

International Travel Policy



Preamble:

While student overseas learning experiences represent just one of many international education opportunities for schools, these experiences are invariably life-changing, building students' capacity to operate effectively as active and informed local and global citizens.

Parktone advocates overseas learning experiences as a school improvement strategy and an investment in the future of young Victorians. The need for Victoria's young people to be globally connected, informed and active has never been greater: *Global integration and international mobility have increased rapidly in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.* (Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians) (2008: p 4.).

Learning while in another country is one of the most powerful catalysts for effective international education, and the positive impact of learning in another country is profound; students return home with enhanced intercultural understandings, sharpened self-awareness and emerging leadership skills (Department of Education & Training, 2015).

Throughout their learning students progressively develop knowledge, skills and behaviours that support them to develop into active and informed global citizens. From Foundation to year 6 students connect with others through their family, school and local community. They come to understand cultural similarities and differences and to appreciate that different cultural, language and religious groups make up Australia. They become increasingly aware of national events, environmental, social and political issues, international events and crises, and through these they evaluate their role as a global citizen. Participation in an overseas learning experience enables students to build their personal and social competence, intercultural understanding and language skills, and provides many benefits for the school community:

Personal and Social Competence	Intercultural Understanding	Benefits for School Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced sense of self and personal identity • Increased independence, maturity, confidence and self-awareness • Enhanced social competence, through confronting challenges beyond their familiar environment and comfort zone • Opportunities to be ambassadors for the school • Increased awareness of future study and career opportunities and broader community participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move beyond stereotypical views and attitudes • Greater interest in global and international issues • Increased proficiency in the use of another language • Motivation to further engage with other cultures through future travel and consideration of employment opportunities overseas • A more global outlook on life, and a heightened sense of engagement with, and increased awareness and appreciation of, different cultures • A deeper understanding of their own culture as distinct from others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school culture that promotes a sense of belonging for every student; supports students' personal growth; prepares all students for success in an increasingly globalised and connected world • Provides opportunities to strengthen links with individuals and groups in the wider community to support and enhance international education programs • Provides enhanced connectedness between participants, their families and the school • Development of and continuing support for sister-school partnerships and other international connections

Regardless of purpose, all overseas learning experiences are intercultural experiences in which students have the opportunity to develop intercultural understanding. The development of intercultural understanding is a general capability of the Australian Curriculum:

In the Australian Curriculum students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to understand themselves in relation to others. This involves students valuing their own cultures and beliefs and those of others, and engaging with people of diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections and cultivate respect between people. (Australian Curriculum: Intercultural Understanding)

Rationale:

This policy provides the basis for managing all international travel experiences.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- The school meets its obligation to ensure that all international travel excursions are planned and conducted in a manner that aligns with departmental regulations and guidelines
- Parents are informed of management processes for all international travel excursions, and are provided with an understanding of procedures involved in the planning and preparation of international travel excursions

Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy the following terms are defined as follows:

- **The Department** (The Department of Education and Training)
- **Smarttraveller website:** The Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), travel advisory and consular assistance service
- **International travel:** Travel between countries or nations
- **Excursion:** An activity organised by a school during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities

Guiding Principles:

When planning and conducting international travel excursions Parktone Primary School will:

- operate within applicable legislation and take responsible steps to ensure that they meet their duty of care to students when organising international travel excursions
- gain School Council approval for all international travel excursions
- comply with any DFAT travel advice current for the proposed location
- subscribe to receive automatic travel advice updates from DFAT through the Smarttraveller website both prior to the excursion and when overseas
- review their risk assessment if there are any changes to the DFAT travel advice. This will require the Principal to consider whether there is a need to cancel, recall or alter excursion arrangements.
- ensure that the international travel excursion is directly linked to school curriculum

Excursions and Activities

- **Venue Selection** – The school will take steps to ensure that all venues that are to be used by the students during an international travel excursion are suitable and appropriate, including any homestay families' place of residence if applicable
- **Safety, Emergency and Risk Management** – The school will conduct a risk assessment for overseas travel and develop a risk management plan

Staffing and Supervision

Ensure that all international travel excursions are appropriately staffed in line with the outlined minimum staff ratios and requirements (one staff member to ten students for international travel excursions).

- Staff must be approved by the principal or school council and may be included in supervision ratios. Staffing and supervision may include:
 - teachers employed by the Department or school council
 - other adults with a valid Working With Children Check on a volunteer or paid basis such as:
 - parents or carers of students with additional needs
 - education support class officers
- The principal, together with the study tour co-ordinator will ask staff for an Expression of Interest and conduct a merit and equity process to select appropriate staff to supervise the study tour.

The school will ensure that international travel excursions:

- are under the direct control of a teacher employed by the Department
- at all times are supervised by the approved adults in attendance
- have enough teachers employed by the Department or school council to maintain appropriate control of the experience and of each activity to take place within the international travel excursion
- have registered teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff, with excursion staff who are not registered teachers and who will provide supervision of students providing a valid Working with Children Check

The school will:

- aim to provide staff of at least one person per gender
- ensure that the specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member attending the international travel excursion are clarified and understood by all staff and students prior to the commencement of the excursion
- ensure that, where specialist instructors are employed, they have the necessary skills or qualifications for the activity, appropriate experience for the age and skill level of the students, and hold appropriate public liability insurance. The school recognises that while specialist instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the teachers have overall responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students, even where the teachers do not directly provide the actual instruction
- ensure that school-based staff comply with the Department's Travel for Staff policy

Emergency management plans

The school will develop emergency management plans that are specific to international travel excursions. In the event of an emergency, to ensure information is provided to emergency services, the school will notify the Department of any approved school camp or excursion at least three weeks beforehand through the Student Activity Locator in the eduGate Emergency Management portal.

Emergency management plans will be inclusive of procedures in the event of:

- an emergency at the different venues in which the students will be located
- a medical emergency including the details of emergency services, the local doctors, and the local hospitals that are located at the different venues in which the students will be located
- procedures for students to report any problems during the international travel excursion. Such procedures will be communicated to staff and students prior to departing
- nominating a person to be responsible for responding to critical incidents. Students and staff will be made aware of the responsible person/s prior to departing.

The school will ensure that all participating staff and students, as well as relevant school staff, are familiar with the procedures contained within the emergency plan.

Students and Parents

The principal together with the study tour coordinator will seek expressions of interest from parents to assist in determining how many students are interested in attending the study tour. How often the study tour will be offered and which year levels will be invited to attend will be depend on the number of parents who express an interest in having their child attend. At any stage, from the expression of interest through to the departure date, the principal may determine the necessity to refuse a student's attendance on the study tour.

The school will ensure that parents/guardians have provided informed consent for their children to participate in an international travel experience. *Note:* If the school is aware that a family is subject to family law orders or there are family law proceedings in place or pending, then it will obtain the written consent of both parents in order for the student to participate in the international travel

In preparation for excursions, the school will advise students and parents of:

- the organisational arrangements
- relevant safety arrangements or emergency procedures
- of expected standards of behaviour

In extreme cases whereby appropriate standards of student behaviour are not met, the international travel excursion staff, following consultation with and the approval of the school principal, may decide to return a student to their home from an excursion. In such cases, excursion staff will advise the student's parent or carer of the:

- circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home
- time when the parent or carer may collect their child from the excursion or the anticipated time that the student will arrive home
- consider the age and maturity of the student when making homeward travelling arrangements

Student Medical Information

- The school will obtain and hold all up-to-date and relevant information about the student's medical conditions, medication and other medical requirements

Medical Insurance

- The cost of medical and hospital treatment is high in some countries. Consequently, all staff and students must obtain travel and medical insurance for the entire overseas excursion which is arranged by the school

Immunisations

- The school will take reasonable steps to inform students and their parents that immunisations may be required, including advising the student and their parents to seek medical advice from their doctor as well as directing them to the DFAT Smartraveller website for travel advice

Costs

- All student travel costs and expenses related to the international travel excursion are the responsibility of parents. The school will provide a breakdown of all associated costs within an expected range at the initial information session. Once numbers are confirmed by way of a deposit, actual costings will be communicated

Staff & Student Eligibility for International Travel Excursion Attendance

Selection processes for staff will be transparent and include an application process and shortlisting. Prior to submitting a deposit, parents and students will be provided with an outline of the overseas learning experience, its aims and purposes, the process and criteria for eligibility and the commitments required. An expression of interest will be sought, and the Principal will determine student eligibility before a deposit is made.

Once students and staff have been selected, the school will provide an opportunity as soon as practicable for parents and students to meet with all staff who will be travelling with the group.

Implementation:

In chronological order

- The school will develop a proposal for the intended international travel excursion to be presented at School Council, which will include:
 - the purpose and intended outcomes of the international travel excursion
 - links to school vision, policies, curriculum, and Strategic Plan
 - details of the teacher in charge, destination, dates, and duration
 - year level(s)
 - student safety and risk management processes and procedures
 - travel, insurance and accommodation arrangements
 - costs, source of costs, cost timeline, and any proposed fundraising
 - processes for selecting students and staff
 - processes for communicating with students and parents

- outline of experiences during international travel excursion

➤ details of key contacts for travel

- upon approval by School Council, the school will present the proposal for DET approval by the Regional Director

Before the international travel excursion, the school will:

- begin liaison planning with overseas hosts/ partner schools, which may include utilising the International Excursion Hosting Agreement to assist in formalising hosting arrangements with partner schools
- consider accommodation arrangements and engage the services of a travel agent
- provide an update of information for teachers, students and parents, including details of application and selection for staff and students and timeline for selection process to be undertaken and outcomes communicated

In the weeks prior to the international travel excursion, the school will:

- reinforce expectations for students and staff
- allocate responsibilities
- ensure all relevant consent forms and passports have been completed and lodged by parents
- ensure all relevant student and staff medical information forms have been completed and lodged
- confirm travel and personal insurance arrangements
- establish codes of conduct/ participation agreements
- brief participants on clothing and toiletry requirements; travel and luggage requirements; money and gift arrangements; resources/stationery items to be taken; communication with school/home; telephone and internet access
- register overseas travel plans with DFAT and check the Smartraveller website
- meet with participating students regularly prior to departure to get to know the student group and to discuss their hopes, expectations, current knowledge base, anxieties, feelings, anticipated learning – is a pre-condition

Seeking advice

Principals, school staff and other personnel involved in planning and conducting international travel excursions should seek advice, where necessary, from relevant Department units and external agencies to obtain appropriate technical or specialist advice.

Evaluation:

Policy to be reviewed in 2019 and thereafter as part of the school's three-year review process.