NSW Department of Education

Permission - Frequently Asked Questions

Mandatory inclusions

Where can we access the information regarding permission notes and mandatory inclusions to copy and paste into our school notes?

These can be accessed via the:

Permission support landing page: https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/Permission

Direct link to the mandatory 'must have' statements for all sport and physical activity permission notes: Permission must haves' (DOCX 35KB).

Where can we find the mandatory sport-specific inclusion statements for the relevant sport/s?

These can be found via:

Collision permission: Australian rules, rugby, rugby league- mandatory inclusion (DOCX 233KB) (updated May 2024)

Structured swimming activity- mandatory inclusion (DOCX 234 KB) (updated May 2024)

Unstructured swimming activity- mandatory inclusion (DOCX 248 KB) (updated May 2024)

Snowsport- mandatory inclusion (DOCX 207 KB) (updated May 2024)

Rafting, kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddleboarding - mandatory inclusion (updated February 2025).

Do the mandatory 'must have' statements need to be included for school sport or just when students play competitive sport offsite, for example, interschool sport?

The mandatory statements must be included in all permissions notes.

All sport and physical activity will be covered by the notification step that embeds the 'must haves' into communication with parents at the beginning of each school year or as changes are made to arrangements throughout the year.

If schools choose to continue to use their existing notes, the current 'must haves' need to be added. Permission must haves (DOCX 35KB) Schools that write their own annual notification must also include the following along with the 'must have' statements:

Our school values sport and physical activity and the essential role it plays in contributing to overall wellbeing for all students.

School sport is co-curricular and is a mandatory part of the school week for all students.

This year, sport and physical activity will be organised and overseen by our teachers assisted by other school staff and take place on the school site.

Do we need to send out a generic PDHPE note at the beginning of each year with accident insurance information, concussion management information and a list of sports that students will participate in?

You don't need to separate PDHPE from the annual notification at the beginning of the year in which sport and PDHPE are advised as being business-as-usual (BAU). The note would contain the following:

Our school values sport and physical activity and the essential role it plays in contributing to overall wellbeing for all students.

School sport is co-curricular and is a mandatory part of the school week for all students.

This year, sport and physical activity will be organised and overseen by our teachers assisted by other school staff and take place on the school site.

Accident insurance information

In the event of injury, no accident or medical insurance cover is provided by the NSW Government Treasury Managed Fund for students participating in school sporting activities, physical education lessons or any other school endorsed activity, unless there is a breach of duty of care by department or school staff. The NSW Department of Education is insured to meet the financial impact of any legal liabilities arising from its activities. It does not provide, nor has it ever provided, accident or medical insurance for students enrolled in government schools.

Concussion management

When a student enrolled in a government school is diagnosed with concussion, the principal must be advised in writing by the parent/carer as soon as the diagnosis is confirmed. Students may only return to sport and physical activity once a medical clearance has been provided to the school and, if at a school sport event, to the supervising teacher.

Any student that experiences a suspected concussion during a school-endorsed activity, will be removed from the activity and parents/carers will be advised that a medical follow-up is required.

If medical clearance is not provided, the student cannot participate in vigorous or competitive school sport or physical activities for 21 days from the concussion date.

Can we do a general permission note at the start of the year that covers physical education (PE), sport lessons and the swimming carnival?

Swimming activities require separate permission. Sport lessons and PE can be covered by the new notification step, if low risk, teacher-led and on school grounds.

Schools could send all notes home at the beginning of the year, however, specific details for the swimming carnival must be provided.

What about sport at lunch and recess - do we need notes for them?

No.

Do we need to seek permission for students to attend an in-school event such as a K-2 athletics carnival?

No, if it is on school grounds and there is no change to arrival or dismissal times. A parental communication would suffice with information for spectators.

If the K-2 athletics carnival occurs off the school site then yes permission for students to attend must be sought.

Which note/statement do we need to use for excursions to 'water play' venues where there is not any swimming but water slides etc?

“Water play parks” should be considered as unstructured swimming and the relevant note used. The types of activities can vary from waterspouts, tipping buckets to water slides. If there is any activity that includes a landing zone that has knee-deep water (for example, water slides), the Unstructured swimming activity- mandatory inclusion (DOCX 248 KB) is required.

If students are not participating in any activity involving water deeper than knee-deep, then no mandatory swimming inclusion is required.

Schools should refer to unstructured swimming activities when planning unstructured aquatic activities.

Why have the statements on costs of medical treatment been removed?

These statements are no longer fit for purpose.

The 2024 NSW Ambulance School Group Cover Scheme (ASGCS) is in place to make sure that any student who has a medical emergency and requires an ambulance while at school or on an organised school excursion or activity, will receive this service at no (additional) expense to the school or parents/carers.

Ambulance coverage information: NSW Ambulance School and Group Cover Scheme (ASGCS)

Families that have Private Health Insurance (PHI) or a Centrelink concession health care card will be required to use their own coverage.

Weekly school sport

Are the 'annual notification' and 'term/season notification' mandated by the department to be sent home or is it a school decision to send home these notifications?

Information about this is provided here- Weekly school sport and physical activity permission tool.

It is a school decision. The 'annual notification' and 'term/season notification' are time savers that embed the 'must haves' into parental communication at the beginning of each school year.

If schools choose to continue to use their existing notes, the current 'must haves' need to be added. Permission must haves (DOCX 35KB).

Which level of permission note would be needed if the sport venue changes week to week (for example, bus to a field one week, then playing at the school field the next). Are two separate notes needed or does the level 3 collective note cover both?

Level 3 collective note can be used for both.

When you have a Sporting Schools grant that covers the cost of a coach coming to the school, for example, basketball coaching, is a permission note required?

No however, schools need to provide a parental *notification* note along with the external provider's details as well as the supervision arrangements informing parents that a teacher from the school will be overseeing each group of students. A *permission* note is required if activity is not taking place on school grounds and/or if it involves a mandatory inclusion sport.

What if you have a 3rd party coming to run the sport activity, for example, a golf pro coming to teach skills alongside the teacher and it costs $5 per student?

When external providers deliver sport at a cost to families, specific permission **must** be obtained from parents/carers. Schools should use information on the carnivals, gala days, knockouts and external providers permission page to determine department requirements.

Supervision arrangements must be communicated informing parents that teachers from their school retain overall responsibility for supervision of students when engaging external providers to deliver sport and physical activity. The supervision ratios of teachers to students must not exceed average class size.

A private organisation (for example, Soccer jays, tennis) arrives on school site each Thursday at 7:30am to run a weekly sports clinic. The parents/carers deal directly with the organisation including paying for the weekly session. Does the school have to collect permission for these out-of-school sporting activities that are run by private companies? Does the school have to provide supervision for these activities?

In this example, the school does not collect the permission notes. The school should make it clear to parents/carers that, while the activities are taking place on school grounds, they are not school activities and therefore no supervision will be provided.

This is an example of Share Our Space, where the school grounds are simply the venue for the activities.

Carnivals and gala days

What if the students have to walk to the athletics carnival or swimming carnival from the school. Do they need a permission note? Can we just do an information note for the carnivals?

Athletics and cross-country carnivals can be covered by this note if the events are taking place at a venue that is used as part of weekly school sport.

A swimming carnival would need its own note as there is a mandatory inclusion for swimming.

Are the athletics and cross-country permission notes mandatory if the carnival is held on school grounds?

No, an information note for parents/carers advising about the carnivals suffices.

When holding an athletics carnival, do high jump events need specific permission, for example, with the 'flop' jump style?

No, this not required for a school athletics carnival.

Are verbal permissions acceptable for walking to the local reserve for a sporting activity?

Schools should use written permission (either paper or digital) for all sport and physical activities that require it, except in extenuating circumstances.

Verbal permission from parents/carers may be accepted if a student has forgotten to provide it or are unable to do so in the usual manner. In such cases, schools should have a system in place to support this, such as recording the time of the conversation and noting who provided the permission and who received the verbal permission.

Are Sporting Schools providers classified as external providers?

Yes, Sporting Schools providers are classified as external providers. Information for schools can be found in the department's 'Engaging external providers guidelines' available at External providers information link.

Does the external provider permission note apply if it is being provided by a Student Learning Support Officer (SLSO) with qualifications?

No, a non-teaching departmental staff member with the appropriate expertise to deliver a sport or physical activity is not considered an external provider. Please note that there must always be a teacher present to provide supervision and duty of care.

Does a swimming carnival come under a structured or unstructured aquatic activity?

The carnival is structured. All teacher-led activities are structured. Races are structured. A free swim is unstructured - this is not recommended.

Novelty events, if any, would depend on the nature of the activity.

School swimming carnival safety guide (PDF 1.34 MB)

Novelty events younger students (DOCX 315KB)

Novelty events older students (DOCX 310KB).

What if it's a mixture of structured and unstructured swimming, for example, a swimming carnival with free play at the end of the carnival. Which note do we use?

They become unstructured if there is a mix.

I have seen a reverse note be used for the swimming carnival where it says that if it is handed in, it clearly states that they are not to swim at the carnival. It also says on the note if the note is not returned that they have permission. Can this be done?

No, schools cannot use a reverse note as the system for parent/carer permission. The school will not know they received the note. Explicit parent/carer permission is required.

Do we need to ask parents/carers about their child's swimming ability on notes for zone swimming carnivals?

No.

Does verbal permission on the day of the event suffice for permission for aquatic activities?

Yes, although we would recommend parents/carers SMS or email confirmation, so the school has evidence. You can block your own number before you type the parent phone number using #31#.