMAGUI PRESCHOOL

5.04 Excursions Policy

The safety, rights and best interests of children are the paramount consideration in all decisions and actions relating to the operation and delivery of education and care at Bermagui Preschool.

This policy has been developed by Bermagui Preschool in consultation with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and families.

Date Approved: September 2026 **Review Date:** September 2029

Aim

Excursions provide valuable opportunities for children to extend their learning, explore different environments and engage meaningfully with their community.

Bermagui Preschool is committed to ensuring excursions are planned and conducted in a way that protects the safety, health, wellbeing, rights and participation of every child.

Excursions will support children's learning and development and be consistent with the Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Standard, Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and the NSW Child Safe Standards. Children's safety and wellbeing will always be the paramount consideration.

Strategies

Planning and Preparation

Excursions will be planned according to the age, abilities, interests, needs and experiences of the children. Consideration will be given to accessibility, inclusion, culture, communication, medical conditions, additional needs and any risks specific to individual children.

Children will be encouraged, in ways appropriate to their age and development, to express their views about excursions, ask questions and raise concerns. Educators will listen to children and take their concerns seriously.

Before an excursion, the service will:

- assess the educational value, destination, activities, duration and route;
- complete the required risk assessment before seeking parental authorisation;
- identify and manage risks, including environmental, traffic, water, transport, supervision, medical, weather, public and child protection risks;
- determine appropriate educator numbers and supervision arrangements;
- arrange transport and venues where required;
- make alternative arrangements where an excursion cannot safely proceed;
- provide families with sufficient information to make an informed decision about participation; and
- obtain the required written authorisation before a child leaves the service.

Children who do not attend an excursion will continue to be supported to participate in the educational program and maintain their social connections.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment will be completed before each excursion and will identify hazards, assess the level of risk and document strategies to eliminate or minimise those risks. The assessment will consider the destination and route, activities, duration, water hazards, transportation, traffic, weather, supervision, children's individual needs, medical conditions, first aid, emergency access, toilets, hygiene, shade, mobile phone coverage and other relevant risks. The risk assessment will specifically consider risks associated with children becoming separated from the group, crowded or unfamiliar environments, public access areas and interactions with other adults. The Responsible Person will check relevant circumstances, including weather and staffing, immediately before departure. Where circumstances change, the risk assessment will be reviewed and amended as necessary. For a regular outing, the risk assessment may be completed once every 12 months where the circumstances remain substantially the same. A new or revised assessment will be completed where circumstances change.

Authorisation

Parents or legal guardians will be provided with sufficient information about an excursion, including its purpose, destination, date, duration, activities, transportation and anticipated supervision arrangements. Written authorisation will be obtained before a child participates. Authorisation must be provided by a parent or a person named in the child's enrolment record as authorised to provide such permission. For regular outings, authorisation will be obtained every 12 months where the outing continues to meet the requirements for a regular outing. No child will leave the service on an excursion without the required authorisation. Written authorisation will include all information required under Regulation 102 of the National Regulations. The service will ensure that authorisations are complete and retained in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Active Supervision and Child Accountability

Children will be actively supervised throughout the excursion. Educators will position themselves to maintain clear visibility of children and will adjust supervision according to the environment, identified risks and children's individual needs. Every child will be accounted for individually at key transition points, including departure, arrival, movement between locations, embarking and disembarking transportation and return to the service. Attendance checks and head counts will occur regularly. Any discrepancy in attendance or concern about a child's whereabouts will be treated as an immediate child safety concern and managed in accordance with the service's emergency procedures.

Staffing

The service will maintain the educator-to-child ratios required by the National Regulations and will provide additional educators or responsible adults where the risk assessment identifies that they are required. Where children remain at the service while others attend an excursion, required staffing and first aid, anaphylaxis and emergency asthma management arrangements will be maintained at both locations in accordance with the Regulations. Educators attending the excursion will be familiar with the risk assessment, emergency procedures and their supervision responsibilities.

Families and Volunteers

Families are encouraged to participate in excursions where appropriate. Family members and volunteers cannot be used to replace educators or meet required educator-to-child ratios where the Regulations do not permit this. All participating adults will receive appropriate information about their responsibilities, child safe practices and supervision expectations. They will remain under the direction and supervision of an educator and will not be left in sole charge of children. Adults attending excursions must respect children's privacy, dignity, culture and individual needs and must immediately report any safety concern, disclosure or allegation of harm to the Responsible Person.

Transport and Traffic

Transport arrangements will be risk assessed and conducted in accordance with the applicable requirements of the National Regulations and NSW transport and road safety requirements. Children will be actively supervised when walking, crossing roads, using public transport or travelling in service-arranged transportation. Where required, children will use appropriate seatbelts or safety restraints. Children will be individually accounted for when embarking and disembarking transportation. Where the transportation provisions of the National Regulations apply, required records will be completed and the vehicle will be checked after children have disembarked to ensure no child remains inside. Where transportation forms part of an excursion, the transportation risks will be considered within the excursion risk assessment.

Water and Environmental Hazards

Water hazards will be specifically considered during excursion planning. Where an excursion occurs near water, appropriate risk management and active supervision strategies will be implemented. The service will consider weather, sun protection, heat, cold, shade, drinking water, hygiene, toilets and other environmental conditions before and during excursions.

Child Safe Excursions

Bermagui Preschool is committed to implementing the NSW Child Safe Standards throughout all excursions. Children will be informed about their rights and supported to participate in decisions affecting them. Children will be encouraged to speak up if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable, and educators will listen and respond appropriately. Excursions will be planned to promote inclusion and respect for children's diverse backgrounds, identities, abilities and circumstances. Reasonable adjustments will be made wherever practicable so that children can participate safely and meaningfully.

Adults attending excursions will understand their responsibilities for child safety and will be appropriately supervised. The service will maintain clear boundaries between adults and children and ensure that children are not placed in situations where they are unnecessarily isolated with an adult.

The service will consider physical and social environments when identifying child safety risks, including public places, unfamiliar adults, crowds, transport hubs, changing environments and situations where children may become separated. Children and families will be informed about how to raise concerns or make a complaint. Concerns, complaints, disclosures or allegations relating to child safety will be responded to promptly and in accordance with the service's Child Safe, Child Protection, Complaints and Incident Management procedures and applicable NSW legislation.

Child safety information will be shared appropriately with educators, volunteers and responsible adults so that everyone understands their responsibilities.

Privacy and Digital Technology

Children's privacy and dignity will be respected during excursions. Photography, video and other digital recording will comply with the service's privacy and digital technology requirements and any relevant authorisations. Personal devices must not be used to photograph or record children unless specifically authorised under service procedures. Digital device use must never interfere with active supervision.

Conducting the Excursion

Educators and responsible adults will be informed of the itinerary, supervision arrangements, safety procedures, grouping of children and their responsibilities before departure. A list of children attending will be available at the service and carried by the Responsible Person. The service will take appropriate first aid equipment, required medication and medical management plans, emergency contact information, an operating mobile phone and other items necessary for the excursion. Before leaving, the service will display the excursion itinerary, timetable and contact phone number.

If a child cannot be accounted for, the Responsible Person will be notified immediately. An immediate search and emergency response will commence, including contacting emergency services where necessary. The remaining children will continue to be actively supervised and kept safe. The child's parents or guardians and relevant authorities will be notified in accordance with legislative requirements and service procedures. The incident will be managed, documented and reported in accordance with the service's emergency and incident procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

***Approved Provider*:** Ensures excursions comply with the National Law and Regulations, NSW Child Safe Standards and service policies, and that appropriate authorisation, risk management, staffing and supervision arrangements are in place.

Nominated Supervisor / Responsible Person: Oversees excursion planning and implementation, ensures risk assessments and authorisations are completed, allocates supervision responsibilities, maintains child accountability and responds to safety concerns. The Responsible Person will ensure that educators are appropriately allocated to groups of children and that supervision arrangements remain effective during transitions, activities, transport and any emergency response.

***Educators*:** Follow this policy and the excursion risk assessment, maintain active supervision and ratios, account for children, support children's participation and voice, supervise volunteers and respond appropriately to incidents, concerns and disclosures.

***Families*:** Provide required authorisation and relevant information about their child and, when participating, follow service requirements and supervision directions.

***Volunteers / Responsible Adults*:** Follow service policies and directions, maintain confidentiality, support educators, remain supervised and immediately report concerns about children's safety or wellbeing.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The service will monitor excursions to ensure compliance with legislation, regulations, the NSW Child Safe Standards and service policies. Feedback from children, families and educators will be considered as part of continuous improvement. Incidents, near misses, complaints, disclosures, identified risks, changes in practice and legislative or regulatory changes will be considered when reviewing this policy.

This policy will be formally reviewed every three years, or earlier where required due to changes in legislation or regulations, government requirements or guidance, an incident or serious risk, a complaint or concern, identified practice gaps or changes to the service's operations.

Relevant Legislation

- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, including Sections 165 and 167.
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, including Regulations 99, 100, 101, 102, 123, 136, 168, 170, 171 and 172, as applicable.
- Children's Guardian Act 2019 (NSW).
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW).
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (NSW).
- Relevant NSW road and transport legislation.
- NSW Child Safe Standards.

Resources & References

- Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)
- NSW Office of the Children's Guardian – Child Safe Standards
- National Quality Standard
- Early Years Learning Framework
- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics
- ACECQA guidance relating to excursions, risk assessment and transportation
- Kids and Traffic
- Kidsafe NSW
- NSW Early Learning Commission's excursion and transportation guidance

Relevant Documentation

Policies

- 1.09 Feedback, Grievances and Complaints Policy
- 1.11 Photography / Social Media / Online Safety Policy
- 1.12 Safe and Responsible Use of Digital Devices Policy
- 4.16 Emergency Procedures (Evacuation and Lockdown) Policy
- 4.18 Child Protection Policy
- 4.31 Medical Conditions Policy
- 4.32 First Aid Policy
- 4.41 Paramountcy in Child Safe Practice Policy, where applicable

Forms, Risk Assessments and Records

- Excursion Risk Assessment
- Excursion Authorisation Form
- Regular Outing Risk Assessment
- Regular Outing Authorisation Form
- Excursion Attendance List / Child Accountability Record
- Excursion Itinerary and Emergency Contact Information
- Excursion Transportation Records, where applicable
- Child Medical Management Plans and associated medication / medical records, where applicable
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Records
- Excursion Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Records, where applicable

Version History

V1.0 – First published: Pre-March 2023

V2.0 – Reviewed September 2026 – Comprehensive review and update of the Excursion Policy, including child safety, risk management, supervision, authorisation and transportation requirements.