



Overseas school trips – supplementary guidance

Version 1.0

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Introduction

Guidance Purpose

This supplementary guidance provides more specific advice and best practice for schools taking overseas trips. The information should be used in conjunction with wider existing advice published, including but not limited to the following resources:

- [Education outside the classroom – Ministry of Education](#)
- [Education outside the classroom guidelines – Tātūrangi – New Zealand Curriculum – Ministry of Education](#)
- [Day-to-day financial management - Ministry of Education](#) (specifically the Financial Information for Schools Handbook)
- [Support your child's wellbeing and mental health - Ministry of Education](#)
- [Child protection in schools - Ministry of Education](#)
- [Health and safety responsibilities for schools - Ministry of Education](#)
- [School-to-school exchanges - Ministry of Education](#)

Overseas trip planning and communications

Initial Planning

Guidance and further information related to supporting schools initial planning are published on [education.govt.nz](https://www.education.govt.nz). This guidance covers aspects related to policies and procedures, legal obligations, emergency planning, health and safety risks, understanding the travel destination, staff and supervision, travel insurance, passport and visa requirements, costs, and trip accessibility.

Before you leave

What to communicate

Make sure you are regularly communicating with parents. You will need to clearly outline:

- details of the staff and adults who will be accompanying the trip
- what the payment schedule is and how much it is, including a clear indication if deposits are non-returnable (for example, for travel, accommodation, activities)
- details of what is and what is not covered by the cost
- decisions about insurance and what is included/excluded
- whether the travel agent is bonded, and the risks of a non-bonded agent
- advice on appropriate clothing and pocket money
- the itinerary, including departure and arrival details
- accommodation details
- any possible dangers and risks you have identified – including cancellations
- the school's emergency plan
- discipline and appropriate sanctions
- details of travel arrangements, including any enroute accommodation
- the date of the family information evening (if any)
- how you will provide receipts or cost breakdowns for payments made by families.

What information and documents to collect

You will need the following information and documentation from families and students:

- an emergency contact name and number both at home and away
- a consent form which details any special medical and diet information and gives permission to take appropriate emergency measures
- passport and visa details

- any medical and travel insurance requirements.

Involve staff and supervisors

Teamwork and leadership are vital ingredients for a successful trip.

- Have regular team meetings and ensure all staff are consulted about arrangements.
- If possible, include families in some of these conversations, particularly for longer or overseas trips.

Regularly update your risk assessment

Make sure you regularly update your risk assessment to meet individual students' needs.

Meet with relevant staff and family members if you are concerned about a student. For example, an additional member of staff might be needed to assist with students with disabilities or other learning needs.

Find out more about supporting students with diverse needs on the learning support page.

[Learning support - Ministry of Education](#)

During the trip

Supervision

- Regularly do a headcount of students, particularly when getting on and off transport. Always get another member of staff to check.
- Always ensure reasonable supervision. Allocate groups of students to individual staff members; this helps rapid communication of information.

Travel

- Ensure students understand and apply travel safety requirements, for example, using seat belts on coaches.
- Always keep students informed of reasons for delays or sudden changes of plan. This will help keep students calm if there are unexpected changes and they can update their guardians if necessary.
- Make sure students are aware of Customs and biosecurity requirements and the penalties that underpin them before departure and for the return trip to New Zealand.

Accommodation

- On arrival at the accommodation, update your risk assessment. Consider a fire practice if you can do so without disturbing other guests, and check entries and exits to rooms.
- Take care when allocating students to rooms. There needs to be a balance between students' preferences and the need to ensure good order and safety.
- Let students know who they can talk to privately if they have concerns or are feeling unsafe. Consider informing students and families about room allocations before the trip if possible.
- Take similar care in allocating staff members and other adults.
- Advise students to take care of their belongings and offer to lock valuables in staff rooms or in the hotel safe.
- Make sure rooms are checked for pre-existing damage and report it to the accommodation manager.

Activities

- Arrange a meeting with students to reinforce the code of conduct, identify out-of-bounds areas, map out the programme for the week and agree on bedtimes.
- Let the tour reps or hotel managers know of any concerns you may have, particularly if you think they compromise student safety.
- Do not change the planned programme or accept enforced changes without good reason. If possible, communicate any changes to parents.
- Consider the insurance implications of your liability as a party leader. For example, many insurance companies do not cover human error. This may be covered by school insurance for professional liability.
- If you are unsure of how to deal with a problem on the trip, consult your team or contact your school for advice. A school should ideally provide an emergency contact so that you can make contact in the event of an emergency.

Returning home

- In the last stages of the journey home, ensure that students can contact home to provide an expected time of arrival.
- On arrival, staff must stay with students until they are collected.
- Contact family members if they are late to pick up a student.

Insurance

Minimum insurance cover

Insurance should cover the following aspects at a minimum.

Health cover

- Medical expenses incurred for the treatment of illness and/or injury that requires surgery and/or hospitalisation – unlimited sum insured.
- Medical evacuation related to serious illness and injuries – unlimited sum insured, include emergency dental treatment.
- Costs for family members' travel in the event that the student suffers a serious illness or injury.

Repatriation, search and rescue

- Repatriation and expatriation in the event a student has to return home following an injury or illness.
- Return of mortal remains/funeral expenses - including travel costs for family members, repatriation of remains and funeral costs, search-and-rescue operation costs incurred to locate the insured.

Travel into and out of New Zealand

- Missed flights or delays for travel into and out of New Zealand.
- Medical expenses incurred for the treatment of an illness and injury incurred during the travel.

Personal liability

- Negligence causing bodily injury (including death) of another person or loss of or damage to property.

Party leader liability

Depending on the circumstances, party leader liability may not be covered by travel insurance but may be by Risk Management Scheme or private insurance programme for schools.

We recommend you check the insurance policy with your insurance providers. Situations may include but not limited to costs from missed flights and transport or misjudgements by a party leader.

Unforeseen circumstances

Depending on the nature, cost, and length of the trip, you might consider insurance to cover unforeseen circumstances such as natural disasters, event cancellation or global pandemic.

Unforeseen circumstances insurance is not essential, but you may want to consider it for trips with high costs, reliance on external bodies, tight timeframes or higher risks.

Required ratios

A ratio compares the number of skilled and experienced supervisors to the number of students or participants involved in an event.

Ratios will vary according to the age and needs of students, the nature of the activity, the location, the competence of the students and the staff involved.

See chapter 4 of the EOTC guidelines:

- [Education outside the classroom guidelines – Tātūrangi – New Zealand Curriculum – Ministry of Education](#)

Ratios for overseas trips, remote environments or hazardous activities should match the increased level of risk involved.

If in doubt, be conservative and/or seek professional advice when deciding on an appropriate supervision plan, including ratios.

A list of professional national bodies can be found within the Helpful Resources section of the EOTC guidelines.

Temporary accommodation

When a student or group is not able to stay at accommodation arranged by their school/trip organiser for any reason, they may need to stay somewhere else temporarily.

Reasons to need temporary accommodation include (but not limited to):

- booked flights/transport have been delayed/cancelled
- student(s) had urgent medical treatments
- trips have been disturbed by national disasters/civil unrest.

Trip organisers must take a robust approach to determine that temporary accommodation and accompanying supervision is suitable.

This includes but is not limited to:

- assessing the suitability
- ensuring that students have appropriate supervision
- ensuring the group students have an appropriate ratio of supervisors
- monitoring and managing any risks to the safety of students.

Safety (Risk) management and emergencies

Safety and risk management will help to reduce the likelihood and severity of serious and adverse health and safety outcomes when hosting or taking a school trip.

Schools and trip leaders need to ensure that risks are known, assessed and managed.

You can the following resources to support all aspects of safety management. Your board should also have a set of health and safety guidelines for you to follow.

Resources including guidance, tools and resources to help schools with EOTC safety management:

- [EOTC Safety Management – Education Outdoors NZ \(external link\)](#)
- [EOTC Safety Management Plan and Toolkit – Education Outdoors NZ \(external link\)](#)
- [Good Practice Guidelines – Education Outdoors NZ \(external link\)](#)
- [School Boards and EOTC Responsibilities -Education Outdoors NZ \(external link\)](#)

Responding after an emergency

If you have an extreme event while on a school trip it can affect students, staff, families and communities.

You can find resources about responses to extreme events on the Ministry website below.

- [Respond at school to an emergency or traumatic incident - Ministry of Education](#)

More information

Other related pages

- [Enrolling students from overseas - Ministry of Education](#)
- [School-to-school exchanges - Ministry of Education](#)
- [School costs and donations - Ministry of Education](#)

Resources

- [The Tertiary and International Learners Code of Practice - NZQA \(External link\)](#)
- [Education outside the classroom guidelines – Tātūrangi – New Zealand Curriculum – Ministry of Education](#)

Disclaimer

This guidance has been compiled for your information only. It should not be treated as an exhaustive statement on the subject, nor should it be considered as a substitute for legal or professional service.

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