



## **VCAL EXCURSIONS AND ACTIVITIES POLICY**

### **PURPOSE**

Skillinvest recognises the opportunities and experiences gained from excursions and activities undertaken in different environments and as such places value on providing opportunities for our students to participate in excursion programs that enhance their learning and social skills development.

As part of Skillinvest's VCAL program, students are also required to plan and deliver projects with external organisations and as such activities outside of Skillinvest are a required to meet their outcomes. Incursions organised in addition to the normal Skillinvest program also provide enriched learning experiences for our students, beyond what is available in the everyday curriculum.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that excursions and activities are planned and staffed appropriately for the benefit and safety of all students and staff in attendance.

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Excursions**

Any activity undertaken by students off Skillinvest grounds. This includes but is not limited to:

- Part day trips
- Whole day trips
- Overnight trips
- Camps
- Subject based field trips
- Unsupervised excursions for senior students

#### **Activities**

Any activity undertaken by students supplementary to their normal timetabled day, whether undertaken on or off Skillinvest grounds. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Activities mentioned above under Excursions
- Incursions

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To ensure that excursions and activities are planned and approved appropriately
- To ensure that excursions and activities are appropriately staffed in alignment with Duty of Care and Code of Conduct and Child Safe Policy requirements
- To ensure that excursions and activities are conducted safely
- To ensure that, in planning events and activities, the Child Safe standards and other relevant Skillinvest policies pertaining to student safety and wellbeing are adhered to

- To ensure that informed consent is obtained from parents/guardians for their child to participate in an excursion or activity
- To ensure that students are adequately prepared for excursions or activities

**Important:** *Educators and others involved in excursions, must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.*

## **POLICY**

### **Planning & Approval**

While the degree of planning involved will depend on the risks involved, the conduct of any excursion or activity should consider the following:

- Educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum
- Approval requirements for excursions and staff travel
- Maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process
- Suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion
- Informed consent from parents/guardians
- Adequate student and staff medical information
- Student preparation and behaviour
- Requirements for any adventure activities (these involve greater than normal risk so there are additional considerations associated with these activities)

### **Parent Guardian consent**

Skillinvest must obtain prior **written** or **electronic** consent from parents/guardians for any and all excursions in order to:

- take the student out of the Skillinvest environment for a day excursion
- have the student in its care after normal timetabled hours on an overnight excursion
- obtain parent/guardian authorisation:
  - for the financial costs of the excursion (if additional costs are to be charged)
  - for any adventure activities that may be undertaken during the excursion
  - for students to be sent home from an excursion in the event of serious misbehaviour and for the costs of the student's return to be the parent/guardian's responsibility
  - that, if needed, Skillinvest can consent to emergency medical treatment
- enable the parent/guardian to alert Skillinvest to any medical conditions or allergies

### **Requirements for Informed Consent**

Skillinvest must:

- obtain **written** or **electronic** signatures
- give parents/guardians, who are to provide consent, sufficient information about the excursion to enable them to make an informed decision
- tell the parent/guardian the:
  - nature of the proposed activity
  - degree of supervision
  - risks involved
- keep records of the consent documentation at Skillinvest
- ensure that the VCAL Educator in charge of the excursion has a hard or electronic copy of the consent documentation for each student on the excursion

- ensure parent/guardians are aware that the VCAL Coordinator/Training Manager may need to cancel or alter excursions arrangements at short notice, which may lead to inconvenience or financial losses to parent/guardians. This would be required to ensure the safety of students and/or due to circumstances beyond the control of Skillinvest.

*Under no circumstances will verbal permission be accepted for a student to attend a Skillinvest event or activity where written consent is required.*

### **Student Medical Information**

While we retain student medical information at Skillinvest, it is required that a confidential medical information form be completed by parents/guardians before each 'higher risk' approved excursion (e.g. adventure activities or camps). In addition to providing staff with the information they require to ensure student safety; this provides parents/guardians with the opportunity to update any information previously provided to Skillinvest.

Skillinvest will:

- ensure that the educator-in-charge takes the medical information forms on the excursion
- ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations
- keep copies of the forms securely at Skillinvest.

**Information:** Transfusions or other courses of medical treatment are matters for legally qualified medical practitioners. Educators cannot be held liable for medical treatment given against the wishes of a parent/guardian.

### **Payment**

All efforts will be made not to exclude students merely for financial reasons. Parent/guardians experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their child to attend an excursion, are invited to discuss alternative arrangements with the Training Manager. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Training Manager in consultation with the appropriate staff, on an individual basis.

All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for excursions. Parent/guardians will be provided with permission requirements and excursion information, clearly stating payment finalisation dates.

Students whose payments have not been finalised within the specified timeline will not be allowed to attend unless alternative payment arrangements have been previously organised with the Training Manager or other nominated representative.

Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide organizing educators with detailed records on a regular basis.

Skillinvest may choose to subsidise some excursions or some student's expenses.

### **Risk Management**

An assessment of excursion risks must be undertaken as part of the planning process. This includes carefully considered venue selection in addition to an assessment of the risks of the event.

An excursion risk assessment must be undertaken utilising the Risk Assessment and Management Plan, which includes consideration of risks across the entire excursion (including transportation, activities undertaken, excursion venues and staff or student illness) and any significant financial risks to Skillinvest and/or parent/guardians (for example if an excursion needs to be cancelled).

Venue managers and activity providers should be consulted in the preparation of Skillinvest's Risk Assessment and Management Plan and where appropriate, the risk management plans of venues or activity providers should be used to inform Skillinvest risk assessment process.

In the event of an emergency during an on-campus event, Skillinvest Emergency Management Procedures will be followed.

In the event of an emergency during an off-campus event, staff will:

- Take emergency action as documented in the excursion and camp's Risk Management Plan
- Immediately notify Skillinvest General Manager or Training Manager

### **Fire Danger and Extreme Weather Notifications**

Prior to the excursion (including prior to departure on the day), the VCAL Coordinator and/Training Manager and excursion leader must consider all notifications and updates pertaining to all weather conditions relevant to the area travelling to and from. (For example, information relating to fires, storms, winds or any extreme weather).

Fire Danger- The General/Training Manager may need to cancel excursions and camps at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. On such days, Skillinvest managers liaise with fire authorities to obtain up to date information for communication to those that may be affected by wildfire, including those with students attending camps in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required. When required, Skillinvest will follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities.

- Educators must carry mobile phones and will be equipped with first aid kits to be used in emergency situations.

### **Child Safe Standards**

To fulfil the requirements of the Child Safety Standards, Skillinvest will ensure the following occurs in relation to excursions, activities and camps:

1. In accordance with any applicable legal requirement or Skillinvest policy, Skillinvest must make reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the following information about a person whom it proposes to engage to perform child connected work:
  - a) Working with Children Check status, or similar check;
  - b) Proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications;
  - c) The person's history of work involving children; and
  - d) References that address the person's suitability for the job and working with children.
2. Skillinvest need not comply with the requirements in step (1) above if it has already made reasonable efforts to gather, verify and record the information set out in steps **(1)(a)** to **(1)(d)**, above about a particular individual within the previous 12 months.

3. Skillinvest will ensure that appropriate supervision or support arrangements are in place in relation to:
  - a) The induction of new staff into Skillinvest's policies, codes, practices, and procedures governing child safety and child connected work; and
  - b) Monitoring and assessing a job occupant's continuing suitability for child connected work.
4. Skillinvest will implement practices that enable Skillinvest governing authority to be satisfied that people engaged in child-connected work perform appropriately in relation to child safety.

### **Duty of Care**

All Skillinvest staff attending a camp or excursion owe a duty of care to the students. This means that they must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent any reasonably foreseeable harm to students. This duty is nondelegable, which means that it cannot be delegated to external camp or education providers, parents or volunteers. The designated educator in charge has ultimate responsibility for all students in their care.

External education providers and para-professionals must have appropriate certification (e.g. Working with Children's Registration) and ensure that supervision guidelines are followed.

Prior to the camp or excursion parent/guardians should be made aware that DET does not provide student accident cover and that they need to make their own arrangements for cover.

### **Educator In-Charge Responsibilities**

A designated "Educator-in-Charge" will co-ordinate each excursion.

The Educator in Charge must complete all relevant aspects of the event documentation. The Educator in Charge must work with the supervising educator to complete the Risk Assessment and Management Plan and submit to the VCAL Coordinator at the time of making the application.

During the excursion / camp; the Educator-in-Charge will:

- Know the exact location of students at all times including during travel.
- Maintain a record of telephone contacts for the supervising staff accompanying the excursion.
- Know who Skillinvest contact person is and their phone number.
- Have a copy of the names of emergency contacts for all students and staff on the excursion.
- Have copies of the parental/guardian approval and medical advice forms for those students on the excursion.
- Maintain a copy of the completed Consent Forms (including all attachments) submitted to Skillinvest VCAL Coordinator.
- Carry a mobile phone and first aid kit for each excursion. The Educator-in-Charge is responsible for collecting the first aid kit prior to leaving.
- Communicate the anticipated return time with Skillinvest office, in the event that excursions are returning out of timetabled hours. Parent/guardians will be informed prior to students leaving for the excursion, that they can phone the office to receive an updated anticipated return time.

Educators participating in an excursion and/or camp will:

- Understand the purpose of the program and its connection to student learning.
- Be aware of their supervisory responsibilities throughout the program.
- Know who the nominated member of staff is who will provide first aid if required.
- Know the exact location of students they are responsible for at all times including during travel.

### **General Responsibilities**

- In the case where an excursion involves a particular class or year level group, the organising educator will ensure that there is an alternative program available for those students not attending the excursion.
- Parents may be invited to assist in the delivery of excursions, as deemed necessary. Only students that have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour will be permitted to participate in excursions. Parent/guardians will be notified if their child is in danger of losing the privilege to participate in an excursion due to poor behaviour. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the VCAL Coordinator in consultation with other VCAL staff. Both the parent/guardian and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the excursion.
- Disciplinary measures apply to students on camps and excursions consistent with Skillinvest's policies. In extreme cases the camp or excursion staff, following consultation with, and the approval of, VCAL Coordinator, Training Manager or their nominee, may determine that a student should return home during a camp or excursion. In such circumstances, the parent/guardian will be advised;
  - Of the circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home
  - Of the time when the parents/guardians may collect their child from the camp or excursion
  - of the anticipated time that the student will arrive home
  - Of any costs associated with the student's return which will be the responsibility of the parents/guardian.

### **POLICY EVALUATION & REVIEW**

This policy was last updated in Term 3 2019 and is scheduled for review in Term 3 2023.