ACCMP Procedures

Risk Management

Excursions & Offsite Activities

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1. Management priorities
This school will ensure that:

- legislative and regulatory requirements for the organisation and management of excursions are complied 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

• first aid kit containing equipment appropriate to the excursion will be taken on all excursions, as will staff with current First Aid qualifications where necessary

• the school will provide insurance to cover the excursion

• any incident occurring on an excursion will be fully investigated and recorded.

2. **Staff commitment**

Staff are responsible for:

• planning and conducting excursions with regard to the health and safety of all participants

• cooperating with measures introduced to protect the health and safety of people on excursions

• reporting any accident, incident or near miss that occurs on an excursion.

3. **Policy Background : Excursions**
i. Introduction

Excursions are a recognised part of school activities, and staff can reasonably expect to be required by the school to conduct an excursion as part of their normal work duties. Because excursions necessarily involve both staff and students leaving school premises, there may be increased risks to their health and safety. The increased risk may arise from either or both of the following factors:

• the nature of the excursion itself (for example, a short walking excursion to look at environmental features in the school’s vicinity poses less risk than a camping trip)

• a less controlled environment (that is, the reduced control that the school can exercise over external factors such as the safety of the excursion site or the people with whom students might come into contact).

Schools need to ensure that the health and safety of staff and students on excursions is managed just as it would be within school grounds.

ii. Key Requirements

a. General duties

Under Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation, the term "workplace" will be interpreted quite broadly to include out of school environments. This means that the school’s duty to provide a safe place of work for its employees extends to staff on excursions which are being conducted as part of their teaching duties. Staff injured on an excursion are also entitled to workers compensation.

Similarly, a school’s duty of care to its students extends beyond the school’s geographical boundary. It exists whenever the school ought reasonably to exercise control over students, including when they are on school excursions. To ensure that reasonable care is taken to minimise the risk of injury to the students, school authorities must not delegate duty. Schools may be found "vicariously liable" for any negligent acts of staff while on excursions.

Under WHS legislation and the common law duty of care, schools are required to undertake risk management in relation to each and every
excursion. This means taking all reasonable steps during the planning, organisation and execution of the excursion to minimise foreseeable risks of injury. It will never be possible to completely eliminate risks on an excursion.

b. What are foreseeable risks?

In determining whether a risk is foreseeable, the High Court has indicated that risks which are not "far fetched" or "fanciful" are foreseeable. It is recognised that accidents can and do happen, particularly on excursions, but the value of the excursion to the educational experience and personal development of students may outweigh any foreseeable risk of injury. It is important to identify the predictable risks, and to have contingency plans for the unpredictable ones.

c. What standard of care is required of teachers on excursions?

The standard of care will vary depending on the level of risk associated with the activity. The standard of care required of a teacher would therefore be higher for an excursion that included ice-skating than it would be for an excursion to a museum.

In addition, factors such as the age of students, their physical and intellectual capacity and their maturity may also influence the standard of care to be applied. Any prior experience of the students and the staff in similar activities will also be of significance.

4. Procedural Protocols

It is essential that the necessary approvals for an excursion be obtained before embarking on a school-related excursion whether it is off site or involves visiting presenter/s. At Australian Christian College the Principal or delegate must approve any excursion involving the school. Organisers of excursions need to follow any guidelines laid down by the Principal and relevant school policies.

The ACCMP WHS Excursion Form – Planning and Risk Assessment is the key instrument for the structured planning of excursions and offsite activities and the receiving permissions.

It details the administrative preparation expected for the excursion:

- Evaluation of potential benefits of the excursion
- Consent forms
- Medical information collated and risk assessment made
• Contact with outside providers: check insurance details if relevant, certification, child protection issues etc

• Cross reference other ACCMP Policy issues

• Check staff student ratios

• Check availability of parent support

• Organise payments

• Check transport timetables

• Organise collection procedures

• Organisation sheet for students

• Book buses; check drivers

• Organise suitable private vehicles if necessary

5. Staff to Student Excursion Ratios

_on any school excursion there must always be a clear predominance of ACCMP staff members supervising. Additional adult volunteers taken to meet the following ratios must be verified as suitable for the specific nature of that excursion by the Principal or delegate._

General ratios are as follows:

• Primary (Foundation to Year 2) - 1 adult : 5 students

• Primary (Year 3 to Year 6) - 1 adult : 8 students

• Secondary - 1 adult : 10 to 15 students (depending on the activity and the
These ratios might not be appropriate in certain circumstances: e.g. if Year 3 use train transport during peak hour travel, the ratio would need to be as low as 1:4. Secondary students going to certain activities requiring less supervision might have a 1:12 or 1:15 ratio. If a variation to the general guideline is requested, it must be made in writing to the Senior Executive.

6. Gender Issues

It is appropriate to take a male and female adult on every excursion if possible. Senior Secondary students (Years 10 – 12) might not require this, but any prospective venue should be assessed in terms of potential risks especially in connection to public conveniences (child protection issues). Certain destinations would need to have staff of both genders attending.

If male and female students have an overnight excursion, both male and female adults need to be in attendance.

Any adults (other than ACCMP staff) must have Child Protection checks verified prior to the activity if requested by the Principal. This includes volunteer parents/family members.

7. Overnight Excursions or Outdoor Education Activities

Staff should remain awake until all students are asleep. If necessary, at least two staff should be rostered to stay awake until all students are asleep if the process of getting all students asleep takes longer than anticipated. Staff should clearly set the expectations prior to an overnight excursion of sleeping times. It is always good practice to bring forward ‘lights out’ time by 30 minutes to allow for the unforeseen. Students should know the boundaries for any talking at night or early in the morning. Staff should ensure that students and staff have adequate sleep so that overtiredness does not unduly affect their conduct of duties or the students’ behavior.

8. Premises in the control of others

The duty of care owed by the school to staff and students, and owed to students by teachers supervising the excursion, remains even if the site or premises visited during the excursion is controlled by somebody else. The operator or owner of the site, and its employees, would also owe their own duty of care to persons on the site. The duty imposed on the school would be discharged if it can reasonably conclude...
that the site or premises is apparently safe and staffed by competent and careful people. In these circumstances, there is still a significant responsibility for the school, and particularly the teachers involved with the excursion, to make sure they have first-hand knowledge of the excursion site(s).

9. Insurance

The school should make sure its insurance policy extends to cover the excursion, or arrange special insurance as required.

10. Managing Excursions

Organisers of any excursion need to apply risk management principles. This means:

- identifying hazards pertaining to the excursion
- assessing the potential risks associated with the hazards
- deciding on ways of controlling the risks
- implementing appropriate control measures
- monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of these actions: this will include keeping records for use by future organisers of a similar excursion.

For excursions involving physical activities, including adventure sports, there are inherent risks associated with those activities which need to be assessed and controlled. Please cross reference with the ACCMP Adventure Sports and Outdoor Education Policy and the ACCMP Sport Policy.

11. First Aid

All staff supervising an excursion should be aware of the school’s First Aid Policy. Where a staff member does not hold a current First Aid Certificate, they must defer to expert medical opinion as soon as possible. Where multiple staff are attending an
activity it is school practice to include at least one person with current First Aid Certification and also ensure all staff know who is the nominated First Aid Officer for that activity.

12. Managing an incident

An incident occurring during an excursion may be relatively minor or may be extremely serious, even fatal. First aid must be obtained immediately for any illness or injury, however minor it may seem, and proper medical attention sought where appropriate. Emergency response procedures should be pre-planned and implemented as soon as it is apparent the situation is critical. Follow up treatment may also be appropriate, particularly if the incident was traumatic. Crisis care and counselling may be needed not only for the victim(s) of an incident but also for other participants who may have witnessed the incident or where a fatality occurs.

Staff members involved should be aware of the ACCMP WHS Critical Incident Policy.

13. Recording an Incident

Any incident during an excursion that requires special treatment, medical or other, needs to be officially recorded on an ACCMP WHS Incident Report or First Aid Form. Even a seemingly minor incident may have long-term consequences that are unable to be foreseen at the time. A brief record of essential details should be made to ensure that the circumstances of any event can be recalled if and when required. This information may also be used by the school and government authorities to analyse the event and to prevent a similar incident from occurring in the future.

An incident record should include:
§ date, time and place of the incident
§ details of the activity being undertaken
§ details of the people involved in the incident
§ a brief description of the incident
§ a statement of action taken following the incident
§ details of people and organisations who were informed about the incident.

All incidents involving injury, and even those which had the potential for injury (for example, equipment failure where no one is hurt), should be properly investigated and recorded.

14. Supervision
Activities taking place outside of school grounds require the permission of the Principal and other appropriate designated authorities. Students are in the care of staff while they are on any school approved excursion and activity. They are required to abide by school rules and regulations while out of the school premises. The school’s duty is not necessarily abrogated by the presence of parents at excursions.

15. Equipment and facilities

Facilities and equipment not supplied by the school need to be checked for appropriateness and safety, to the same standard that the school would provide. Staff should not allow students to participate in a physical activity if they are not satisfied that the grounds and equipment are reasonably safe. The availability of first aid treatment at the site also needs to be checked.

16. Information

A copy of all notes in relation to an excursion or related experience must be left with the School Administration Office. When an excursion occurs, full lists of students involved in either regular activities or short-term events should be provided. These lists can be photocopies of the teacher’s lists. There should be no occasion when the School Administration cannot quickly determine the location of any student. Lists should include the name of supervising teachers and the grade of students.

17. Water safety

Administrative instructions and guidelines issued by the relevant educational authority will usually determine the staff requirements for the supervision of swimming and water safety programs. For example, staff requirements may vary according to the nature of swimming venues, such as:

- confined shallow water venues with water to a maximum depth of shoulder height
- open deep water venues which include deep and/or flowing water at non-surf beaches, lakes, channels, rivers and dams
- surf beaches with direct access to ocean waters.

In all cases, the requirements set out in this document must be rigorously observed. If there is uncertainty as to staffing requirements, then further advice should be sought from the school’s Executive.
An employed staff member must be given overall responsibility for any water-based activity, while other adults approved by the Principal may participate. Staff must have the necessary certificates of competence both to teach swimming and water safety, and to activate emergency rescue, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and first aid procedures competently.

The staff member in direct control of the swimming group is legally responsible for the implementation of emergency procedures, including contacting a doctor, ambulance or other emergency service. This person is also responsible for ensuring that all the teachers assisting at the venue carry out the tasks relating to the supervision of all students at the venue.

### 18. Precautions

**• Extreme Weather**

If an excursion is to occur on days where extreme weather or bushfires are forecast, the activity should not occur without prior consultation with the school’s Senior Leadership and Management. Extreme weather is defined as 5° C or below and 35° C or above during daylight hours.

**• Primary Years Water Assessment**

Water activities for Primary Years at camps, free swimming, swim school, etc require children to be assessed and classified with a coloured wrist band. A yellow wrist band indicates non-swimmers, whilst blue wristbands indicate all other levels of ability in the water.

**• Water Restrictions**

There are restrictions to students swimming in areas other than built pools. If permission is given for students to swim, that activity must be visually supervised at all times whilst any student or participant is in the water.

Students are not permitted to swim in open water unless they have a Surf Survival Certificate. ACCMP offers this certificate each year.

Students are not permitted to swim freely in Rock Pools until they have completed a swimming test. The guidelines for this test are set by DET.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If a student is new to the school in the year of the excursion, ACCMP needs written evidence that the child can swim unaided for 20 metres and can tread water unaided for 2 minutes. A recent swimming school certificate or official evidence of a swimming achievement e.g. ribbons or Nipper awards will be accepted as evidence.
i. Water safety

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- open deep water venues which include deep and/or flowing water at non-surf beaches, lakes, channels, rivers and dams
- surf beaches with direct access to ocean waters.

In all cases, the requirements set out below in this Policy Document must be rigorously observed. If there is uncertainty as to staffing requirements, then further advice should be sought from the School’s Executive.

An employed staff member must be given overall responsibility for any water-based activity, while other adults approved by the Principal may participate. Staff must have the necessary certificates of competence both to teach swimming and water safety, and to activate emergency rescue, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and first aid procedures competently.

The staff member in direct control of the swimming group is legally responsible for the implementation of emergency procedures, including contacting a doctor, ambulance or other emergency service. This person is also responsible for ensuring that all the teachers assisting at the venue carry out the tasks relating to the supervision of all students at the venue.

There are restrictions to students swimming in areas other than built pools. If permission is given for students to swim, that activity must be visually supervised at all times whilst any student or participant is in the water.

ii. Beaches

Students can only swim at an ocean beach if prior notification has occurred. That notification must be lodged for approval with the Principal or delegate and with parental/guardian consent.

a. Swimming at Ocean Beaches Supervision

- Swimming should only occur at beaches patrolled and supervised by trained Life Guards during the activity.
• An adult with a current First Aid certificate must visually supervise the period of swimming.

Safety

• Swimming must occur within flagged areas only.

• Beaches should be clear of blue bottles or other marine pests.

• There must be no alerts in relation to strong currents or rips.

• If there is any notification of high water pollution levels, swimming must not occur.

• Secondary students should not swim deeper than their middle chest area.

• Primary students should not swim deeper than their waist.

• No diving is to occur.

b. Surfing at Ocean Beaches

Surfing can only be run as an ACCMP activity when being run by an external professional organisation who specialise in running Surf Schools etc. and students cannot enter the water until the organisation being used is present with all staff expected for the session.

Surfing is an activity for Secondary students only.

Supervision

• Where possible surfing should only occur at beaches that are declared ‘open’ and are supervised and patrolled by trained Life Guards during the activity.

• A staff member with a current First Aid certificate must be on the beach and visually supervise the period of surfing at all times.
• An adult other than the designated First Aid Officer must also have visual supervision of the surfing activity at all times. That adult must have professional qualifications in relation to surfing supervision or have specific approval by the Principal as an appropriate person.

• Surfers must follow local authority guidelines for the activity.

• Supervisor to student ratio must not exceed 1:8

_Safety_

• Any secondary student or staff member involved in a surfing activity must hold basic qualifications in relation to swimming competency and lifesaving (minimum Open Water Safety Course Certificate).

• Beaches should be clear of blue bottles or other marine pests.

• There must be no alerts in relation to strong currents or rips on the beach.

• If there is any notification of high water pollution levels, surfing must not occur.

• All students must wear a ‘fluro’ vest when in the water

• No diving is to occur.

• Mobile phone reception should be available and a staff member or surf school instructor should have phone reception.

_iii. Non-ocean waterways_

_Supervision_
- Swimming should only occur with the full visual supervision of attending staff.

- Water-craft activities should only occur with the full visual supervision of attending and qualified staff.

- An adult with a current First Aid certificate must visually supervise the period of swimming or water-craft activity.

**Safety**

- If appropriate to an activity and prior exemption has been authorised, the creek or river bed must be visually inspected prior to any person entering.

- Whilst any water used for recreation should be fresh (i.e. moving through the area), there should be no evident current.

- The water should be clear of blue bottles or other marine pests.

- There must be no alerts in relation to strong currents.

- If there is any notification of high water pollution levels, swimming must not occur.

- If shallow swimming is involved, the bottom of the water must be 100% visible in all areas.

- No diving is to occur.

- If canoeing or kayaking is involved specific knowledge of the water current or tide should be known prior to students commencing the exercise. Any participating student must
have water skills
competency qualifications.

• Secondary students should not get into water deeper than their waist, unless involved in a specific and approved water-craft activity.

• Primary students must not get into water deeper than half way up their thighs unless involved in a specific and approved water-craft activity.

• Students must not put their heads under water. Non-ocean waterways have higher than acceptable levels of water pollution.

iii. Rivers or creeks

As a general rule, rivers or creeks should not be used for swimming.

Supervision

• An adult with a current First Aid certificate must visually supervise the period of swimming.

Safety

• If appropriate to an activity and prior exemption has been authorised, the creek or riverbed must be visually inspected prior to any person entering.

• Whilst any water used for recreation should be fresh (i.e. moving through the area), there should be no evident current.

• The bottom of the water must be 100% visible in all areas.
• No diving is to occur.

• Secondary students should not get into water deeper than their waist.

• Primary students must not get into water deeper than half way up their thighs.

19. Transport Arrangements

All transport arrangements should be fully outlined in consent notes. The school and/or local police (if relevant) should be notified as soon as possible if any variation to this should be necessary.

• Students must not drive other students. The only variation to this would be an exceptional or unforeseen circumstance and the Principal has given verbal or written approval. Parents should be verbally notified as soon as possible in any such circumstance.

• Supervising staff should not approve any student to leave an activity during the activity.

• Supervising staff must have visual recognition of any nominated person collecting a student after an activity.

• Students younger than Year 11 must not be allowed to make their own transport home without the supervision of a nominated adult.

• Supervising staff must remain with all students whilst waiting for parents or nominated persons to collect a student after an activity. No student should be left unattended. If waiting after dark, students should be away from road or car park and wait under available lighted areas.

• Students traveling in private vehicles must wear seat belts at all times.

Modes of acceptable transport:
• School Buses
• Private Buses
• Train (suitable for upper Primary and older only)
• Walking
  - Private transport (requires specific approval)

If using buses:

• a supervising adult needs to be included in bus transport other than the
driver unless given exemption for this requirement by the Principal.
• all participating adult persons must have clearance in relation to any
Australian Christian College Child Protection procedures.
• students on trains will need to have higher staff / student ratios the younger
the grade. Discuss the ratio with the Senior Executive.

20. Medical Records

The medical records of all participants must be checked prior to any excursion. A
copy of key medical and contact information must be taken in a water-proof
container during any activity when students are away from school.

21. Mobile Phones

It is imperative that the school can make contact with the excursion group during
the activity.

Staff should have access to a mobile telephone during excursions if possible. Contact
the Business Manager to organise one.

If no telephone is available all contact telephone numbers should be left with the
22. Controlling and Minimising Risk

*Guidelines for planning to minimise risk:*

School excursions should be undertaken and planned with the following factors in mind:

- assessment of all foreseeable risks: this includes inspection of the site before the excursion begins

- consideration of the nature of the excursion with regard to students' ages, levels of maturity, capacities and natural propensities for mischief

- education of students (and staff) about the risks that they are likely to encounter on the excursion

- instructions or demonstrations required to prepare the students for the excursion

- providing full details of the excursion to the school community: including leaving information about expected start and finish times with a designated person at the school.

*Risk assessment and control*

Australian Christian College Executive should assess risks associated with every excursion methodically and plan responses to identified risks. A database created from information gathered from previous excursion experiences will be useful in initial preliminary assessing of risk. The risks involved and the control measures used will depend very much on the particular activity.
23. Permission of parents or guardians

The school should, in all circumstances, obtain the written permission of parents or guardians before taking students on an excursion. Parents need to be provided with sufficient information to enable them to make an informed decision.

A permission form is also an opportunity for schools to obtain information that may be needed to properly assess the risks to individual students. This is especially useful where the attribute causing added risk is not obvious and may not have been observed in the normal classroom environment (for example, allergies and debilitating phobias). School should advise parents to provide current health information relevant to the particular event.

Obtaining permission is also an opportunity to address other planning issues such as steps to be taken in the case of an emergency. A request for permission can also be a consent for teachers to use their best judgment in obtaining emergency care. A parent can authorise a teacher to obtain ambulance or other emergency assistance without the need for further contact with the parent to confirm that they are willing to bear any associated cost.

24. Supervision

An important element in countering risks to students’ health and safety on excursions is the provision of appropriate supervision. Australian Christian College does permit using parents to assist in excursions. It is important to realise that just as the school cannot delegate a duty of care to a teacher, it will be equally liable for any negligent acts or omissions of supervising parents.

All staff and parents who are involved in an excursion should be thoroughly briefed prior to the commencement of the excursion.

Roll calls and head counts are important elements of supervision, particularly with certain groups of students and in particular environments. There is always a risk of someone becoming detached from the group during an excursion by simply wandering off, lingering at an interesting attraction, or sustaining an injury, illness or other misfortune that detains them. This may expose a student to further risk of harm, whether they are lost or not. Frequent head counts and roll calls will quickly determine if someone is missing and/or in need of assistance, when time may be critical.

25. Transport

Where vehicles are used to transport people on an excursion, only drivers with licences appropriate to the type of vehicle can be used. All drivers must conform to
the policy standards outlined in the ACCMP Policy document in relation to Transport.

Vehicles should be checked as to their condition. Vehicles should also be an appropriate mode of transport for the number and ages of people travelling and for the type of journey and destination. Though transport department regulations allow for a certain number of people to stand in buses, this practice may not be sound for a school excursion, particularly one involving young children. Instead, the school should hire buses with sufficient seats to cater for the number of people travelling. Where possible, the school should seek buses equipped with seat belts, given the extra safety these would provide.

While a supervising teacher cannot influence the skill of a bus driver, he or she can have some influence over the proper loading of the bus, plans as to where children should embark and disembark, and behaviour of students while on the bus.

Insurance

Transport insurance should be arranged to cover accidents en route. If teachers use their own cars to transport students, they should ensure that their insurance cover is adequate, that the school administration is aware of the use of the car for school business and that the car used is safe.