

Overseas Travel Contingency and Emergency Response Manual

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# Purpose

As you are aware, there are inherent risks associated with any group travel, whether domestic or international. Risk management procedures should be in place prior to the commencement of any travel.

This document has been designed to ensure the safety of staff and provide response protocols across various situations including unexpected events and possible emergencies. Prior to departure you should familiarise yourself with these procedures. This document and its attachments should also accompany you on your travels.

In this document DET refers to Department of Education and Training staff, specifically International Education Division project manager and/or relevant school principals.

The travel advice, information, response protocols and risk register data contained within or attached to this document will not cover every situation within which you may find yourself when travelling overseas. They are intended to raise your preparedness to be able to respond effectively should you find yourself in a similar situation.

This document does not supersede the Departments [travel policy](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/services/procurenet/_layouts/15/WopiFrame2.aspx?sourcedoc=/services/procurenet/SiteAssets/Pages/Travel-and-Accomodation/DET%20Travel%20Policy%20-%20Update%20Sept%202016.docx&action=default) any contradictions between this manual and the policy, the policy takes precedence.

**Remember; once you depart Australia, you own the risk.**

# Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) - How they grade their advisories

Travel advisories reflect DFAT’s overall assessment of the security situation in a specific country and are designed to help assess the level of risk in that country.

Each travel advisory is graded against the levels outlined very briefly below; for full details concerning the various travel advisory grades visit [smartraveller](http://smartraveller.gov.au/travel-advice-explained.html). The travel advisories are shown in a continuum bar at the top of each travel advice page on smartraveller. Some advisories show more than one level, this may occur when the overall country is at a certain level, but different regions within the country are assessed to be at higher or lower levels due to particular risks or safety concerns.

In determining the level of a destination they consider the security risks and compare these to the general security threats in a large Australian city, but there is no strict formula. They also take into account the capacity of a foreign government to deal with the risks.

**Level 1 – Exercise normal safety precautions**

Exercise common sense and look out for suspicious behaviour, as you would in Australia.

**Level 2 – Exercise a high degree of caution**

Pay close attention to your personal security at all times and monitor the media about possible new safety or security risks.

**Level 3 – Reconsider your need to travel**

There is a high level of risk in the country/area. This may be due to a very high threat of terrorist attack or a volatile and unpredictable security situation. If you are already in a destination where we advise you to "reconsider your need to travel" and you are concerned about the security situation, you should consider leaving.

**Level 4 – Do not travel**

The security situation is extremely dangerous. This may be due to a very high threat of terrorist attack, widespread armed conflict and or dangerous levels of violent crime. If you are already in a destination where we advise that you "do not travel" you should consider leaving unless you have compelling reasons to stay.

Visit [smartraveller](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/) - [Travel advice explained](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/travel-advice-explained.html) for more valuable travel security advice. You should [subscribe](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/accounts) to receive travel advice for the destination/s you will be visiting. You will receive email alerts each time the travel advisory is reissued.

# Pre-trip planning and preparation – checklist\*

**Research:** being informed of the current local safety and security situation in the country(s) being travelled to is important preparation for your risk register;

Check [smartraveller](http://smartraveller.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx)

[Subscribe for smartraveller](https://orao.dfat.gov.au/pages/userlogin.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fpages%2fsecured%2fdefault.aspx) updates for each country

If traveling with to a sister school, ask for local safety and security advice from counterparts

Ask your travel agent/ tour company if they have safety and security advice available

Stay up to date with local news at destination

Understand local attitudes and conditions; acceptance of tourists, acceptable behaviour, respect local culture and customs, appropriate clothing, local laws.

Learn local layout; have maps of the area, information from previous visits

Review overseas travel requirements in the SPAG/intranet

**Travel Documentation:** different countries have different documentation requirements please ensure you have all required documentation in place prior to departure.

Passports and copies of passports with required length of validity post travel

Visas

Letters of authority from parents

Detailed itinerary

Insurance Policy, if your school elects to use VMIA, information can be found in [section 2.4](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/Schools/Insurance/Insurance-General/Insurance%20Arrangements%20Guidelines%20for%20Schools%202017%20-%20January.docx)

Carry one copy of all documentation in a separate place to the originals

Leave copies of all documentation with key contact at school (who is not going on the trip)

[Register all travellers with smartraveller](https://orao.dfat.gov.au/pages/userlogin.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fpages%2fsecured%2fdefault.aspxhttps://orao.dfat.gov.au/pages/userlogin.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fpages%2fsecured%2fdefault.aspx)

**Health:**

GP visits prior to travel including any required vaccinations, medication; [check list for parents](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/EM/Risk/Forms/Topics%20View.aspxhttps:/edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/EM/Risk/GP-checklist-for-parents-draft.docx) (draft)

[Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved Excursions](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/safety/medicalinfo.doc) (note a form for overseas to be developed [draft here](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/EM/Risk/Forms/Topics%20View.aspxhttps:/edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/EM/Risk/medicalinfo-overseas-draft.doc))

Health management plans as required

First aid kit

Medications in original packaging

Original scripts for any medication being carried

**Accommodation arrangements:**

Request through travel agent to stay on 3rd to 10th floor (fire ladder can reach)

Ensure exit routes and I.D. fire exits clearly identifiable

Ensure secure door/windows on all rooms

Safes or safe deposit boxes to store valuables

**Risk, safety and emergency management:**

Prepare risk register informed by information gathered in sections above, sample overseas risk register available on the intranet: [risk collaboration](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/Risk/Risk%20Examples/Sample%20Registers%20for%20schools)

Prepare an [Emergency Plan](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/safety/emergencyresp.doc) including 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
    - destination contact numbers e.g. Australian Embassy/Consulate, travel/insurance company, key school contact back in Australia, accommodation etc.

Prepare communications plan and chain, see section 4 and 5 of this document for samples

**Risk, safety and emergency management (cont.):**

Review [role of group leader overseas travel](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/Risk/Risk%20Examples/Forms/DET%20Document%20Set/docsethomepage.aspx?ID=30&FolderCTID=0x0120D52000E337E58D2DEA4794B385E7BC4B33763C002C951E863C46534EA5C578D940E92E83&List=8679caa6-a7a8-4649-a3fe-933451490fd0&RootFolder=%2Fedrms%2Fcollaboration%2FRisk%2FRisk%20Examples%2FSample%20Registers%20for%20schools&RecSrc=%2Fedrms%2Fcollaboration%2FRisk%2FRisk%20Examples%2FSample%20Registers%20for%20schoolshttps://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/collaboration/Risk/Risk%20Examples/Sample%20Registers%20for%20schools/Role-group-leader-overseas-travel.docx) and update as required

Complete safety and security pre-departure briefing with accompanying teachers, students and parents

Briefings should explain and discuss:

* + - risks identified from smartraveller and other sources
    - plans/strategies in place the minimise and mitigate risks
    - emergency planning in place
    - communications planning in place

**Travel approval and registration:**

Complete required documentation and seek school council approval

Apply for school staff approval through [School Staff Travel Applications](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/Schools/Travel/Pages/home.aspx)

Once both approvals have been granted, register overseas travel in the [Student Activity Locator](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sites/emergencymanagement/DEECDSAL/default.aspx)

**Other:**

Pack wisely, ensure appropriate clothes (warmth and decency), weight of clothes for destination.

Notify your bank of your travel plans.

Make copies of credit cards.

Carry required electronic device chargers and adapters.

**While overseas:**

**General Safety Tips:**

* be alert to revised [smartraveller](http://smartraveller.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx) advice,
* avoid any type of disturbance,
* monitor surroundings,
* keep your luggage close and take care of valuables, especially in backpacks side or rear pockets,
* carry I.D. card with blood type,
* organise to be met at airport,
* paper in student’s pocket with contact number/address,
* be aware of personal security including unsolicited offers,
* be aware of quarantine aware of restrictions,
* try to avoid walking around with large maps (advertises you as a tourist)
* be cautious about Wi-Fi banking/balance checks and keep an eye on your credit cards when paying for items/meals (card scanning).

**Safety at Airport:**

* keep all personal belongings on you at all times including; bags, laptops, cameras, other valuables
* only use licenced cabs/buses

**Safety while at destination:**

* pre-arranged meet up points briefed every morning/change of location
* only use licenced cabs/buses
* use seat belts
* keep windows up and doors locked in accommodation and while in vehicles

**Planning for Recovery:** if an incident or emergency occurs while the group is overseas, the recovery process should start as soon as possible.

**Recovery includes strategies for:**

1. Notifying the Security Services Unit (9589 6266) of the incident
2. Engaging additional specialist advice from Student Incident and Recovery Unit (9637 2934)
3. Collecting and providing clear, accurate, age appropriate information and ascertaining what can and can’t be released publically
4. A plan for actions to be taken to restore physical and psychological safety

**The plan for Recovery should identify:**

Roles and responsibilities in responding to the impact of the incident or emergency

Including:

* Bringing the group together as soon as you can to create a sense of physical and psychological safety
* Supervision arrangements for students separated from the group, e.g. hospitalised
* Who will notify the Principal/key school contact in Australia
* Keeping notes to keep track of actions including engagement with support overseas

Who will verify information of the incident and those impacted

Who will be responsible for liaising directly with impacted families, students

Including:

* Providing verified, age appropriate information to the student group as to what has happened. Remember; if you don’t know, you don’t know.
* Developing a script with key messages to provide to parents prior to contact with children, to prepare parents to be calm in response to their children.

Who will be responsible for communicating with the school community

Who will be responsible for liaising with emergency services, DET Regional and Central staff

\*This is not a comprehensive list, but a guide to help support thinking regarding preparations for overseas travel.

# Risk management scenarios

There are inherent risks associated with any group travel, whether domestic or international. Risk management procedures should be in order prior to the commencement of any program outline processes involved for managing unexpected events and possible emergencies. The following strategy and processes for managing risk have been developed for the X overseas learning experience program and are to be read in conjunction with the X overseas learning experience program Risk Register.

In this document DET refers to Department of Education and Training staff specifically International Education Division project manager and/or relevant school principals. The Hosting or host organisation will refer to the X Board of Education.

**Plan 1: Strategies in case of emergency**

Ensure your own safety by adhering to risk management information provided by DET, DFAT, travel providers and/or the local Australian Embassy/Consulate whilst in country and cooperate with the Group Leader (GL).

In the event of an incident (e.g. civil unrest, natural disaster, etc.) adhere to local protocols and advice regarding your personal safety. Monitor media updates and seek advice from local authorities and your GL. Stay informed and stay connected.

Ensure you are contactable at all times. Provide the GL with your in country mobile phone number. Ensure family and friends have your in-country mobile phone number.

Useful websites to monitor:

[www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)

[www.healthemergency.gov.au](http://www.healthemergency.gov.au)

**Plan 2: A natural disaster, political unrest or threat to group’s safety occurs within your vicinity or a nearby location.**

Stay Calm

Group Leader (GL) will check that all participants are safe. All participants must ensure they are contactable at all times during the exchange. Your mobile phone must be switched on and you must make contact with your GL.

The GL will seek information from in country program organisers, local authorities, and / or the nearest Australian Embassy / Consulate. GL will contact DET to alert them of the situation; consult with host organisation (if required) and/or embassy/consulate on plan of action and inform DET of on-the-ground advice.

GL will keep you informed about any proposed plan of action and/or necessity to change the existing arrangements. You are required to cooperate with the GL at all times. You should also consider contacting your emergency contacts in Australia.

In the event of a localised incident (only impacting on some of the group) you need to be aware of and adhere to local protocols and action plans as advised by local authorities or your GL. This advice may come via the GL or other contacts or intelligence you are able to access in a timely manner (e.g. media updates, consular advice etc.). You need to inform the GL of your situation as soon as possible.

**Plan 3: You are asked to - or need to - cease participation in the exchange.**

Group Leader (GL) will discuss options for resolving the situation with you to minimise disruption to program. If situation persists after all options have been exhausted, the GL will seek advice from DET to arrange a plan of action. If situation is deemed serious enough such that you must discontinue your participation in the exchange, the GL will consult with DET to implement a course of action.

The GL will inform you of the proposed plan and tell you the preferred course of action. Conversations with you will be recorded in writing. GL will ensure an appropriate third party is present to act as a witness.

If you are asked to return to Australia and refuse to do so, the GL will continue with the following procedures in liaison with DET.

GL will advise you that you need to alter your travel arrangements to travel home immediately.

If you agree to return to Australia the GL will continue with the following procedures in liaison with DET.

GL to contact DET to advise of your refusal to return home.

DET will advise GL to inform you that a flight has been arranged to enable an immediate return home and resumption of normal duties. You will be responsible for payment and booking of any alternative flights, accommodation etc.

The GL will notify DET of your modified travel arrangements. DET will notify the host organisation of your withdrawal from the program.

GL will inform the group of the situation and action taken, ensuring that appropriate confidentiality is maintained.

**Plan 4: You are incapacitated (e.g. ill, injured, or involved in an accident etc.).**

Stay Calm

If serious

If not serious

Inform Group Leader (GL) of the incident - GL if present will assess the situation and immediately undertake the following steps.

Inform Group Leader (GL) of your injury - GL will consult with you and support you in seeking medical attention if required.

GL will prompt you to contact your insurance company for advice and appropriate medical facilities.

GL will ensure that medical assistance is provided immediately and organise for you to be transported to the nearest appropriate medical facility if required.

GL will contact DET and support the process of contacting insurance and nominated emergency contact. On direction from DET they will also alert Australian embassy / consulate. The DET will contact the host organisation.

GL will record any assistance sought, and assess whether the injury / illness will impact on your ability to continue to take part in the program.

GL to keep DET informed and if necessary develop an appropriate plan of action to allow you to stay with the group.

GL will facilitate necessary procedures until the insurance company and medical experts decide a plan of action. DET will liaise with other parties if necessary.

If you are unable to continue in the program, Plan 3 will be followed for organising your early return.

**Plan 5: The Group Leader is seriously injured and/or incapacitated**

The Deputy Group Leader (DGL) will assume the role and responsibility of Group Leader (GL) and obtain medical assistance on behalf of the injured or incapacitated. A third person can be nominated by DET should both GL and the DGL be incapacitated.

If participants are also affected, DET’s emergency Plan 3 to be implemented. DGL or designate will contact DET, local authorities, and embassy/consulate for assistance.

If participants are not affected directly, DGL or designate will contact DET and embassy/consulate.

DGL or designate will contact insurance company, emergency contacts and support participants and follow DET directions.

DGL or designate will document and record steps taken to manage the situation.

DET will take over management of Plan 3 with support of the DGL or designate, host organisation and embassy/consulate.

DGL or designate continues to follow DET’s directions and communicates these directions to the exchange participants.

# Sample communications plan

**Sample –Communication Plan 2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Action** | **Who** | **When** |
| Communication Strategy briefing | Provided to all staff participating in the overseas student learning experience (OSLE) at the Staff Briefing on (prior to Parent Information Evening). | * Group Leader to OSLE staff |  |
| OSLE staff mobile phones | OSLE staff will take their own mobile phone to X destination. They must ensure that international roaming is enabled (contact phone provider). They should also disable the ‘location services’ and ‘data roaming’ function on their phone to avoid bill shock. The cost of any required international phone calls will be covered by the relevant school. | * OSLE staff | Prior to departure |
| Recording important phone numbers | OSLE staff will be provided with a list of important phone numbers that are to be entered into their phone prior to departure, in the correct country and area code format. OSLE staff will also carry a hard copy of these important phone numbers. | * Group Leader to provide list of important phone numbers in required format * OSLE staff enter phone contacts & carry hard copy | Prior to departure |
| Nominated school contact | Schools and OSLE staff are NOT to provide travelling staff member’s mobile phone numbers to families of OSLE students. Each school will provide parents with the details of a nominated school contact, based in Australia (as per DET guidelines). This nominated school contact will liaise (where required) with OSLE staff, DET Emergency Management and families | * Participating schools nominate school contact person and provide parents & DET with details * Nominated school contact liaises with OSLE staff, Insurance company, DET Emergency Management Division, to report an incident to Security Services Unit & families | * Prior to departure * During OSLE |
| X destination SIM cards | X destination SIM cards collected upon arrival in X destination for each of the accompanying staff. These SIMS have been organised by XXX. This will enable communication between groups in case of emergencies. These numbers will also be provided to all staff upon arrival in X destination. | * XXX | * Upon arrival in X destination |
| Student devices for communication | Students are to bring/ be provided with a portable Wi-Fi-enabled device (e.g. iPad, iPod Touch).  Required apps/software (e.g. Skype, blog, Internet browser) will be identified and must be installed on all student and staff wifi-enabled devices. These will be used for communication by the students via the established blog and for teacher-in-charge approved messaging.  Students will only use their communication device at designated times and for designated purposes, with the supervision and approval of the teacher-in-charge.  Devices to be collected and charged by the lead teacher from each school every night. Students are NOT to have communication devices in their hotel rooms at night or to use them unsupervised. Each school to provide power board/s for recharging devices. | * Families or schools provide Wi-Fi-enabled device for each student, with charger and power adaptor (as required) * Participating schools ensure student and staff Wi-Fi-enabled devices are loaded with required apps/software * Students use communication devices at designated times & under supervision | * Prior to departure * Prior to departure * During OSLE |

# Sample communication chain

**International Education Division**

(IED endorsed travel)

**Group Leader**

xxx

**Students**

**Parents/**

**Carers**

**Principal(s)/Key contact at school**

xxx

**Emergency Management Division –**

**Security Services Unit**

**24/7 phone service**

**9589 6266**

**Teachers**

# Lost Child

Response protocol for unaccounted for students.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| As soon as student is identified as being missing | * Conduct role call to ensure all other group members are present and ensure all stay together in one location. * Check with other group members as to last sighting * Call the student’s mobile number |
| Missing for 10 minutes | If location and circumstance permit, one group leader to conduct a limited search of the local vicinity while second group leader remains with group. |
| Missing for 20 minutes | Group leader to communicate with partner school |
| Missing for 30 minutes | Group leader to contact local authorities. Second group leader to escort group back to accommodation/ dormitory and stay with them to alleviate their concerns. |
| Missing for 1 hour | Group leader to contact VGBO contact person |
| Missing for 2 hours | Group leader to contact Victorian school principal to provide information about situation and program response. |

# Version control

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Version Control** | | | | |
| **Version** | **Date** | **Status** | **Changes** | **Changed By** |
| 0.1 | 28-Jun-17 | Draft | First draft – adjusting the pre-trip planning and preparation into a checklist format, added in a sample communication plan and adjusted the sample communications chain | Petra Mackay |
| 0.2 | 30-Jun-17 | Draft | Included information about how to access VMIA insurance to checklist | Petra Mackay |
| 0.3 | 4-Jul-17 | Draft | Added in Recovery section to checklist | Petra Mackay |
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