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Excursion Policy

QUALITY AREA 1: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & PRACTICE

Date Created: March 2009 Date to be reviewed: July 2023 Version No: 10

Policy Statement:

Yarrunga aims to provide opportunities to expand and enhance children’s experiences by exploring different occupations, experiences and environments within our local community.

Rationale:

Yarrunga believes that both regular and routine outings and excursions away from Yarrunga are a key element of our educational program. Our culture of taking children outside the gate sits with the values of belonging; children belong to their community. These excursions are well considered and planned to provide meaningful experiences and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times. We also encourage families to join us on excursions if they can.

Scope:

The Policy applies to all children within the Centre, and excursions organised by the staff.

Relevant legislation:

Education and Care Services National Regulations – (Part 4.2 & 4.4)

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Act 2011

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Regulation 2011

Location of Information:

This information is available to families on request or on Yarrunga’s web page, by request and is included within the Staff Handbook.

Reference sources:

Guide to the National Quality Standard - 2018

CELA model policies September 2020

Kidsafe NSW <www.kidsafensw.org>

Sutherland, K (2007) “Out There” Rattler, Issue 8

Kids and Traffic <www.kidsandtraffic.mq.edu.au>

Strategies:

Excursion

**All excursions will be planned in advance to:**

* maximise both children’s developmental experiences and their safety.
* reflect the age, capacity and interests of the children;
* ensure they are properly supervised and conducted in a safe manner; and
* are conducted with fully informed written parental/guardian permission.

**All excursions will be thoroughly researched to ensure:**

* supervision is adequate so children cannot be separated from the group;
* access to hazardous equipment and environment are minimised;
* there is adequate access to food, water and other facilities (toilets, hand washing etc);
* consideration is given to the mobility and supervision requirements of children with additional needs;
* that adequate shade for sun protection is available.

**When planning for an excursion educators will:**

* assess the requirements for the excursion;
* research cultural significance of the site if applicable
* conduct a risk assessment (procedure)
* book transport to venues;
* make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions;
* inform families of the details of the excursion including destination, objective and outcomes, and what the child should bring;
* provide parents or legal guardians with an excursion permission form (at least 24 hours prior to the excursion) to complete, authorising that their child may participate on the excursion;
* collect completed permission forms for each child attending the excursion;
* request additional adult participation on the excursion where required;
* arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including EpiPen and Asthma medication), relevant medication for children attending and mobile phone to be taken on the excursion.

Educators must make alternate arrangements for any children who are not attending the excursion and ensure that any dialogue or pre-planning for the excursion does not alienate such children from social networks.

Additional factors need to be considered in the planning of excursions for children with additional needs. Where possible, Yarrunga will uphold the right for all children to access all excursions and engage in meaningful ways while on excursions.

Risk Assessment

**The Nominated Supervisor will:**

Ensure a risk assessment is conducted prior to any excursion to identify any dangers. Risks to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child whilst on the excursion will be identified and assessed and details of how Yarrunga will manage any risks identified.

The risk assessment conducted will consider;

* Appointing a Responsible Person to be in charge of the excursion
* Destination and duration of the excursion;
* Potential water hazards or any hazard associated with water based activity;
* Transport to and from destination;
* Number of educators, responsible persons, and children involved;
* Proposed activity; and
* Items to be taken on the excursion e.g. Mobile phone, emergency contact numbers etc.

If the excursion is a regular occurrence, a risk assessment will only be carried out once, provided the circumstances around the excursion have not changed in any way since the initial risk assessment was conducted.

In the event of an incident at Yarrunga while children and educators are on excursion, they will be notified by phone and will return to the rear of the Centre where they can wait until they again make contact with the person who notified them.

Authorisation for Excursion

**The Nominated Supervisor will ensure that:**

One-off excursions: - These types of excursions may require transport and specific permission from families in a detailed permission form about the excursion. These excursions will be planned with at least 1 weeks’ notice. We make families welcome to join us on excursions if they can. For all excursions parents or legal guardians will be given a written authorisation before a child can leave the centre, and the form with full details of the excursion including:

* The anticipated adult: child ratio – outlining number of educators and staff and other adults attending;
* That a minimum of two educators/staff members are in attendance and that the minimum number of adults/educators attending will be-
  + - * 3-5 years ratio 1 adult; 10children
      * 2-3 years ratio 1 adult; 5 children;
      * Under 2 years the ratio is 1:4

Any variance to the ratio (e.g. Nursery are taking children in the quad pram 1:4 ratio) a risk assessment will be completed and signed by the Nominated Supervision and Excursion Leader.

* Date, description, duration and destination of proposed excursion:
* Method of transport to be used;
* Reason for the excursion, and proposed activities to be conducted on the excursion;
* A statement that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available for parents to view.
* Children not attending the Centre on excursion day can also be invited to participate in the excursion on the provision that their parent/guardian also attend the excursion.
* The Centre will aim for children in the Junior Preschool and Preschool rooms to have at least two (2) excursions outside the Centre each year.

Routine or spontaneous outings – these are in our local community and are usually walking excursions (1½kms). As part of our enrolment process families who agree to excursions for their child must provide written authorisation and this is in the form of an ongoing permission form, which is valid for 12 months and completed at the beginning of each subsequent year.

Incursions – we are lucky to be able access many varied performers who come and perform for the children at the centre. Families will always be informed on these events and permission sought.

**No child will be taken on an excursion unless written permission from parents or legal guardian has been received.**

Families and Volunteers

Families will be encouraged to participate in excursions to assist in maintaining suitable child/educator ratios. We ask each family how they feel about their child going on excursions, and we respect their opinion and choice about their child’s involvement. Most parents/guardians are very supportive and love the idea of their children journeying outside Yarrunga with us, however every family is different and there are a number of reasons that some will choose to withhold permission for outside trips. If the parent needs to bring their child’s sibling because they cannot find suitable care, the sibling must be included in the ratios.

If additional adults are required, volunteers will be invited. Volunteers will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out of Yarrunga.

Family members/volunteers will not be left in sole charge of children and must be supervised by an educator at all times.

All volunteers/family members’ details will be entered into the appropriate staff record for that day.

Transport and Traffic

Safety of children will be considered in the choice of route and mode of transport. Yarrunga will follow all applicable NSW road rules as well as the Kids and Traffic best practice recommendations for transporting young children safely in buses.

When walking within the community, educators will also reinforce the ‘Stop, Look, Listen and Think’ when crossing roads. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Educators will ensure children obey road rules and crossroads at the crossing or lights where available. Educators will remain vigilant to ensure no child runs ahead or lags behind the group.

When children are crossing, walking near roads, footpaths, driveways and car parks, they are to;

* To wear Yarrunga ‘hi-vis’ vests
* Hold hands with educator/carer, or other child until they are at least 8 years old.
* Otherwise ensure that they hold onto a pram, stroller, bag, trolley or your clothing if they cannot hold a carers hand.
* All children should be wearing protective appropriate clothing and enclosed shoes.

Supervision

Supervision on excursions will ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children for the duration of the excursion, taking into account ratios and all risks and hazards likely to be encountered.

The venue will be assessed as safe for all children and adults on the excursion and will be easily supervised and accessible.

Water Hazards

No excursions will be conducted to a swimming pool or other water related activity. Where there are significant water hazards (such as rivers. lakes), risk management strategies will be identified and implemented.

Conducting the Excursion

All educators, volunteers and children attending will be informed of excursion timetable/itinerary, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.

A list of children on the excursion will be left at Yarrunga and a copy carried by the delegated Excursion Supervisor.

Before leaving on a ‘one-off’ excursion, a notice will be prominently displayed in the foyer which includes:

* Itinerary and timetable; and
* Mobile contact phone number.

Items to be taken on excursion include:

* A suitably stocked first-aid kit including EpiPen &Asthma medication
* A mobile phone;
* Children’s emergency contact numbers
* Children’s medication, if required; and
* Other items as required e.g. sunscreen, drinking cups, jackets etc.

If a child is lost on an excursion, we will always leave a staff member behind to look, while the other group leaders escort the children back to Yarrunga.

Evaluation

All excursions are conducted in a safe manner and evaluated. It is important in identifying areas for improvement for future excursions, or any other changes that may need to be made or considered in the future. Children are also consulted in the review process. What did they enjoy most? What would they do differently next time?

Any improvements identified in the risk assessment prior to conducting the excursion or the evaluation of the excursion are addressed and actioned to ensure children’s safety.