

RATIONALE

The school's camping program enables students to explore, extend and enrich their learning and their social skills development, in a non-school setting. Camps may have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at the school. A camp is defined as any activity that involves at least one night's accommodation.

AIMS

- To provide students with the opportunity to participate in a camping program that is linked to social and educational outcomes for students.
- To provide shared class and year level experiences, team building and a sense of group cohesiveness.
- To reinforce and extend classroom learning.
- To provide a program that delivers skills and knowledge that may lead to a lifelong involvement in worthwhile leisure pursuits.
- To provide a program that promotes self-esteem, resourcefulness, independence, leadership, judgement, cooperation and tolerance.

IMPLEMENTATION

Planning & Organisation Questions

- What is the purpose of the camp and its connection to student learning?
- Do staff members attending have the competence to provide the necessary supervision of students throughout the camp?
- Is an appropriately trained member of staff able to provide first aid?
- Have staff members who are not registered teachers completed a Working with Children Check?
- Is the location of staff and students throughout the camp including during travel known?
- Is a record of telephone contacts for supervising staff accompanying the camp available?
- Is a record of the names and family contacts for all students and staff available?
- Are copies of the Parental Consent and Confidential Medical Advice forms for those students on the camp available at the school?
- Has a copy of the completed School Council approval proforma been submitted and approved?
- Will the online Notification of School Activity form be submitted four weeks prior to the excursion?
- Have the Adventure Activity Standards been investigated and satisfied?

Financial

- School Council will ensure that all school camps are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost, and comply with all DET requirements.
- Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend camp, will be required to discuss their individual situation with the Principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Principal and the Business Manager on a case-by-case basis.
- All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for individual camps.
- Children whose parents have not paid deposits by the due date, who do not make full payment by the due date, or who have not made alternative arrangements with the Principal may not be eligible to attend.
- Any family who has not met the required alternative payment for a previous camp may not be able to participate in the camping program until the outstanding payment is finalised.

- School Council may set aside a budget each year that will cover the cost of replacing teachers who are involved in camps, or the costs for replacement staff may be factored into the camp costs of participants.
- Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide organising teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.

Risk Management

- The process of risk assessment is best undertaken collaboratively so that different perspectives are brought to bear on the process.
- This process should be applied to all elements of the proposed excursion – not just to the scheduled adventure activities.
- Ideally all staff supervising the excursion should be actively managing risk before, during and after the excursion. Including ALL supervising staff (for example, where practical, including volunteers, specialist instructors, etc) in this process can help to achieve this.

The following process will include the staff leading the excursion, the staff supervising the excursion and must include the staff with the experience and expertise in the activities being offered and knowledge of the proposed excursion or activity. This process will be documented. Refer to the link below for sample templates.

The process of risk assessment will follow the steps below:

1. Establish the Context
2. Risk identification
3. Risk Analysis
4. Risk Evaluation
5. Risk Treatment
6. Monitor & Review
7. Communication & Consultation

Prior to conducting a camp, the Department's requirements and guidelines relating to camps, will be rigorously observed.

Consideration in planning may include:

- Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors website
- Risk management website
- Emergency management website
- Student preparation website
- Student medical information website
- Bushfire website
- Adventure Activity Standards website

Approval & Planning

- School camps are an outdoor education activity and as such, are subject to specific planning and approval guidelines.
- Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed school camp, the Teacher in Charge must familiarise themselves with DET's Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors website. Refer: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/excursions/Pages/outdoorguidelines.aspx>

- All camps must be approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal and the School Council.
- Staff wishing to organise a camp must first complete an excursion/camp proposal form and provide it to the Principal or Assistant Principal for approval.
- The Teacher in Charge must ensure that all the camp, transport arrangements, emergency procedures and student/staff ratios comply with DET guidelines.
- The Assistant Principal will complete the DET Notification of School Activity online at <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/excursions/Pages/sal.aspx> 4 weeks prior to the camp departure date.
- All food, equipment, staffing, organisation of activities and student management procedures must be addressed prior to the camp.
- Consideration needs to be given to students with special dietary requirements. Parents should notify the staff in writing regarding special dietary requirements when returning consent forms.

Venue

- The school will only use residential campsites accredited by the 'Australian Camps Association' or the 'National Accommodation, Recreation & Tourism Accreditation Program (NARTA)' for overnight camps.
- Camp venues will be assessed for their inherent safety and suitability, as well as for the risks associated with the activities that may occur during the camp or excursion.

Safety

- The school will ensure that all camps comply with all DET requirements. All safety requirements must be considered and adequately resolved prior to the camp.
- On days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban, the principal or their nominee may need to cancel a camp at short notice. Where a camp is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be implemented.
- Telephone numbers of all emergency services must be provided to the school, and be taken on camp by The Teacher in Charge and accessible to all staff.
- If any swimming activities are to occur, there must be sufficient staff in attendance with a approved DET nominated swimming qualification.

Communication

- All aspects of the camp will be outlined to parents in writing, including cost, sleeping arrangements, itinerary, activities, clothing and equipment lists, contact phone numbers, transport arrangements, student management processes, permission and medical forms and clearly stated payment options and payment finalisation dates.
- All parental consent and medical forms must be completed, signed and returned prior to the date of the camp.
- Copies of completed permission notes and medical information must be accessible by staff at all times at the camp location.
- Parents will be notified as soon as practicable when their child has been injured or will require medical treatment.

Staffing

- All camps will have an experienced teacher in attendance where possible.
- A designated Teacher in Charge will coordinate each camp.
- The Teacher in Charge must provide the Principal and General Office with a final student list before departure to the camp.
- The Teacher in Charge is responsible for ensuring that a mobile phone and first aid kit are taken to the camp.
- The Teacher in Charge will ensure all students and adults attending the camp are aware of evacuation and emergency procedures.
- The Teacher in Charge will communicate the anticipated return time with the school office in the case where camps are returning out of school hours.
- In special circumstances, parents may be invited to assist in the delivery of school camps. When deciding which parents will attend the organising teacher will take into account any valuable skills offered (e.g. bus licence, first aid, etc), gender balance and special needs of particular students. Parents selected to assist with the camps program will be required to undertake a Working with Children Check.

Students

- Students who have not consistently displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school may not be permitted to participate in school camps.
- Parents will be notified if their child is in danger of losing the privilege to participate in a camp due to poor behaviour at school.
- The decision to exclude a student from a camp will be made by the Principal, Assistant Principal and Year Level Coordinator, in consultation with the Teacher in Charge. Both the parent and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp.
- Students participating in a school camp may be asked to sign a contract agreeing to abide by all camp rules.
- Parents will be requested to collect their child from camp if their child exhibits behaviour that is considered unacceptable or a danger to others. The Teacher in Charge, in consultation with a member of the school's leadership team, will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.
- In the case where a camp involves a particular class or year level group, the organising teacher will ensure that there is an alternative program available for those students not attending the camp.

Transport

When transporting students to and from school camps the school will comply with DET Guidelines relating to transport which can be found in Section 4.10 in the Government Schools Reference Guide.

Adventure Activities

Adventure activities are those that involve greater than normal risk such as base camping, bush walking, canoeing, snow activities, orienteering, cycling, horse riding, rock climbing and abseiling, challenge ropes courses, swimming (other than school swimming programs), surf activities, sailboarding, and similar activities. Staff should consult the DET Adventure Activities website, or seek advice from peak bodies or skilled and experienced staff with recent experience instructing the activity to satisfy Council's requirements.

REFERENCES

The primary references that must be consulted when considering all camps is the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors website:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/excursions/Pages/outdoorguidelines.aspx>

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the regular policy review cycle.

