 

**overseas Excursions procedures**

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OVERSEAS EXCURSIONS PROCEDURES

This procedure must be read in conjunction with the Overseas Excursions Policy

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1. Overview
* These procedures cover the mandatory requirements for planning overseas excursions for ACT public schools, providing step by step guidance in the planning and conduct of overseas excursions.
* They apply to all ACT public schools and areas in the Education Support Office (ESO) that support the administration of overseas excursions and must be read in conjunction with the *ACT Education Overseas Excursions Policy.*
1. Rationale
* The ACT Education Directorate (the Directorate) recognises that overseas excursions provide students with a wide range of rich learning experiences to complement the foundation of learning activities in our public schools. The benefits associated with overseas excursions are varied and may include intellectual, cultural, physical and social growth and awareness for students.
* While overseas excursions provide positive opportunities for all participants, they also represent a potential high level of risk to individuals, principals, school staff, the Directorate and to parents/caregivers.
* Overseas excursions must be accessible to all students. As such schools must ensure that students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and those who require additional support are not disadvantaged or prevented from participating for financial reasons or lack of resources.
* These procedures facilitate the approvals, timeframes and other requirements to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those involved in planning and conduct of the overseas excursion.
* The information is aimed at identifying and minimising the risk to enhance the learning experience to ensure the planning and approval process meets the requirement of the safety and wellbeing of staff, students and accompanying adults while travelling overseas.
* Support will be provided throughout the planning stages by various areas with the Education Support Office (ESO). Contact details are provided at each stage.
1. Endorsement, Approvals and Authorisations
* The Deputy-Director General is the Excursion Approval Authority for all international excursions which have a safety rating at level 2 or above, as per Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Smartraveller scale.
* The Executive Group Manager, School Improvement supports Executive Leader School Operations and staff for travel approvals for safety rating of level 2 and above and will defer to Deputy Director-General (DDG) for approval.
* Executive Leader School Operations provide approval at Stage 1 and part of Stage 2.
* The principal is responsible for compliance with all aspects of the Overseas Excursion Procedures including seeking the necessary approvals. Principals must ensure that approvals at each stage are adhered to within the timeframe.
1. Directorate Point of Contact and Records Management
* School Operations is the central point of contact for schools organising overseas excursions (schooloperations@act.gov.au).
* School Operations is responsible for passing on the information to the correct area of the Directorate for processing and returning to the school via the nominated email address. The school principal must be copied in every email concerning the overseas excursion for the school and all correspondence must be placed on a centralised TRIM file.
1. Planning and Approval Stages
* The overseas excursion planning and approval process occurs in four (4) stages.
	+ Stage 1 – Pre-Planning and Overseas Excursion Proposal Approvals
	+ Stage 2 – In-principle Approval
	+ Stage 3 – Conduct of the Overseas Excursion
	+ Stage 4 – Post Overseas Excursion
* These procedures outline the mandatory requirements and information required for each stage to ensure legislative and Directorate requirements are met. Failure to adhere to these procedures, requirements and prescribed timelines will result in non-approval of a school’s proposal or cancellation of the planned overseas excursion.
* Accompanying forms are linked throughout the document and can be found on the ConnectED page. Document package information and a checklist can be found at Appendix A for all stages of planning.
* The principal and teacher-in-charge must be clear on when forms are due to ensure that timeframes are met by the school and parents/carers.
* Schools are advised to commence planning of overseas excursions at least 6-12 months in advance to allow for ACT and Commonwealth administrative processes (including processing of passport applications).
* If at any stage of the process approval is not given, School Operations will contact the school principal and the teacher-in-charge. If resubmission is required, support will be facilitated by School Operations to ensure assistance and support from the appropriate area of the ESO.
1. Responsibilities
* The principal is responsible for compliance with all aspects of the documentation. The principal is to:
	+ appoint a teacher-in-charge of the excursion.
	+ use the information in this procedure to guide the teacher-in-charge and to comply with Directorate requirements for overseas excursions.
	+ develop a Communications Plan in readiness for conduct of the overseas excursion.
	+ notify their Director of School Improvement of the intent to travel overseas at least 6 months before travel.
	+ ensure that all documentation is completed and submitted within the allocated timeframe for approvals.
	+ confirm that the overseas excursion activities cannot be undertaken in Australia.
	+ confirm and approve the educational purpose for the overseas excursion.
	+ develop and approve an education plan for students who are unable to attend the overseas excursion.
	+ seek DDG approval for an excursion with a DFAT warning of Level 2 or higher.
	+ approve any cancellations or alterations to excursion arrangements.
	+ conduct a pre-excursion briefing for staff, students and the parents/carers of students attending the excursions.
	+ ensuring there are appropriate contingency funds available for staff on the excursion to access in the event of an emergency.
	+ notify any parents/carers of any exclusions due to ACT Health directions.
	+ undertake the ongoing [risk assessment process](https://actedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-Education/SitePages/Risk-management-advice-and-guidance.aspx#what-is-risk-assessment) with teacher-in-charge.
* The teacher-in-charge is to:
	+ attend any training or information sessions relating to overseas excursions.
	+ use the information in the procedures to comply with Directorate requirements for overseas excursions.
	+ comply with DFAT travel advice.
	+ ensure all documentation submitted is current as per DFAT advice.
	+ contact the Directorate’s Agency Security Advisor (EDUSecurityandEmergency@act.gov.au) to inform them of the intention to travel to the country of choice including transit locations and to arrange a security briefing.
	+ consider the connection with the curriculum, proposed dates, year groups and prospective attendance numbers, staff requirements, modes of travel, accommodation type, approximate cost and proposed activities with the school principal.
	+ ensure parents/carers have completed all the necessary medical information forms and permissions.
	+ ensure all staff travel forms and requirements are completed.
	+ ensure staffing arrangements are sufficient in the event of an emergency.
	+ work with the principal on the communications plan, including assigning a designated school contact.
	+ ensure excursion planning and risk management considers the school’s child safety responsibilities. This is especially important if there is any time where students are not under the direct supervision of school staff. Refer to the [National Child Safe Principles](https://www.education.act.gov.au/support-for-our-students/feeling-safe-at-school/national-child-safe-principles).
	+ ensure information and a briefing has been provided to parents/carers.
	+ develop a clear code of conduct to govern the behaviour of all participating students and ensure that the code of conduct is signed by each student and their parents/carers.
	+ prepare all documentation required for each stage.
1. Stage 1: Pre-Planning and Overseas Excursion Proposal

**Guidance notes**

* Pre-planning discussion with principal to discuss educational purpose.
* No financial or other commitments are made by families or staff.
* All Stage 1 documentation must be completed 6-12 months before the departure date.
* All planning in relation to the overseas excursion is to be fully documented and records kept and maintained in accordance with the Directorate’s records management policies.
* All Stage 1 forms are to be completed and approved against the Stage 1 Approval Checklist (Appendix A).
* Contact Agency Security Advisor for advice on proposed travel destination(s) (EDUSecurityandEmergency@act.gov.au).
* Executive Leader School Operations approval required.
	1. Application and Approval Process
* The proposal must be approved by the school board prior to being submitted to the Executive Leader School Operations.
* The school board should consider all financial aspects of the overseas excursion before approving a proposal to ensure that access and participation in overseas excursions is not prevented for reasons of disability or financial disadvantage.
* School boards may explore fundraising activities or existing budgetary sources to support students. The decision to provide financial support to an excursion is at the discretion of the School Board and Principal and must be considered on a case by case and de-identified basis to protect the privacy of students and families.
* The decision of the school board will be communicated to the teacher-in-charge by the principal. The minutes of the school board meeting must reflect the discussion and decision.
* All forms including the signature of the principal and school board chair must be submitted to the ESO via School Operations for Executive Leader School Operations approval.
* It is the responsibility of School Operations to acknowledge receipt of the application by emailing the principal and teacher-in-charge, check the application is complete and includes all required information, and forward the proposal to the Executive Leader School Operations for approval.
1. Stage 2: In-principle Approval

**Guidance notes**

* All Stage 2 documentation must be submitted for approval at least four (4) months prior to proposed departure date.
* The principal should ensure all documentation complies with any conditions set by the Directorate or Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) travel requirements <https://www.dfat.gov.au/travel>.
* All Stage 2 forms are to be completed and approved against the Stage 2 Approval Checklist at Appendix A.
* Once approved, registration through DFAT must be completed *(*<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/consular-services/subscribe>).
* A security briefing must be arranged by the teacher-in-charge with the Directorate Agency Security Advisor (ASA) for all participants attending the overseas excursion (EDUSecurityandEmergency@act.gov.au).
* Final approval required by DDG.
	1. Application Process
* The principal should ensure the documentation complies with any conditions set by the Executive Leader School Operations in Stage 1. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that all documentation required for Stage 2 is forwarded to School Operations.
* School Operations will acknowledge receipt of the application by emailing the principal and teacher-in-charge, process the application, and forward the application for in-principle approval to the DDG via the Executive Leader School Operations.
* If not approved, School Operations will provide feedback to the teacher-in-charge and principal. School Operations will support schools to amend and resubmit their application.
	1. Approval Letter and Final Checklist
* When the DDG approves the Stage 2 application, the principal and teacher-in-charge will receive an approval letter including a final checklist as per Appendix A.
* The school must inform the Executive Leader School Operations and DDG via School Operations of any updates to excursion information up until departure date. This includes changes to any of the information previously submitted and extra information such as a change to staffing and student numbers, a change in the DFAT rating, or any other potential issues that may arise through parent/caregiver concerns or questions.
1. Communications
* When conducting an overseas excursion, a communications plan should be developed as soon as possible. The plan should consider the type of communication, what needs to be communicated and to who, roles and responsibilities, and timing in response to a variety of situations including emergencies and audience.
* The Communications Plan should outline:
	+ contact details for the teacher-in-charge.
	+ contact details for the designated point of contact at the school.
	+ expectations of communication between the teacher-in-charge and the school contact.
	+ information and consent notes for parents/carers – what do they need to know and when and what do they need to consent to and why?
* The point of contact for the school may also be the school liaison for parents/carers where all enquiries can be directed to during the excursion.
1. Travel Information and Planning
	1. Intention to Travel
* Schools that intend to plan an overseas excursion must notify School Operations 12 months before the proposed excursion date.
	1. Educational Purpose
* The Overseas Excursion Proposal for Approval needs to demonstrate how planned activities will significantly contribute to and/or enhance curriculum outcomes. The proposal should demonstrate that the planned activities are not available in Australia or provide additional educational benefits compared to similar activities in Australia.
* Overseas excursions must be accessible to all students. Consideration must be given to how students with additional needs will be able to participate.
	1. School Community Support
* Once the principal and teacher-in-charge have considered all aspects of the overseas excursion, a letter to the parents/caregivers must be prepared and sent out. The intention of the letter is to gauge the level of interest in the proposed excursion before Executive Leader School Operations approval. The Information for Parents and Caregivers form guides the information required.
	1. Staff Training Session
* It is a requirement that staff planning for an excursion participate in a Directorate led Overseas Excursion Training session conducted as a minimum twice a year. Principals of schools intending to run overseas excursions should ensure that the proposed teacher-in-charge or a staff representative attend a training session before planning begins.
* Training sessions include information on the policy and the procedures and a session on risks and security protocols.
* If schools have missed the training session in time for planning, must contact School Operations.
	1. Passports
* The parents/carers of each child intending to participate in the overseas excursion are responsible for obtaining a passport for their child. The teacher-in-charge is required to inform parents/carers of the arrangement for the security of passports while travelling.
* The risk assessment undertaken for the excursion must include an action for the possibility of an incident related to the security of passports.
* For further information on passports including timeframes, visit <https://www.passports.gov.au/> and <https://www.passports.gov.au/getting-passport-how-it-works/how-get-child-passport>.
	1. Australian Government Travel Advice
* DFAT provides travel advice to Australians intending to travel overseas (<https://www.dfat.gov.au/travel>) through Smartraveller which provides travel advice and consular assistance service. Risk and emergency management plans must be developed in consideration of the location, students, activities planned, types of travel undertaken and any relevant advice from DFAT.
* When considering the overseas excursion destination, the teacher-in-charge must refer to the information of the [Smartraveller website](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/?gclid=CjwKCAjw-IWkBhBTEiwA2exyOxJFnCEapwrU-bQncoAmB6VFsyWvJrcR1_wQWnktmiVKWTgQiHBgVxoC1AsQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds) in the first instance to check that the country of choice and transition countries are at the acceptable ‘level’ for travel (see below).
* A [scale system](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/consular-services/travel-advice-explained) is used to indicate the degree of caution Australians should exercise in each location. The level will inform travel insurance arrangements and costs to parents/carers.
* In determining the advice level of a destination, DFAT considers the security risks compared with the general security threats in a large Australian city. The capacity of a foreign government to deal with the risks is also considered. At times the advice may not fit exactly within one of the levels - in such cases DFAT will use language that is best suited to a specific situation and provide practical advice.
* It is the **responsibility of the school** to subscribe to Smart Traveller *(*<https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/consular-services/subscribe>) to receive travel advice and alerts to the destinations to be travelled to and through. This information is used to inform the Executive Leader School Operations, staff and parents/carers.
* The four levels of DFAT advice are:
	+ **Level 1**: exercise normal safety precautions.
	+ **Level 2**: exercise a high degree of caution – requires additional attention to planning and assessment of risk.
	+ **Level 3**: reconsider your need to travel – would generally mean the excursion should be postponed or cancelled as the educational goals are unlikely to justify the risks.
	+ **Level 4**: do not travel.
* **Permission to proceed with an overseas excursion may be withdrawn at any time if the DFAT travel rating of any destination or transit point reaches level two or above.** This applies at any stage of the planning process where a level 2 or above has been advised by DFAT.
* Any decision to continue would require School Operations and the Agency Security Advisor (ASA) to determine the risks, seek advice from ACT Government Agencies and present the finding and impacts to the DDG, Executive Leader School Operations, principal and teacher-in-charge.
* If there is appetite to proceed for a level 2 or above the following must take place:
	+ consultation by School Operations and ASA to Directorate Senior Executives
	+ a detailed risk assessment and treatment plan and a contingency plan
	+ approval by the DDG.
* After considering all the facts, the decision to proceed or not will be made by the Director General and communicated to the Executive Leader School Operations, principal and teacher-in-charge. School Operations will assist with communications to parents/carers.
* It is important that parents/carers understand this process and the consequences and are informed of any updated travel advice issues by DFAT and the impact on the excursion. Schools must advise parents/carers in writing of:
	+ the need to follow the DFAT travel levels.
	+ their insurance provider’s information.
	+ DFAT advice on the excursion.
	+ any revised travel arrangements or cancellation.
1. Safety & Well-being
	1. Duty of Care
* In providing a safe working and learning environment for everyone, risks and controls associated with safety and well-being for staff, students and accompanying adults are documented on the Risk Assessment.
* It is the **responsibility of the principal** to ensure all participating staff members are aware of the duty of care and safety requirements outlined in the Overseas Excursions Policy and other relevant ACT Government policies, supervision requirements and safety procedures as outlined <https://actedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-Education/SitePages/Health-safety-and-wellbeing.aspx>
* The activity, qualifications and experience of staff members combined with knowledge of the students and their specific needs must be considered when selecting staff to accompany and supervise students on the excursion.
* It is the responsibility of the teacher-in-charge to be aware of potential cultural and political differences and to ensure that, prior to departure, students and accompanying adults are fully briefed on these risks as part of the pre-excursion briefing.
	1. Risk Assessments
* Risk management must be an integral part of facilitating overseas excursions. Overseas excursions should maximise educational opportunities whilst reducing risk to a level that is acceptable to the Directorate and within the laws of Australian and the visiting country.
* Undertaking a risk assessment is essential and will provide the necessary information to support the overseas excursion proposal and guide your communication to the school board, and information to parents/carers.
* The Directorate has developed a general Operational Risk Register for Overseas Travel. Using this register as guidance, the teacher-in-charge must undertake a risk assessment with all staff intending on travelling. The risk assessment must be specific to their planned excursion to identify risks that may affect the safety, health or wellbeing of any staff, accompanying adult and students. Effective controls for minimising and managing risks must be discussed and documented and understood by everyone attending the overseas excursion. This information is required as part of Stage 1 approval.
* Considerations for the risk assessment include:
	+ the number of students, the age range and the students’ experience, capacity and behaviour.
	+ the excursion venue/site and any potential hazards and risks associated with the proposed activities at that venue, including but not limited to current DFAT warnings.
	+ local laws and customs and criminal activities that are common in the location/s visiting.
	+ the method of transport to the excursion venue and all activities.
	+ transit locations and risks associated with the location.
	+ travel insurance requirements and in-country public liability provisions.
	+ in-country laws concerning pandemics (e.g. COVID-19) and response such as lockdown, isolation and border closures. For further guidance on managing pandemics, contact School Operations for the latest information.
	+ safety and suitability of the selected accommodation.
	+ issues that might arise due to the length of time of the excursion and/or possible weather events.
	+ any medical or behavioural conditions, that need to be managed.
	+ any special clothing or required items that should be taken on the excursion by students and supervisors.

**NOTE:** Excursions involving high risk activities will **NOT** be approved. Excursions that are in remote locations or where there is limited or not communications will **NOT** be approved.

* Dynamic risk assessments must be undertaken throughout the overseas excursion. This assessment provides the opportunity to constantly evaluate the risk if a trigger point is activated by a particular circumstance or situation that requires an immediate assessment of the current excursion that may result in a change to the planned activity. These risks are documented and filed.
	1. Physical Activities
* Participant safety must be the primary consideration at all stages of the overseas excursion. Students must only engage in Directorate approved activities. [The Physical Activities Mandatory Procedures](https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/school-activities/physical-activities-policy/physical-activities-policy) outline the requirements for principals, staff, external providers and others involved in the planning and delivery of any physical activity.
* Consideration must be given to the selection of activities and the standards in comparison to the requirements under Australian Law, Regulations and Standards. Any activity undertaken overseas must have the equivalent or higher standards than Australia and must include, qualification and equipment standards. Where there are differences, it is advised that schools:
	+ consider an alternative activity.
	+ undertake a risk assessment.
	+ ensure there is adequate public liability ($20million Australian Dollars).
* The school must complete an Overseas Excursions Physical Activities application form.
	1. Emergency Planning
* An emergency plan must be developed and included within Stage 2. The plan must include emergency contacts, and procedures to be followed in the case of illness, an accident, hospitalisation, loss or theft or personal belongings, travel issues, a change to DFAT travel advice, a natural disaster or an act of terrorism.
* The teacher-in-charge must have a copy of the plan with them throughout the overseas excursion. A copy must be left with the principal. The emergency plan may include a requirement for the teacher-in-charge to contact the school on a daily basis.
* The teacher-in-charge must have access to a mobile phone with global roaming capabilities throughout the overseas excursion. Where possible, the teacher-in-charge is required to inform the school of an unexpected delay in returning from the excursion to enable the school to advise parents/carers of the later arrival.
* It is the responsibility of School Operations to send the Emergency Plan to the Risk, Security and Emergency Management team to review the documents to ensure that they have been modified to suit the overseas excursion and consider risk controls.
* In the event of an emergency, a supervising teacher on the overseas excursion is required to contact the principal immediately.
* Any incidents requiring the use of the emergency plan are to be documented by the teacher-in-charge and recorded on return to school.
* Any changes to the risk assessment and management plan, emergency contact details or emergency plan must be submitted to the principal prior to the excursion.
	1. First Aid
* Adequate arrangements must be in place to provide for the safety and wellbeing of staff, students, and accompanying adults. This must include the provision of first aid.
* It is the responsibility of the teacher-in-charge to ensure planning for medical emergencies has been achieved to ensure staff are able to respond to sick and injured students, teachers and accompanying adults. This includes ensuring the supervision ratios are adhered to.
* The teacher-in-charge must:
	+ have a clear understanding of the medical facilities and services on offer to foreigners before departure.
	+ identify what qualifications are needed and which staff have current Basic First Aid and CPR qualification or other first aid qualifications.
	+ appoint at least one qualified staff member participating in the excursion to the first aid role.
	+ ensure the first aid kit is stocked appropriately and is available at all times.
	+ provide support to the first aid officer in the organising of medical information and the collection, storage of dispensing of medication to students.
	+ ensure all medical information and consents are collected by the parents/carers.
	1. Immunisation
* As timeframes for immunisations may be different for different countries, it is imperative that the school informs parents/carers of the overseas excursion locations including transit points, as soon as possible. Parents/carers must seek advice from their general practitioner regarding the vaccinations recommended and timeframes.
* Schools must prepare information for parents/carers including a description of the advice given and/or copies of all communication related to immunisation as part of the stage 2 application. Proof that immunisation requirements have been undertaken is required and provided by parents/carers to the school.
1. Supervision
	1. Liability of supervising staff
* Directorate staff can receive workers’ compensation if involved in an accident while on an overseas excursion. Depending on the circumstances, the Directorate may bear the cost of any damages resulting from a staff member’s negligent actions while on an overseas excursion. However, if staff actions are not in keeping with ACT Government and Directorate policy, they could be individually liable.
	1. Supervision of Students
* To ensure appropriate and effective levels of supervision, the risk assessment should take into account the following:
	+ the experience, qualifications and skills of staff including accompanying adults, instructors and support staff.
	+ the age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of students.
	+ the ability and experience of the students.
	+ the size of the group.
	+ the nature and location of the excursion.
	+ the activities selected.
	+ known or anticipated weather conditions.
	+ requirements outlined in the information for [Directorate Physical Activities Mandatory Procedures](https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/school-activities/physical-activities-policy/physical-activities-policy).
	+ emergency response planning.
	+ other relevant factors.
	1. Gender Balance
* For overseas excursions schools must consider and respond to the diverse gender identities of students and take steps to accommodate their safety, comfort, and wellbeing.
* Schools should ensure the staffing composition for overseas excursions reflects the needs of students attending the excursion.
	1. Minimum Ratios
* Supervision ratios are set as the minimum requirement for overseas excursion including for travel and in transit. Upon undertaking a risk assessment on the activity or event/s, the teacher-in-charge may, set a higher number of staff to students.
* Where there is a conflict of ratios between the Directorate Physical Activities Procedures and the Minimum Ratios, the highest student to teacher ratio must be chosen.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Number of Students Participating** | **Number of Staff Required** |
| 1 to 10 | 2  |
| 11 to 20  | 3  |
| 21 to 30 | 4 |
| (every 10) | (1 teacher per 10 students) |

* 1. Accompanying Adults
* Overseas excursions are designed to provide enriching experiences for students. Principals should carefully consider whether it is necessary for an accompanying adult to attend the excursion. For example, it may be necessary for a parent of a child with special needs to attend to support their child.
* All schools must act impartially and with probity when considering whether parents/carers or volunteers may accompany student groups on excursions. The principal must ensure that due diligence is taken to ensure no conflict of interest exists, and that no one participating in the excursion gains or is seen to gain improper advantages or benefits. This includes advantages to teachers, and family members as accompanying adults particularly where there is a financial gain to the family member.
* The teacher-in-charge must at all times act in a manner consistent with the intention of Section 9 of the *Public Sector Management Act* <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1994-37/current/pdf/1994-37.pdf> when considering whether other accompanying adults participate.
* It is the responsibility of the teacher-in-chargeto:
	+ ensure accompanying adults are advised of their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the [Volunteers and Visitors in Schools Policy](https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/wellbeing/child-protection/volunteers-and-visitors-in-schools-policy/volunteers-and-visitors-in-schools-policy); provide each person with an information pack containing the required forms and information.
	+ ensure all accompanying adults undergo a criminal record check via the Australian Federal Police (<https://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/national-police-checks>) to be considered for the role.
	+ ensure accompanying adults obtain a Working with Vulnerable People (WWVP) background check.
	+ maintain a list of accompanying adults, and indication that the criminal record checking process has commenced, WWVP has been obtained and record dates of final approvals.
	+ ensure all documentation for accompanying adults has been submitted.

**Note:** the criminal record check, **must** be sponsored by the school principal and any accompanying adult approved to attend by the Executive Leader School Operations.

1. Insurance
	1. Travel Insurance
* All students and accompanying adults must take out travel and medical insurance for the entire overseas trip. It is recommended that this insurance is not taken out via a tour operator.
* Before taking out any insurance cover, families and accompanying adults should ensure they understand what the policy covers and consider if they require additional coverage. Consideration must be given to if the insurance cover excludes events that may disrupt travel plans such as pandemics, wars, natural disasters and strikes.
* Travel insurance costs and arrangements such as cancellation policies are determined by the Level of DFAT advice which will be checked by the insurance company.
* Some countries attract an increased level of risk associated with insurance for staff. Before deciding on a country of interest, you must contact the Directorate Agency Security Advisor via edusecurityandemergency@act.gov.au to offer you advice. You can also access information via [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)
	1. Insurance for staff
* Staff are insured by the ACT Insurance Authority (ACTIA) for ‘official agency business’. The cover includes injury and sickness as well as incidental costs such as medical, personal liability and lost luggage.
* Staff participating in the excursion must notify ACTIA of their intention to travel. Staff can submit one form for each staff member or by submitting the ACTIA Overseas Travel Form for all staff, individually filled in and signed prior to submitting.<https://actss.service-now.com/sharedservices/?id=act_insurance_authority>
* A copy of this notification must be included in stage 2 application.
* Staff must comply with the direction of Directorate Policies and Procedures and the current Enterprise Agreement (Agreement) to maintain insurance coverage. Actions that do not comply with the Agreement or Directorate policies and procedures may result in lapses in insurance coverage. This includes failure to comply with rules and regulations related to safety, health and well-being.
* Staff who intend to combine an overseas excursion with personal travel cannot access ACTIA insurance for any part of their overseas travel. The principal must confirm that staff who are not covered by ACTIA for this reason, have acquired adequate insurance.
* It is the responsibility of School Operations to provide a summary of the details of each overseas excursion with final approval to ACTIA prior to departure.
* If staff would like a copy of the ACTIA Insurance Policy, or further information relating to Travel Insurance, contact edusecurityandemergency@act.gov.au or contact ACTIA directly via the Shared Services Portal.
	1. Insurance for students
* All students participating in the overseas excursion are required to have adequate travel insurance, including unlimited medical coverage and repatriation.
* It is the responsibility of the principalto advise parents/carers that adequate travel insurance is required for students. It is important that the chosen insurance policy covers the activities students will undertake during the excursion and is related to the country or countries of travel. It is the responsibility of the principal and teacher-in-charge to inform all participants that the Directorate does not accept liability for additional costs that may arise from an incident.
* It is the responsibility of the principal to advise parents/carers to consider whether they would be entitled to a refund through their insurance agent if an excursion is cancelled due to an increased DFAT alert level or any other reason.
	1. Insurance for accompanying adults
* Accompanying adults are required to take out their own travel insurance.
* It is the responsibility of the principal to advise accompanying adults to consider whether they would be entitled to a refund if an excursion is cancelled due to an increased DFAT alert level or any other reason.
	1. Insurance for external providers/contractors and consultants
* Contractors and consultants such as activity leaders are not covered by ACTIA. The principal must advise external providers, contractors and consultants to provide evidence that they haveworkers’ compensation, public liability insurance, personal injury and professional liability cover sufficient for the nature of the work they are undertaking.
1. Financial Management
* While overseas excursions are curriculum related, payment is required by parents/carers of participating students. Schools should aim to keep costs to a minimum.
* Schools are responsible for ensuring that the total cost of the overseas excursion is met with a complete breakdown of the cost to be submitted with the application. The Overseas Excursion Costs Planning and Financial Management Information will assist schools in the breakdown of costs. The cost of relief staff and staff travel, accommodation and other associated expenses related to the excursion **must** be included. All ACT Government requirements for planning, purchasing and accounting for monies must be met. A full break down of the costs for the excursion **must** be submitted with the Stage 2 application.
* Staff should not personally cover any expenses related to their travel, including but not limited to accommodation, food, airfare, immunisations, global roaming, and any required training such as First Aid.
* Staff personal expenses (items such as souvenirs) must not be covered by participating students.
* There may be occasions where global roaming for communications is required. Contact Strategic Procurement EDUStrategicProcurement@act.gov.au for further information on expenditure related for overseas school excursions.
	1. Procurement of Goods and Services
* The Directorate follows the ACT Government procurement guidelines to ensure that the best services are provided to students. The procurement amount and rules information outline the different rules and regulations associated with procurement activity, which is dependent on the value of the procurement. (<https://actedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-Education/SitePages/Procurement-amount-and-rules.aspx>).
* To progress the procurement process, contact Strategic Procurement EDUStrategicProcurement@act.gov.au who will assist in working through the key steps being:
	+ Statement of Requirements (SOR)
	+ Procurement Values – consider how they are being applied.
	+ Agreement/purchase order.
	+ The Excursion Risk Assessment and Risk Register.
* The team will also provide advice regarding travel requirements and assistance in the approval process.
* A copy of all completed forms must be sent through to School Operations for the purpose of records management.
	1. Third Party Providers
* It may be deemed necessary for a third-party provider such as tour operators, and contractors to be engaged to organise and facilitate activities, events for the excursion. If this is agreed, the school must follow the Procurement of Good and Services section of the procedures.
* Tour operators are equipped to provide unique travel experiences and manage the logistics and administrative requirements on behalf of the school.
* The principal must conduct due diligence to determine whether the third-party provider meets the following criteria:
	+ the provider’s staff are suitably trained to supervise the activity.
	+ the provider meets industry and Australian standards and holds relevant accreditations.
	+ the provider has a risk management and safety plan relevant to the activities being conducted.
	+ the provider has appropriate insurance (for $20million Australian Dollars) for public liability cover for any event.
	+ the provider has clear terms and agreement in relation to cancellations, alterations/postponements, and refunds.
	+ the provider outlines clear terms of engagement and what they offer e.g., activities, logistics, administrative requirements.
	+ key contacts are supplied.
	+ all information is presented in English via a secure website and is verified as authentic.
* It is important to remember that engaging a third-party provider does not transfer the duty of care. The teacher-in-charge and the school principal will still need to take reasonable steps to reduce foreseeable risks.
* In the event a third-party provider cancels the school must be clear on refund options and this must be clearly understood and communicated to parents/carers.
* Schools are advised not to make payment or cancel a trip until this information has been checked and verified by the Legal Liaison team via School Operations.
	1. Contracts
* Before parents/carers enter into any agreement with a third-party provider, to run all or part of an overseas excursion, the school principal and teacher-in-charge must consult with Legal Liaison team via School Operations.
* The Legal Liaison team will verify responsibility for any agreements entered between the parents/carers and the third-party provider. As such the school will not be liable for any loss or damage incurred by a parent/carer as a result of a third-party provider breaching the terms and conditions of an agreement.
1. Excursion Documentation
* A copy of information needs to be held with the teacher-in-charge of the excursion as well as with the school principal. This information can be found within the required documentation in Appendix A with the information updated and maintained throughout the planning and conduct of the overseas excursion:
	+ communications plan with key contact details.
	+ medical information with any relevant medical plans.
	+ permission notes signed by parents/carers.
	+ risk assessment and emergency management plan with key contact details for in-country consulate support, local hospital, local emergency services, local affiliate school etc.
	+ contact details of families, students.
	+ detailed itinerary with dates, times, key contacts etc.
	+ details of travel insurance for staff, students and accompanying adults
	+ copy of tour operator contact details, insurance and risk assessment (if applicable)
	+ in addition to the above, a copy of the photo page of each student passport and any visas.
	1. Itinerary
* The school should commence planning the overseas excursion itinerary based on the details provided in the Stage 1 proposal. The itinerary, including any changes, must be included with the stage 2 application forms.

**Note:** The school must provide a list of any changes to the itinerary submitted in stage 2, to the principal prior to the overseas excursion.

* 1. Medical Information, Consent and Response Plan for Parents/Carers
* The school must inform parents/carers and obtain consent for each student to authorise their participation in the excursion. The medical consent forms must also be collected for each individual student from the parents/carers and, where indicated response plans for known medical or health conditions. The medical forms and letter to parents/carers must include authorisation for the teacher-in-charge and or first aid officer to arrange medical and/or surgical treatment should it become necessary while overseas.
* Exchange of information between schools and parents/carers must be in writing and any verbal communication confirmed in writing and stored in a secure location.
* Confirmation that parents and carers have completed all overseas excursion consent and medical forms is required with the application in Stage 2 which will give the teacher-in-charge time to discuss any individual plans with the parent/carer.
* If travel immunisation/vaccinations are required, proof by the family medical practitioner must be attached to the individual student medical form.
* In the event of an accident, the student forms must be attached to the incident and accident report and forwarded to the School Operations who will process through the ESO.
	1. Pre-Excursion Briefing
* The principal and the teacher-in-charge must undertake a pre-excursion briefing for students, parents/carers, accompanying adults, and participating teachers.
* Consideration should be given to the following topics:
	+ educational purpose.
	+ health, safety and well-being including medical, immunisation.
	+ code of conduct for students.
	+ code of conduct for accompanying adults.
	+ cultural considerations.
	+ risks associated with specific activities and general risks.
	+ logistics including if students or adults need to leave earlier than expected.
	+ Accommodation.
	+ Passports.
	+ Money.
	+ security precautions and emergency procedures.
	+ appropriate clothing and accessories.
1. Accommodation
* It is the responsibility of the principal to provide parents/carers and students with detailed information about the style of accommodation and outline any special conditions or arrangements that may form part of the experience. This should include considerations such as sharing arrangements, bedding type (bunks, swags, single beds etc.)
* Regardless of the style of accommodation, the teacher-in-charge and staff must ensure the accommodation is adequate and students are monitored on a regular basis to ensure they are suitably placed and stay where they are allocated.
	1. Hotel, Hostel Style Accommodation and Catering
* The principal must provide clear details of the accommodation arrangements and expectations to the parents/carers and students. This includes the requirements on sharing accommodation with other students, catering arrangements, rules or laws pertaining to the local community etc.
* Once the accommodation location and style are known, the teacher-in-charge must undertake a risk assessment to address any known or potential issues such as sharing arrangements, bathroom configuration, student combinations, location of the teachers on site, where they can require assistance afterhours including first aid and access to catering.
1. Stage 3 – Conduct of the Overseas Excursion - Procedures
* The following activities must be undertaken by the principal and teacher-in-charge while the school is on the excursion. These include the following:
	1. Enact the Communications Plan
* The Communications Plan approved by the principal and the teacher-in-charge must be enacted to ensure regular and adequate communications are maintained throughout the excursion***.***
	1. Review and Update of Itinerary
* The approved itinerary must be reviewed prior to departure with any changes documented and approved by the principal.
* The itinerary must be followed for the duration of the overseas excursion. Any changes must be documented with decision notes, communicated and approved by the principal. Any updates must be filed.
* The principal should communicate the changes to the Executive Leader School Operations, parents/caregivers particularly where there is a change to location, venue, activity.
	1. Risk Assessment
* As soon as the excursion begins changes and unexpected issues may arise. The teacher-in-charge, in consultation with staff and accompanying adults, must undertake risk assessments, keep notes on any changes and document decisions made on the Risk Assessment and Emergency Management form.
* This must include documenting any controls required to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all participants. Any significant issues, concerns relating to WHS and risk must be communicated to the principal immediately.
	1. Excursion Documentation
* The teacher-in-charge must keep all excursion documentation secure throughout the excursion.
	1. Activities
* Check that all participants are engaged with activities that are approved by the Directorate and are in accordance with relevant Directorate policies and procedures. If at any time staff feel the activities are not in accordance with Directorate requirements, or if staff feel that the health, safety and wellbeing of participants is compromised they must cease the activity and notify the teacher-in-charge who must notify the principal.
	1. DFAT Travel Advice
* It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that DFAT travel rating and advice for all countries that the school is visiting and transiting is checked daily while the overseas excursion is in progress. If the advice level of a country is raised, or other advice is changed, the principal must communicate this with the teacher-in-charge and must update the Risk Register and follow the emergency plan.
	1. Code of Conduct – Staff, Students and Accompanying Adults
* The teacher-in-charge is responsible for addressing minor breaches of the staff and student code of conduct. If a serious breach occurs, the teacher-in-charge must consult the emergency plan and contact the principal for decision making and to determine how the breach will be managed. This includes any behaviour of accompanying adults that may constitute reputational damage or criminal activity.
	1. First Aid
* Any minor injuries or illnesses should be treated by the nominated first aid officer. All injuries or illnesses requiring treatment must be documented. Injuries or illnesses that cannot be treated by the first aid officer must be referred to a qualified medical practitioner. All actions and decisions must be documented on the emergency plan.
	1. Managing Money - Students
* Students who are experiencing issues with managing money while travelling including losing money, excessive spending will need to be supported by staff and accompanying adults. If required, the teacher-in-charge communicates any financial matters to the principal where the contingency fund will need to be utilised.
1. Stage 4 – Post Overseas Excursion Procedures
* The following activities must be undertaken by the principal and teacher-in-charge:
	+ The teacher-in-charge must conduct an evaluation of the activities, travel and overall experience.
	+ Any issues experienced while overseas must be dealt with by the teacher-in-charge and the principal.
	+ All finances must be reconciled and completed including:
		- the cancellation of travellers cheques within one week of returning to Australia.
		- an advance for incidental expenditure in relation to the excursion acquitted in full within one week of completion of the excursion.
		- the filing of receipts.
		- the return of any school debit cards to the school.
		- refunding any out-of-pocket expenses teachers may have been required to spend during the excursion. Receipts and/or statutory declaration to be provided.
* Excess funds will be managed at the discretion of the principal.
* A copy of all financial planning and acquittal records must be placed on the TRIM file by the school. Strategic Finance is available to assist with financial management requests.
	1. Excursion Debriefs

Excursion debriefs are an important part in the learning experience for staff, students and accompanying adults. The information gathered from a debrief can be used as a learning tool and improve the planning and execution of the next overseas excursion planned. Before commencing have a clear objective of the debrief.

* Upon return of the overseas excursion, several activities must take place to ensure all actions are completed and documented.
* Teachers and students must undertake a post excursion debrief, particularly where there were known issues and concerns. This can be done through an online report or as a group.
* The information should capture what went well, what would be done differently next time and what didn’t work. This information should be used to improve the next Overseas Excursion experience.
	1. Overseas Excursion Report
* The teacher-in-charge must write a post Overseas Excursion Report. The report should include the following:
	+ a summary of student feedback from the debrief.
	+ an Evaluation of physical activities.
	+ an evaluation of any third-party providers.
	+ an evaluation of the code of conduct of staff, students and accompanying adults.
	+ an evaluation of the management of risks and emergencies including effectiveness of response and include recommendations for future requirements.
	+ an evaluation of accommodation arrangements.
	1. Document Finalisation
* Any incidents that occurred should be documented, evaluated and reported to the principal who will determine if any follow-up actions are required. All forms of documentation must be filed and include:
	+ Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan with updates following the evaluation.
	+ first aid incidents with notes on what occurred.
	+ any other incidents including accommodation, in transit incidents, etc.
	+ copy of the final Overseas Excursion Report.
	1. Financial Management Upon Return
* Following the overseas excursion, a financial reconciliation is to be completed within 4 weeks. This should include:
	+ the cancellation of travellers cheques within one week of returning to Australia.
	+ an advance for incidental expenditure in relation to the excursion acquitted in full within one week of completion of the excursion
	+ the filing of receipts.
	+ the return of any school debit cards to the school.
	+ refunding any out-of-pocket expenses teachers may have been required to spend during the excursion. Receipts and/or statutory declaration to be provided.
* The distribution of excess funds is at the discretion of the principal.
* A copy of all financial planning and acquittal records must be placed on the official file by the school. Strategic Finance is available to assist with financial management.
1. Legislative Requirements
* The *Education Act 2004* details the general principles and objects of school education and the operation of public schools in the ACT.
* Schools are also accountable for their use of funds and are required to comply with the *Financial Management Act 1994.*
* Staff, student and visitor well-being is critical to the success of the overseas excursion. The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*, outline the provision of Primary Duty of Care.
1. Summary of Roles and Responsibilities
* **Deputy-Director General –** to approve any form of travel at DFAT level 2 and above.
* **Executive Group Manager, School Improvement –** to assist schools in the approval process for overseas excursions.
* **Directors School Improvement –** to pre-approve overseas excursion following all requirements have been met at each stage.
* **School Operations –** contact point for schools seeking to undertake an overseas excursion.
* **All Staff –** implementthis procedure when planning and conducting and overseas excursion.
1. Contact
* The Senior Director, Risk, Security and Emergency Management, Governance Branch is responsible for this Procedure.
* For support contact School Operations (schooloperations@act.gov.au)
1. Feedback
* Any feedback about this procedure, should be raised with the policy owner. Refer to Contact information above.
1. References
	1. Definitions
* **Accompanying Adults:** includes teachers, school support staff, parents, activity leaders and volunteers
* **ACT Insurance Authority (ACTIA):** provides travel insurance for Directorate staff for overseas school excursions while they are on duty.
* **Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT):** the Australian Government department that monitors international travel risks and provide up to date advice for travellers.
* **Duty of Care:** a duty to, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of persons who are under the school’s care and charge (including workers and volunteers) while on the overseas excursion.
* **Education Support Office (ESO):** refers to the education support services of the Directorate that do not reside in ACT public schools (e.g., system level/corporate support).
* **Overseas Excursion:** educational trip by students outside of Australian borders, under the direction of teachers, which is directly related to the curriculum of the school.
* **Person Conducting Business or Undertaking (PCBU):** the Director-General is the person conducting a business undertaking who under legislation is responsible for all work health and safety matters**.**
* **Physical Activities:** structured and planning learning activities involving movement that deliver skills, knowledge, understanding, fitness and/or personal and social capability as the primary pedagogy to achieve outcomes for students. The *Physical Activities Policy* must be followed during the facilitation of all Physical Activities.
* **Risk:** the effect (whether positive or negative) of the uncertainty on objectives.
* **Risk Assessment:** the overall systematic process of risk identification, risk analysis and risk evaluation.
* **Risk Register:** a location for documenting risks after they have been analysed through a risk assessment process; outlines the context, controls and actions required to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
* **Supervision:** As part of that duty, teachers are required to supervise students adequately. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from those that could arise (that is, those that the teacher should reasonably have foreseen) and against which preventive measures could be taken. Supervision of students is also extended to accompanying adults who are approved to assist teachers.
* **Teacher-in-Charge:** Designated as a Classroom Teacher or higher classification in the [Enterprise Bargaining](https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1405750/ACTPS-Education-Directorate-Teaching-Staff-Enterprise-Agreement-2018-2022.pdf)[Agreement](https://www.education.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1405750/ACTPS-Education-Directorate-Teaching-Staff-Enterprise-Agreement-2018-2022.pdf) and is nominated by the Principal as the teacher in charge.
	1. **Related Policies and Documents** - Link to related policies or other documents.
	+ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (smartraveller – [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au))
	+ *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards)*
	+ Excursions Policy
	+ Employment Agreement - <https://actedu.sharepoint.com/sites/Intranet-Education/SitePages/Employment-agreements.aspx>
	+ First Aid Policy
	+ Physical Activities Policy
	+ Responding to Student Accidents/Incidents: Support, Reporting and Insurance Arrangements Policy
	+ Risk Management Framework
	+ Students with a Disability Meeting their Educational Needs Policy
	+ Swimming and Water Park Aquatic Activities Policy
	+ Volunteers and Visitors in Schools Policy

APPENDIX A – Document Package for Stages 1, 2, 3, 4

Principal and Teacher-in-charge are to insert dates for each Stage against the Forms and Actions Below and attach to Stage Approval Checklist form.

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| **Stage 1 – Pre-Planning and Overseas Excursion Proposal Approvals** |
| **Instructions:**1. The documents below are required for Stage 1 Approval
2. Once approvals have been obtained, the principal completes Form 1 and sends package to School Operations (schooloperations@act.gov.au)
3. All documentation will be place on the registered file.
 |
| **Form/Action** | **Date/Timeframe** | **Responsible Person** |
| * Form 1: Approval Checklist
 | 6-12 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 2: Overseas Excursion Proposal for Approvals
 | 6-12 months before departure | Principal |
| * Form 3: Information to parents/carers
 | 6-12 months before departure | Principal |
| * Form 9: Overseas Excursion Risk Assessment & Emergency Plan
 | 4-6 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |

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| **Stage 2 – In-principle Approval** |
| **Instructions:**1. The documents below are required for Stage 2 Approval (except for Form 20, which is completed after Stage 2 Approval has been obtained)
2. Some stages require other areas of ESO to undertake the duties
3. Once approvals have been obtained, the principal completes Form 4 and sends Stage 2 Documents package to School Operations (schooloperations@act.gov.au)
4. All documentation will be place on the registered file.
 |
| **Form/Action** | **Date/Timeframe** | **Responsible Person** |
| * Form 4: In-principle Approval Checklist
 | 4 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 5: In-principle Approval Application
 | 4 months before departure | Principal |
| * Form 6: Overseas Excursion Costs Planning and Financial Management
 | Begin 6 months before departure | Principal |
| * Form 7: Overseas Excursion Immunisation and Medical Information, Consent and Response Plan for Parents/Carers
 | 4-5 months before departure | Principal |
| * Form 8: Overseas Excursion Physical Activities Application
 | 5 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 9: Overseas Excursion Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan
 | Begin 5 months before and continue to update in Stage 2,3 | Teacher-in-change |
| * Action 10: Contact Strategic Procurement for Selection of Travel Providers
 | 4-5 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 11: Letter – Excursion Information Package for Parents/Carers
 | 3-4 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 12: Working with Vulnerable People, Background Checking
 | 4 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 13: Action 13: Overseas Excursion Travel Procedures for Staff
 | 3-4 months before departure | All staff attending |
| * Action 14: Advise Agency Security Advisor of Travel via email and arrange a Security Briefing
 | 2-3 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 15: Accommodation Information for Parents/Carers
 | 2-3 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 16: Excursion Consent and Code of Conduct Agreement for Parents/Carers and Students
 | 2-3 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge  |
| * Form 18: Emergency Contact Details for Parents/Carers
 | 2-3 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 19: Mandatory Procedures Statement
 | 2-3 months before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 20: Final Checklist
 | Six weeks prior to departure | Teacher-in-charge |

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| **Stage 3 – Conduct of Overseas Excursion** |
| **Instructions:**1. The actions below are required to be maintained throughout the excursion relating to forms in Stage 1 and 2
2. Any changes made must be communicated to the school principal who will inform School Operations (schooloperations@act.gov.au)
3. All documentation will be place on the registered file.
 |
| **Form/Action** | **Date/Timeframe** | **Responsible Person** |
| * Action 21: Itinerary – update and provide principal with update
 | 1 day before departure | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Form 9: Overseas Excursion Risk Assessment and Emergency Management Plan
 | Ongoing | Teacher-in-charge |

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| **Stage 4 – Post Overseas Excursion** |
| **Instructions:**1. The actions below are required upon return
2. Any changes made must be communicated to the school principal who will inform School Operations (schooloperations@act.gov.au)
3. All documentation will be place on the registered file.
 |
| **Form/Action** | **Date/Timeframe** | **Responsible Person** |
| * Action 1: Complete financial management; acquittals, receipts and reports
 | Within 2 weeks of return | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Action 2: Undertake debrief and provide report to the principal
 | Within 2-4 weeks of return | Teacher-in-charge |
| * Action 3: Complete Form 09 and send through to schooloperations@act.gov.au and EDURMA@act.gov.au
 | Within 2-4 weeks of return | Teacher-in-charge  |