



# Camps Policy and Procedures

## **1. Background**

Camps are seen as an integral part of the school curriculum as they enable 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 our college. A camp is defined as any activity that involves at least one night's accommodation.

## **2. Aims**

- 2.1 To outline the processes and procedures our school will use when planning and conducting camps, international tours and adventure activities for students.
- 2.2 To provide students with the opportunity to participate in a camping program that is linked to social, cultural and educational outcomes for students.
- 2.3 To provide shared class and year level experiences, team building, school connectedness and a sense of group cohesiveness.
- 2.4 To reinforce and extend classroom learning.
- 2.5 To provide a program for students that delivers skills and knowledge that may lead to a lifelong involvement in worthwhile leisure pursuits.
- 2.6 To provide a program that promotes self-esteem, resourcefulness, independence, leadership, judgment, cooperation, resilience and tolerance.
- 2.7 To further develop students' problem solving and life survival skills.
- 2.8 To extend students' understanding of their physical and cultural environment.

## **3. Policy**

- 3.1 The Principal is responsible for the approval of:
  - All day and overnight excursions including camps
  - Interstate excursions
  - International excursions
  - Excursions requiring sea or air travel, weekends or holiday periods
  - Adventure activities
- 3.2 Staff wishing to organise a camp must complete a Camp Approval Form and risk register and lodge this with the Campus Principal for reference to the Principal for approval (please refer to Appendices of this policy). A risk register from the camp provider is also required. Camps must be submitted for approval at least two terms before the proposed event. The Principal in consultation with appropriate staff will consider the educational outcomes of the camp as well as the impact on the school program for the proposed dates.
- 3.3 All camps and excursions will comply with Department planning requirements. Part of this planning process includes conducting risk assessments, to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risks associated with each proposed camp or excursion. The risk assessment will include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire or other natural disaster activity in the excursion location. In the event the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts a Catastrophic fire danger rating (FDR) day, excursions or camp activities in affected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason.
- 3.4 If the excursion or camp contains adventure activities, the organising teacher must refer to the relevant Adventure Activity Guidelines and complete Risk Registers for those activities (see DET Excursions Policy.)



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The Risk Register/s must be approved by the College Principal prior to the event being entered on Compass. The activities will not proceed if the risk registers contain any extreme risks.

3.5 School Councils are responsible for approving aspects of overnight, interstate and international excursions that relate to budget, any request for parent payments and entering into contracts with third parties. The Principal will obtain School Council approval as required on behalf of the organising teacher.

3.6 The Principal and Campus Principal in consultation with the organising teacher will ensure that all camps, transport arrangements, emergency procedures and student/staff ratios comply with DET guidelines.

3.7 Once the camp has been approved by the Principal, the organising teacher will follow the school's process to enter the camp event on Compass for parents/carers to view, provide consent and make payment online, in discussion with the Business Manager. Parents/carers must be given at least two terms' notice.

3.8 The School Office will complete the Department's "Notification of School Activity" online four weeks prior to the camp departure date.

3.9 Only students who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will 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 will be made by the Principal, Campus Principal and Middle/Senior School Leader, in consultation with the organising teacher. Both the parent and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp.

3.10 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 the Principal, will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.

3.11 It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child is in good health when attending camps. If a student becomes ill during a camp and is not able to continue, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to collect them and cover any associated costs. If the Principal approves a student joining a camp late, transport to the camp is the parent/carer's responsibility.

3.12 Students who bring personal electronic devices to camp are fully responsible for the care and safekeeping of their devices. The school or external provider will not be responsible for any loss, theft or damage to students' devices.

## **4. Swimming and/or Water-Based Activities**

4.1 It is mandatory for school staff with primary responsibility for organising swimming or any water-based activities to complete the e-learning module via eduPay before planning such activities.

4.2 The DET Swimming and/or Water-Based Activity Checklist sets out mandatory requirements for these activities. The organising teacher must complete this checklist and send it to the College Principal for review and approval prior to entering the event on Compass.

## **5. Duty of Care**

5.1 All school staff attending the camp or excursion owe a duty of care to the students. This means that they must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent any reasonably foreseeable harm to students.



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This duty is non-delegable, which means that it cannot be delegated to external camp or education providers, parents or volunteers. The designated teacher in charge has ultimate responsibility for all students in their care.

5.2 External education providers and para-professionals must have appropriate certification (e.g. current Working with Children's Check) and ensure that supervision guidelines are followed.

5.3 Prior to the camp or excursion, parent/carers should be made aware that DET does not provide accident insurance cover or ambulance cover for students. Parents/carers need to make their own arrangements for cover.

## **6. Supervision**

6.1 Our school follows the Department's guidelines in relation to supervision of students during camps and excursions.

6.2 All camp and excursion staff (including volunteers) will be familiar with supervision requirements and the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each camp and excursion.

6.3 All school staff will be aware that they retain overall responsibility for the supervision and care of students throughout all camps and excursions (including adventure activities), regardless of whether or not external providers are managing the activity.

6.4 All camps must have a minimum of 2 staff members.

### Overnight base camps

1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff

### Overnight study camps

1:15 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff

### Interstate travel

1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff

### Overseas travel

The following indicates how staff numbers should be calculated, noting these ratios are the minimum required.

*Number of students : Number of staff*

1 to 10:2

11 to 20:3

21 to 30:4

6.5 For specific adventure activities, staff should refer to DET guidelines for applicable staff-student ratios here: <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>

## **7. First Aid**

7.1 At least one member of staff responsible for each group of students will hold an appropriate first aid qualification. For adventure activities, the minimum acceptable level of first aid training is the senior first aid certificate (often referred to as a level 2 first aid qualification) or its competency based equivalent HLTAID003 Apply First Aid.



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7.2 For remote activities, a higher level of first aid training is required appropriate to the setting, such as Wilderness First Aid or its competency based equivalent THHGHS11A Manage casualty in a remote area.

7.3 Staff must also have a first aid kit appropriate to the excursion location and activities undertaken.

## **8. Student with Disabilities**

8.1 Students should not be denied attendance to any excursion or camp because of disability or medical condition. Parents/carers will be consulted about reasonable adjustments that may be implemented by the school to enable the student to safely attend the excursion or camp.

8.2 Principals will ensure that appropriate emergency and risk management planning is undertaken for students with disabilities attending excursions and camps.

## **9. Fire Danger or Ban**

The Principal may need to cancel excursions and camps at short notice on days of Extreme or Catastrophic fire danger ratings or total fire ban. On such days, the Security Services Unit liaises with fire authorities to obtain up to date information for communication to schools that may be affected by wildfire, including schools with students attending camps in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions must be implemented.

When required, the College will follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities.

## **10. Arrangements for payments**

10.1 All efforts will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Parents/carers experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend a camp, are invited to discuss alternative arrangements with the Business Manager. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Business Manager in consultation with the appropriate staff, on an individual basis. Eligible families may use the Camps, Sports and Excursions Funds (CSEF) allocated to their child to assist with payment.

10.2 All aspects of the camp will be outlined to parents on Compass, including cost, sleeping arrangements, itinerary, activities, clothing and equipment lists, contact phone numbers, transport arrangements, student management processes, medical forms and clearly stated payment finalisation dates.

10.3 All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for camps. Parental consent must be provided with medical forms returned and all monies paid prior to leaving. The office staff will provide the teacher in charge with an event handbook containing parental consent and contact details for all students, and relevant medical information.

10.4 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. Refunds are at the discretion of the Principal or their nominee.

## **11. Guidelines for Staff Planning a Camp**

11.1 Camps need to be planned well in advance and should relate to the curriculum being taught. Students and their parents should be provided with information about the program's educational objectives, the nature of the activities, clothing requirements, the venue and costs well in advance.



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11.2 Parents/carers must provide consent via Compass. Parents/carers must be given sufficient information about the nature of the proposed activities, the risks involved and the degree of supervision.

11.3 Parental consent is required for the following reasons:

- to authorise the school to have the student in its care after normal school hours
- to authorise the school to take the student out of the school environment
- to alert the school to any medical condition or allergies of the student
- to authorise the school to consent to emergency treatment for the student
- for the parent to consent to any financial cost of the camp
- for the parent to consent to the student being sent home in the event of any serious misbehavior.

11.4 Preparation for the camp should include:

- quotes for transport
- booking of transport
- confirmation time for departure and return
- assessing whether a learning support staff member is required to attend (if a PSD funded student is attending)
- monitoring consent and payments on Compass to achieve minimum student numbers as required by the camp provider
- arrangement for school payment to the camp provider.

11.5 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 and health requirements. Parents should notify the staff in writing regarding special dietary and health requirements when providing consent.

11.6 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.

11.7 The college will provide a first aid kit for each camp including a generic use EpiPen where a student at risk of anaphylaxis is attending the camp. The teacher in charge is responsible for collecting these prior to leaving.

11.8 For high risk adventure activities the staff member organizing the camp must have suitable training and current qualifications. All staff members must be aware of the increased duty of care. The organising teacher must refer to the relevant Adventure Activity Guidelines and complete Risk Registers for those activities (see [DET Excursions Policy](#).) The Risk Register/s must be approved by the College Principal prior to the event being entered on Compass. The event will not proceed if the risk registers contain any extreme risks.

11.9 The teacher in charge will ensure that student medical forms are available at the site and all camp staff are aware of special medical issues or medication requirements of any student.

11.10 One staff member will be designated to take responsibility for administering student medication if required (following consultation with parents and/or appropriate medical practitioners).

## **12. Site Safety**

12.1 All safety requirements must be considered and adequately resolved prior to the camp. Telephone numbers of all nearby emergency services and parents/carers must be taken on camp.



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12.2 The teacher in charge will ensure all students and adults attending the camp are aware of evacuation and emergency procedures.

12.3 The teacher in charge will communicate the anticipated return time with the school office in the event where the group on camp is due to return out of school hours. Parents will be informed prior to students leaving for the camp, that they may phone the office to receive an updated anticipated return time.

## **13. Appendices**

The appendices attached to this policy are:

- Appendix A – Camp Approval Form
- Appendix B – VUSC Risk Register Template

## **14. Department's Policy and Guidelines; Further Resources**

14.1 This policy is intended to complement the Department's policy and guidelines on excursions, camps and adventure activities which all Victorian government schools are required to follow. Our school will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines when planning and conducting camps, international tours and adventure activities for students.

14.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
  - Excursions including Camps and Activities
  - Emergency and Risk Management
- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund
- Parent Payments Policy

14.3 The following school policies are also relevant to this Camps Policy:

- Anaphylaxis Policy and Procedures
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Supervision and Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy

## **15. Communication**

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following ways:

- Provided to all staff in the staff handbook and via Sharepoint
- Discussed with specific staff as required
- Available to the school community on request.

## **16. Evaluation**

This policy will be reviewed every three years as part of the school review cycle or as required by changes to DET guidelines.