

EXCURSION POLICY**WHY?**

Thrive Group Tasmania believes strengthening children's connections with and understanding of, their local community is an integral part of any Early Childhood Education and Care Program.

Excursions are full of opportunities for children to explore, discover, enjoy new experiences and learn about the world around them. Thrive also recognises that excursions present a range of potential risks.

Identifying, assessing and managing these risks is critical in ensuring children's safety and wellbeing during outings away from Thrive service settings.

WHO?

This policy applies to families, staff and Educators enrolled with or working in the following Thrive Children's Services:

- Early Learning Services
- Outside School Hours Care Services
- Family Day Care Services

WHAT?

There are two types of excursions: routine and non-routine.

Routine Excursions

Regular outings undertaken by Centres and Family Day Care Educators are undertaken fortnightly or less e.g. visits to local parks, Thrive creative play sessions, library etc.

Non-Routine Excursions

Irregular outings undertaken by Centre and Family Day Care Educators undertake monthly or less frequently e.g. children's entertainment event or concert, visit to a zoo or farm.

Risk Assessment

Before taking children on excursions, Educators must conduct a risk assessment.

For routine excursions, this assessment only needs to be completed up front and then a reassessment undertaken every twelve months (unless the risks with any regular outings change in the meantime).

For non-routine excursions, a risk assessment needs to be updated and authorised prior to each outing.

Documentation

Services need to complete a Routine Risk Management Plan for regular outings – see **Appendix A** or a Non-Routine Risk Excursion Risk Management Plan for Irregular Outings – see **Appendix B**.

Authorisation

Written authorisation is to be obtained from parents before children are taken on excursions.

HOW?

Please refer to the Excursion Procedure (following this Policy).

WHEN?

All services must undertake a risk assessment prior to excursions.

A Routine Excursion Risk Management Plan must be completed at the outset for regular outings and then renewed every twelve months (or sooner if risks associated with regular outings change).

A Non-Routine Excursion Risk Management Plan must be completed or updated prior to each irregular outing.

Parents authorisation is to be obtained prior to children participating in excursions.

Thrive will provide all employees covered by this Policy with the appropriate training, so they are made aware of their responsibilities and obligations.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this policy from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.

All persons covered under the paragraph 'Who' who breach this policy may be subject to the appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or removal from the workplace or termination of services (workers, other than employees and other persons in the workplace).

EXCURSION PROCEDURE**HOW?****Undertaking the Risk Assessment**

Services need to consider the following:

Excursion Destination – identify the possible hazards at the excursion venue, e.g. water, traffic and animals. Gather information about the availability to toilets, hand washing and drinking facilities, shade cover, stroller access and mobile phone coverage.

Visit excursion venues in advance (where possible) to assist in the process.

An excursion venue checklist may be helpful – see sample at **Appendix A**.

Proposed Excursion Route – select the safest route for all excursions i.e. least traffic congestion.

Transport to and from the Destination – where vehicles are being used to transport children (Family Day Care Services) they must:

- Be registered, insured and roadworthy
- Have correct installation and appropriate child restraints which meet Australian Standards and comply with Tasmanian Road Rules for Child Restraints
- Have certification of correct installation of child restraints
- Have loose objects stored safely and correctly.

Educators must hold a current full drivers licence (not be on P plates), must not be affected by alcohol, drugs or medication and must never leave children unattended in a vehicle. See **Transport Policy and Procedure** for further details.

- Where public transport is being used to transport children i.e. public bus services, it is important for staff/Educators to establish clear rules for travel on, and accessing and exiting buses.
- Where a private bus is being used (Centre Services), staff will ensure the bus capacity is not exceeded, seat belts (where available) are worn at all times and supervision and safety guidelines are established.
- Where children and staff/Educators are walking to and from excursion venues, services will establish rules and relevance to age groups i.e. younger children will require closer supervision which may entail strategies such as hand holding.

Number of Adults and Children involved in the Excursion – be clear about how you will maintain staff/Educator and child ratios during excursions. Consider an increased ratio where the level of risk is higher to ensure effective supervision and decide whether you need adults present with specialised skills.

Centre Based Services will develop clear guidelines around staff responsibilities, the person in charge's role and supervision procedures. At least one staff person will hold a current First Aid Certification.

Proposed Activities – be clear on the activity focus of excursions e.g. child centred and age appropriate. Take account of equipment needs when planning excursions.

Water Based Excursions – important considerations include the children's ages, level of water competency and familiarity, number of children participating in the excursion and the group dynamics. Constant supervision is fundamental to children's safety when excursions are in, on or near the water.

To facilitate effective supervision, Thrive recommends the following:

For swimming outings with children under five years of age:

- 1:1 ratio in patrolled areas – public pools, beach between the flag areas
- 1:1 ratio plus an adult with a Bronze Medallion in unpatrolled areas – beach, lake and rivers.

For swimming outings with over five years of age:

- 1:5 ratio.

There is no swimming permitted in dams.

Diving boards are not to be used unless over eight years of age, the child is a proven swimmer and supervised by a person with a Bronze Medallion.

Public water slides are not to be used by under school aged children.

Paddling only outings (water height – five to ten centimetres) with young children require direct supervision.

Proposed Duration of Excursion – ensure the length of the excursion is appropriate to children's needs and development stage, to avoid overtiredness and unsettled behaviour.

Items to take on Excursion – staff/Educators are to ensure they take the following items on all excursions:

- First Aid Kit
- List of children attending and emergency contact details
- Medical information for each child (individual health plans and medication where applicable)
- List of adults participating in the excursion
- Mobile phone which is switched on, has credit and from which staff/Educators can make and receive calls
- Sunscreen, food and water, spare clothing (latter for younger children) to cater for individual needs and any emergency situations
- Form of identification e.g. Centre/Thrive and/or personal contact details.

Completing the Excursion Risk Management Plan – record the excursion details on the Routine or Non-Routine Risk Management (page one of the plan).

List the hazards associated with the excursion activities and use the risk matrix to work out a rating for each hazard you have identified. Cross reference the likelihood with consequences to provide a rating of either low, moderate, high or extreme.

Obtaining Parent Authorisations – services are to ensure written permission is obtained from families whose children are participating in any excursion.

Thrive has a parent authorisation component on both the Routine and Non-Routine Excursion Risk Management Plans. These plans provide parents with information as to the date and destination of excursions, proposed activities to be undertaken, period the children will be away from Thrive premises, the number of children going on the excursion, child/Educator ratio and the means of transport.

Authorisations are to be stored with the children's enrolment details.

These procedures relate to legislation as detailed in the Excursion Policy.

BREACH OF THE PROCEDURE

Any breach of this procedure may result in disciplinary action including, but not limited to, termination of employment or registration.

Thrive retains the sole discretion to reasonably vary, terminate or replace this procedure from time to time. Thrive will consult before any amendments are made and will notify and train those to whom the amendments apply.