

# CAMPING POLICY

## **Rationale:**

The school's camping program enables students to further their learning and 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 our school. Outdoor education stimulates and satisfies students' needs for adventure and challenges their learning. It involves the acquisition of knowledge, values and skills that enhance safe access understanding and aesthetic appreciation of the outdoors, often through adventure activities. Outdoor settings can be defined in three broad categories – the local neighbourhood, nearby settings and extended settings.

**Outdoor education refers to school excursions and camps and the program seeks to compliment support and enrich classroom-based programs.**

## **Aims:**

- To provide all children with the opportunity to participate in a sequential camping program.
- To provide shared class experiences and a sense of group cohesiveness.
- To reinforce and extend classroom learnings.
- 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:**

- A camp is defined as any activity involving at least one night's accommodation, including sleep overs at school.
- The program will be developed sequentially throughout the school.
- School Council will ensure that all school camps are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost, and comply with all DEECD requirements.
- All camps will be budgeted for with detailed and accurate costing presented to the Principal. Parents will be notified of the exact costs and other relevant details of individual camps, as soon as practicable.
- Students will not be excluded from camps simply for financial reasons. 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 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 will be unable to participate in the camping program until the outstanding payment is finalised.
- The school's Business Manager will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide classroom teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.
- 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 staff replacement can be borne by the participants.

- School camps are an outdoor education activity and, as such, are subject to specific planning and approval guidelines.
- School Council is responsible for approval of all overnight excursions; camps; interstate and overseas visits; excursions requiring sea or air travel; excursions involving weekends or vacations; and adventure activities.
- Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed school camp, the Teacher in Charge must familiarise themselves with the Department's [Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors](#) website. They must meet formally with the Principal, to present the Principal with a [planning summary](#), to discuss the proposed camp, and to seek 'in principle' support for the event.
- If the Principal's approval is granted, detailed planning should commence using the [planning questions](#) proforma as a guide. This must include a site visit and [risk assessment](#).
- The designated 'Teacher in Charge' of each camp will ensure that all camps, bus arrangements and camp activities comply with Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines. The 'Notification of School Activity' form will be completed and forwarded to the DEECD three weeks prior to the camp departure date. All students will be required to provide written permission from their parents to attend the camp, as well as a completed 'Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved Excursions' form.
- Prior to seeking School Council approval for the camp, organising staff are required to meet again with the Principal and present him/her with all documentation, including the completed School Council [approval](#) proforma and all attachments, ensuring that time permits for the matter to be placed on a School Council agenda and, if approved, that the online [Notification of School Activity](#) form then be submitted three weeks prior to the activity.
- When presenting information to School Council, the Teacher in Charge must be aware that Council will consider the following:-
  - 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 medical officer able to provide [first aid](#)?
  - Is the itinerary throughout the camp, including travel, documented accordingly?
  - Is a record of telephone contacts for supervising staff accompanying the camp documented?
  - Is a record of the names and family contacts for all students and staff documented?
  - 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 (including all attachments) been submitted and approved?
  - Will the online [Notification of School Activity](#) form be submitted three weeks prior to the excursion?
- 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. School Councillors may not have detailed knowledge of adventure activities. In such instances, organising staff should consult the [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. [Emergency management plans](#) are to be developed when adventure activities are being undertaken.
- School Council recommends that students attending camps travel on buses fitted with seatbelts, where possible\*.
 

\*Not all buses are fitted with seat belts and, as a result, availability of such transport must be considered regarding the timing of the camp and transport provision. In addition, some camps require transport via train, such a vehicle does not have that provision. Transport for all camps must be considered on an individual basis.

- School Council requires that a report be tabled after each school camp, detailing feedback regarding the event, in particular, areas for future improvement.
- Relevant classroom teachers will be given the first option to attend camps.
- The school will provide a mobile phone and first aid kit for all camps.
- A Paramedic will be employed to attend school camps to carry out all medical/first aid duties, where applicable\*. Costing of camps will include the provision of a Paramedic. Attendance of a Paramedic will only be subject to their availability. \*Some Camp providers have their own medical/first aid staff employed to oversee such duties and, in addition, all DEECD staff are mandated to have current Level 2 First Aid and Anaphylaxis certification.
- A senior staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from out-of-school-hours camp. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person in regards to the anticipated return time.
- While school camps are a team activity requiring the cooperation and common-sense of all participants, it is the Teacher in Charge who oversees the operations of the camp, takes charge of events, makes key decisions and accepts ultimate responsibility for the camp.
- Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in the camping program. Parents will be notified if a child is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in a camping experience due to poor behaviour at school. If the unsatisfactory behaviour continues, the child will then be excluded from camp. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the Teacher in Charge.
- Parents will be requested to collect their child from camp and/or an excursion, if their child exhibits behaviour that is considered unacceptable or they become unwell. The Teacher in Charge will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.
- The primary references that must be consulted when considering all camps is the Safety Guidelines for Outdoor Education Activities website:  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/schooloperations/edoutdoors/default.htm>  
as well as the Vic Govt Schools Reference Guide 4.4.2.2 – Student Safety & Risk Management.
- To be read in conjunction with the ‘Excursions’ policy.

**NB: Parents will be invited to assist in the supervision of school excursions if/when appropriate to do so and at the Principal’s discretion, however, it is not deemed appropriate for parents to attend camps.**

- When deciding if parents will attend excursions, the Teacher in Charge will take into account any valuable skills the parents have to offer.
- Parents selected to assist with the excursions program will be required to undertake a Working with Children Check at their own expense.
- Parents who are not required to assist in a voluntary capacity on excursions are to be discouraged from attending of their own accord.

**Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s four year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

**December 2014**