Purpose of Policy and Procedures

St Joseph’s is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for its students, staff and volunteers. This commitment includes the health and safety of staff and students when conducting curriculum activities at school/college or other locations.

St Joseph’s excursions enhance student learning by providing the opportunities for students to participate in curriculum-related activities outside the normal school routine. School activities are well planned curriculum-related activities that aim to maximise student learning experiences. All planned school excursions should be approved by the school principal and when more than one school is involved, principals of all participating schools/colleges should approve the excursion.

To ensure the health and safety of students and staff, schools/colleges are required to proactively manage all aspects of variations to school/college routine. The school’s duty of care to students extends to school excursions and camps which are integral to student educational programs. Activities conducted away from schools/colleges may increase risks and therefore the standard of care required must reflect the increase in identified risks.

It is important when considering overnight excursions that the school/college is able to demonstrate that activities have been thoroughly planned to protect students, staff and others whilst undertaking the activity. St Joseph’s recognises the additional responsibility and level of care that must be undertaken when students are taken by their school for overnight excursions.

This sample policy is intended to clarify requirements for the planning of overnight excursions so that legal obligations are met and that school values are upheld in what is undertaken. It will also provide a suggested formal procedure for obtaining the necessary approvals for excursions of this kind.
Role of the Principal

While recognising that excursions can have significant educational benefits, St Joseph’s is aware that such activities can be disruptive to academic study, both for students undertaking the excursion and for those students whose teachers are participating and are therefore absent from school. It also places additional financial pressures on parents.

In considering whether to proceed with an excursion of this type, the Principal must weigh carefully the educational value of a proposed excursion with the total needs and resources of the school and the financial burden for families of students. Consideration should be given to whether the excursion will provide students with significant educational opportunities not available by other means.

In planning excursions, Principals and staff need to be conscious of the legal and moral responsibility for student welfare that accompanies such activities. Arrangements for care and supervision must reflect the greater degree of risk to students that can exist when travelling long distances within Australia.

Principals need to communicate to parents that such excursions are approved school/college activities and that staff will exercise the appropriate duty of care. Principals should consider the cost of overnight excursions and the accessibility to students whose families may be experiencing financial constraints. Excursions that would place financial pressure on a significant number of families should not be undertaken.

Teachers

Staff members choose to take part in such excursions. There is an agreed set of nominated excursions that the staff have deemed beneficial for the children so there is a school expectation that the teachers would be expected to attend these events. There is No obligation to organise or participate in any other excursion. No extra remuneration other than reimbursement of genuine pre-approved expenses is to be paid in respect of such excursions.

Accommodation and bathroom arrangements are to be such that no staff member or adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. For co-educational groups, it is advisable that both male and female supervisors are in attendance.

When it has been determined there is an educational need for an overnight excursion, the person planning the event must ensure all necessary requirements are met in relation to budget and number of supervising teachers to support the number of students attending.

A comprehensive risk assessment of the proposed excursion is fundamental. A formal proposal including a comprehensive risk assessment and management plan should be presented to the Principal for approval prior to the event being advertised.
In case of illness, accident or other emergency there must be a plan of action and agreed notification procedure approved by the Principal prior to departure. At least one teacher member of the touring party must have a current qualification in First Aid and all should have CPR.

Students

The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for a school/college to subject a student to any disadvantage on the basis of his / her disability. All reasonable efforts must be made to enable disabled students to attend excursions with their classes, including thoughtful selection of excursion venues and activities in the first instance.

An updated school/college medical form must be obtained for each student and a copy taken with staff on the tour. Prior to departure the staff member organising the excursion must read each medical form so that he/she is aware of potential medical emergencies that may arise such as asthma attacks or serious allergies.

On the rare occasion where it is proposed that a student or group of students will participate in an independent activity without the direct supervision of a staff member, it is imperative that the parent or caregiver be fully informed of, and agrees with the arrangements. The signed approval of the parent or caregiver should be obtained.

Supervision Arrangements

When determining the ratio of adults to students required for adequate supervision of overnight excursions, the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- age, capability and number of students
- individual student’s educational and behavioural needs
- individual student’s medical and physical requirements
- rationale for the activity
- identified risks
- adequate instructions for students and supervisors
- provision of sufficient safeguards
- experience, qualifications and insurance status of commercial excursion organisers (if used)
- health plans for individual students

Parents, Caregivers and Volunteers

Parents, caregivers and volunteers (‘volunteers’) chosen to accompany students should be selected according to the expertise they have relevant to the activities undertaken and must be briefed on arrangements prior to the excursion. Written information should be provided to volunteers including information about their role, hazards that might be encountered and precautions to be taken.

All volunteers should be asked to sign a declaration that they are aware of the risk management plan, accommodation arrangements, supervision details and the itinerary.
Arrangements need to be in place to facilitate the return to their parents of any student who exhibits behaviour that seriously endangers themselves or others. Written confirmation from parents should be obtained to acknowledge agreement to the arrangements proposed.

**Excursion Records**

The Principal is responsible for the retention of records related to the excursion. This includes a copy of any advice given to parents, costs, approval letters, risk assessments and administrative and travel details. In the event of an injury to a student or property damage, records relating to the excursion must be retained until the injured party reaches the age of 24, or for seven years, whichever is the longer.

**Management priorities**

This school will ensure that:

- legislative and regulatory requirements for the organization and management of excursions are compiled with, and staff are aware of any mandatory guidelines relating to excursions
- excursions will be planned and conducted using risk management principles
- records will be kept of the risk management process for each excursion
- contingency arrangements and emergency procedures are included in planning procedures
- staff, students and others involved in the excursions (such as supervising parents) are fully briefed on all aspects of an excursion before its commencement and have time to undertake preparatory activity
- supervisory roles and responsibilities are clearly allocated and understood by all staff and students going on the excursion
- parents are informed of the excursion and provide consent for their child’s involvement
- staff involved in planning excursions have the requisite skills and experience for the excursion
- where possible, preliminary inspection of the excursion site will be undertaken
- the qualifications and licensing of, and safety precautions taken by, outside persons or agencies used as part of an excursion are carefully checked
- transport arrangements are made with the safety of participants in mind
- excursions will be selected to match the participant’s levels of competence and ability
- a first aid kit containing equipment appropriate to the excursion will be taken on all excursions, as will qualified first aiders where necessary
- the school will provide insurance to cover the excursion
- any incident occurring on an excursion will be fully investigated and recorded.
SUPPLEMENTARY ADDITIONAL NEEDS QUESTIONNAIRE

Child’s Name: ____________________

D.O.B.: ____/_____/__________

This form will assist us in the care of your child at ____________________
___________________________________________________

Please assist us in providing the following information regarding their needs. It is important that you discuss your child’s additional needs with the class teacher, in addition to completing this form. Please write on the reverse of this form if necessary.

What has your child been diagnosed with? ____________________________

How does this condition affect your child?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Is your child taking medication? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, please give details _____________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Are there any special conditions/ preparations needed for this medication? Regular dosage must be supplied in a Webster Pack (available from Chemist).
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Are there any triggers that may affect your child’s behaviour? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If yes, give details
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

How would you like us to manage this during this activity?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Parent’s Signature: _____________________________________________

Date: ____________________