



CAMPS & EXCURSIONS POLICY

(Including School Specific Procedures)

Latest DET Update: 23/01/2017

First Developed in This Format: August 2016

Updated: October 2016 and January 2017

Rationale

- The Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors are in place to support the planning and approval of overnight excursions, camps, interstate and overseas visits, excursions requiring sea or air travel, excursions involving weekends or vacations and adventure activities. These excursions all require the approval of the School Council.
- When undertaking excursion planning, Principals, teachers, School Councillors and others involved in school excursions (including camps and adventure activities), must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.
- The emergency management planning in schools extends to and incorporates school excursions.
- The school's excursion program enables children to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Excursions complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

Purpose

- To ensure that camps and excursions at Bourchier Street Primary School are planned and approved appropriately.
- To ensure that adventure activities are conducted safely.
- To ensure camps and adventure activities are planned and approved in accordance with DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure that the school obtains informed consent from parents/carers for their child to participate in an excursion.
- To reinforce, complement and extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom.
- To develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.
- To gain first-hand experience of topics included in the school curriculum.

Definitions

An excursion is an activity organised by a school during which children leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities (including camps and sport). Adventure activities are included in this definition (regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds or not).

An adventure activity is an activity that involves greater than normal risk which may include travel into a relatively undeveloped area of the country in which vehicle contact is difficult or uncertain, confrontation with environmental challenges requiring greater reliance upon personal resources than would normally be required in day-to-day life, less than normal contact by person or by telephone, medical or other public services and/or exposure to natural elements with less than the normal physical protection afforded in everyday life.

Activities may include among others: abseiling, artificial climbing and abseiling walls, bushwalking, canoeing/kayaking, challenging rope courses, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, cycling, orienteering, horse riding, overnight camping, surfing, windsurfing, water skiing, sailing,

scuba diving, sea kayaking, snorkeling, recreational swimming, rafting and cycling. Activities such as bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting and flying ultra light aircraft are deemed unsuitable.

Note: Bush walking, cycling and overnight camping may be considered adventure activities where they involve greater than normal risk (as outlined above) and in the circumstances outlined in the activity descriptions in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

Flying foxes may be used at school camps provided:

- safety precautions are taken in its construction and maintenance
- it can be locked or have the carriage removed when not in use
- all children are carefully briefed on its use and associated dangers
- staff supervise all use
- a safety harness is always used

Residential campsites are campsites which usually have permanent facilities (such as cooking and eating facilities, beds and an amenities block) and adventure recreation options. This definition does not include caravan parks, hotels/motels, ski lodges or Victorian government residential schools.

The Department recognises three accreditation providers:

Australian Camps Association's Campsite and Outdoor Activity Provider program see: ACA Accredited Camps

Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP) see: ATAP Accredited Businesses (select Accredited Camp and Adventure Activity Provider)

National Accommodation, Recreation and Tourism Accreditation (NARTA) program see: NARTA Accredited Camps

Other venues may include:

- overnight campsites and venues that only provide accommodation such as caravan parks, hotels/motels or ski lodges
- Victorian government residential schools (for example: Rubicon Outdoor Centre or Bogong Outdoor Education Centre)
- interstate camps or excursions
- overseas venues.

ACA or NARTA programs' accreditation criteria may be used to assess the suitability and safety of these venues. However this criteria should be used when assessing overseas venues.

Implementation

- The Principal is responsible for the conduct of all excursions and must ensure:
 - an online notification of school activity form is completed prior to the activity
 - a planning and approvals process is undertaken, in accordance with DET policy and requirements, which takes into account the following considerations:
 - venue selection
 - safety, emergency and risk management
 - informed consent from parents/carers
 - medical information
 - appropriate staffing and supervision
 - student preparation and behaviour
 - requirements for any adventure activities
- The planning and approval process will take into account the following considerations:
 - The educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum must be clarified and explained.
 - Department approval requirements for excursions and staff travel
 - maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process

- Venues will be assessed and selected on the basis of their safety and suitability for the activities proposed. Where possible, venues will be selected based on the recent and first-hand knowledge (for example, through an inspection of the site by at least one member of the planning and supervising staff).
- Where external providers have been engaged to deliver specific activities or programs for students, or provide other services, the school retains responsibility for its students, as the duty of care of the school staff to students cannot be delegated to a third party
- Criteria for assessing venues such as campsites or overnight accommodation venues include health and hygiene of buildings and facilities, activity equipment and the conduct of activities, certification and qualifications of venue staff, participant supervision provided, risks posed by other users of the site, emergency and risk management plans of venues, fire precautions, first aid facilities, quality assurance and consumer protection, relevant accreditations and references from other schools.
 - Safety, emergency and risk management
 - The teacher-in-charge, in conjunction with all staff attending must undertake a detailed analysis of all risks associated with the activity, procedures to be used in event of an emergency, arrangements if the activity needs to be cancelled or recalled e.g. due to adverse weather conditions, first aid requirements, any other measures for student and staff safety.
 - Staffing and supervision
 - The Principal will ensure sufficient staff, including first aid trained staff, attend the camp. In determining the pupil/staff ratio, the experience, qualifications and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors, etc.), the age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of children, the ability and experience of the children, the size of the group, the nature and location of the excursion, the activities to be undertaken, the requirements outlined in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, for specific adventure activities and any other relevant factors including supervision factors if a student is injured or other emergency. Please refer also to joint excursions below.
 - For day excursions, one staff member to twenty children is the minimum.
 - Unless it is deemed that circumstances require a more liberal staffing arrangement, one staff member to ten children will be the ratio for overnight excursions. Please refer also to the attached supervision ratio for the circumstances requiring a specific ratio.
 - Excursions must be under the direct control of a teacher employed by the DET, have enough DET employed staff to maintain control of the excursion and each activity with teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff.
 - Overnight stays for mixed gender groups must include a staff member of each sex.
 - For small excursions in the local area, the Principal may approve supervision by a non-teacher employed by DET e.g. an integration aide.
 - Approved staff may include teachers, parents or carers, Education Support Class officers, community members, trainee teachers, campsite staff, specialist instructors. Excursion staff who are not teachers, must have a Working with Children Check.
 - Transportation requirements : public transport should be used if practicable with transport authorities consulted as to appropriate travel times and with at least two weeks' notice

- Minimising Disruptions or Costs to Parents
- The Principal will:
 - Inform parents that any costs associated with the student returning from an excursion early due to illness or serious misbehaviour are the responsibility of the parent:
 - ensure parents are advised of the possibility of cancellations or alterations and of any cancellation fees imposed on the parents by third parties
 - with respect to arrangements between the school and third parties, principals should:
 - carefully negotiate terms and conditions with third parties (e.g. travel agents, travel insurance companies, camp providers, specialist instructors, expedition providers) prior to accepting arrangements
 - ensure the terms of any travel insurance offered to the school by the third party are satisfactory
- There must be an assurance that the proposed activity meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedure.
- The school will obtain informed, written consent from parents/carers to take the children out of the school for a day excursion or to have the student in its care after normal school hours or overnight.
- Such parent/carer authorisation includes financial costs, any adventure activities that may be undertaken, for children to be sent home in the event of serious misbehaviour (with costs to be met by the parent/carer) and if necessary the school can consent to emergency medical treatment.
- Consent must also enable the parent/carer to alert the school to any medical conditions or allergies.
- Students will not be denied attendance at the excursion because the parent/carer refuses permission for a blood transfusion.
- The school may require additional information depending on the nature of the proposed activities.
- The school will give parents/carers, who are to sign consent forms, sufficient information about the camp/excursion to enable them to make an informed decision. This includes the nature of the proposed activity, degree of supervision and the risks involved.
- Consent forms will be kept at the school with a designated contact person and for excursions requiring School Council approval, the teacher-in-charge of the excursion will take a copy of each consent form on the excursion.
- A confidential medical information form will be completed by parents/carers before each School Council approved excursion. Any changes to medical information previously provided to the school must be highlighted. The teacher-in-charge will take the medical information forms on the excursion and ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations. Copies will be kept at school.
- The school will use the DET recommended medical form.
 - Any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed will be taken into account.
- Staff and children will have appropriate clothing and personal equipment.
- Technical equipment will be in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken.
- School Council approved camps/excursions will have an emergency response plan.
- All excursion staff will be familiar with emergency procedures for each camp.
- When staying at a residential campsite emergency procedures must be explained as soon as practicable after arrival and a trial evacuation exercise should be carried out immediately to ensure that procedures are appropriate and staff and children are familiar with them.
- Parents/carers will be advised of the telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) for the designated school contact person in the event of an emergency.

- During the excursion, if parents/carers have reason to believe an emergency may have occurred (such as a media report) they will be informed that in the first instance they should call the contact person and not personnel on the excursion as this will keep the telephone lines free at the excursion site.
- Arrangements for communicating with parents/carers in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion will be made.
- The Principal will be prepared to cancel an excursion at short notice on days of extreme fire danger 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 that may have children attending camps or other venues in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required. When required, schools must follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities for all excursions.
- In the event of an emergency, accident or injury, staff on the excursion will take emergency action, then immediately notify the School Principal who should make arrangements for the Department's Security Services Unit to be telephoned on 9589 6266.
- The teacher-in-charge will ensure that sufficient first aid equipment is available including portable first aid equipment.
- Children (and parents/carers) will be fully informed about the organisational arrangements, safety and emergency procedures, and the behavioural expectations and (misbehaviour) consequences of the camp/excursion including the non-consumption of alcohol. In extreme circumstances, after full consideration, consultation and information, a child may be sent home from the activity.
- Staff are expected to act in accordance with their duty of care to children, which is in force during the entire time of the camp or excursion and must be aware that consumption of alcohol by staff during camps or excursions is:
 - inconsistent with the standard of professional conduct necessary to maintain community confidence in these activities
 - is considered unwise
 - could lead to allegations of negligence and loss of WorkCover rights
- Continuous instruction will be provided for children remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion.
- For an excursion requiring School Council approval, an approval pro forma ensuring compliance with the above will be completed and submitted to the Principal and School Council before the excursion may proceed.
- At least three weeks prior to the camp, the teacher in charge also will submit a Student Activity Locator on line form.
- Full records including documentation of the planning process will be maintained.
- Excursions and incursions other than those listed above only require the approval of the Principal and the permission of parents/carers.
- The Regional Director will be informed if an excursion leaves a school unoccupied.
- When undertaking excursion planning, the Principal, teachers, School Councillors and others involved in the activity (including camps and adventure activities), must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.
- For joint school activities, a nominated Coordinating Principal (or teacher) will ensure all planning and approval requirements are met and will advise parents/carers that their children may be supervised by teachers and approved adults from the other school.
- Children will not be denied attendance at any camp or excursion because of disability or medical condition. Bouchier Street Primary School will take reasonable steps to support the inclusion of all children. Parents/carers will be advised to make an appointment with the School Contact Person (please refer to the *Parent Payments Policy*) who is authorised to make decisions about family hardship considerations on a case-by-case basis.

- Interstate or overseas excursions require special consideration. For interstate excursions, staff must be approved by the Regional Director. For overseas excursions, staff must be approved by the Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group. A school travel application Form must be submitted at least six weeks before the proposed departure date.
- Please refer also to the school's *Duty of Care Policy* and the *Risk Management Policy*.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest DET update late January 2017).

This update was ratified by School Council in February 2017

References:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/planning.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/adventure.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/consent.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/staffing.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/venue.aspx
www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/medicalinfo.aspx

School Specific Procedures

Camps

1. A camp is defined as any activity involving at least one night's accommodation.
2. The program will be developed sequentially throughout the school.
3. The School Council will ensure that all school camps are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost.
4. All camps will be budgeted for at the beginning of the year with detailed and accurate costing presented to the Principal or Business Manager. Parents/carers will then be notified of the costs and other relevant details of individual camps.
5. Parents/carers experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend camp, will be required to discuss their individual situation with the School Contact Person (please refer to the *Parent Payments Policy*) and alternative arrangements to be determined. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
6. Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in the camping program. Parents/carers will be consulted if a child is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in a camping experience due to poor behaviour at school. This will be followed up in writing 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 classroom teacher.
7. Parents/carers will be requested to collect their child from camp if their child exhibits behaviour that is considered unacceptable as outlined in the Student Engagement Policy. The camp coordinator, in consultation with the Principal, will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent/carer.
8. Refund of camp payments will not be available for any child sent home from camp due to misbehaviour.
9. Any child who has been suspended from school can forfeit the right to attend school camps.
10. Children who are deemed by staff to be a risk to the good order of the camp can be excluded.
11. Deposits for student participation at camp must be paid by 3.30pm on the due date; no late deposits will be accepted.
12. All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for individual camps. Parents/carers will be sent reminder notices a fortnight before the camp departure date reminding them of the need to finalise payment. Children whose payments have not been finalised at least two days before the departure date will not be allowed to attend unless alternative payment arrangements have been organised with the School Contact Person.
13. Any family who has not met the required payment for a previous camp will be unable to participate in the camping program until this payment is finalised.
14. To ensure all children have the opportunity to gain self-esteem, resourcefulness, resilience, independence, leadership, judgement, cooperation and tolerance, parents/carers only attend camp in exceptional circumstances in negotiation with the Principal.
15. Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents/carers and will provide classroom teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.
16. Teachers will ensure that all camps comply with DET guidelines described above. The "Notification of School Activity" form will be completed and forwarded to the DET three weeks prior to the camp departure date.
17. Classroom teachers will be given the first option to attend camps.
18. The school will continue to provide the opportunity for teachers to update their first aid skills and will provide a Level 2 First Aid Teacher on each camp.
19. The school will provide a mobile phone for all camps.
20. A senior staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from camp. The camp coordinator will be able to communicate with this person in regards to the advertised return time.

21. Parents /carers will be invited to assist in the delivery of school camps. When deciding on which parents/carers will attend, the camps committee will take into account:-
 - any valuable skills the parents/carers have to offer, e.g. bus licence, first aid etc.
 - the need to include both males and females
 - the special needs of particular children
22. Parents/carers selected to assist with the camps program will be required to undertake a WWCC. Any current VIT registration holders will not be required to undertake a WWCC.
23. Parent/carer volunteers will be required to pay the accommodation and meals cost of the camp.
24. All camps require School Council approval. This approval is sought at a scheduled meeting at least three weeks prior to the departure date. Information presented to the School Council will include:-
 - the educational aims and objectives of the camp
 - the names of all adults attending and their expertise and experience
 - travel arrangements and costs
 - itinerary of events
 - procedures followed to ensure the safety of the children
 - the above information will be provided to the Principal at least a week before the School Council meeting date.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in 2017. Next Review 2020.

Excursions

1. An excursion is defined as any activity beyond the school grounds.
2. All excursions must be approved by School Council. In doing so, School Council will determine a schedule of excursions for the school year, will ensure that all excursions are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost, and comply with all DET requirements.
3. The schedule of excursions, including approximate costs, will be distributed in a February edition of the school newsletter, and will be updated on a needs basis.
4. School Council will determine an 'Excursions Levy' each year. Parents/carers can bulk pay for the year's excursions by paying the Excursions Levy, applying for the Camps, Sports and Excursion Funding (CSEF) to pay for the Excursions Levy, or by paying for individual excursions as they occur.
5. All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for excursions. Parents/carers will be sent notices before the excursion date reminding them of the need to finalise payment. Children whose payments have not been finalised by the designated date will not be allowed to attend unless alternative payment arrangements have been organised with the School Contact Person.
6. Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents/carers and will provide classroom teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.
7. Each excursion will be coordinated by a designated 'Teacher in Charge'.
8. The "Teacher in Charge" has the authority to cancel any activity or excursion in the event of an unforeseen circumstance e.g. a bush fire, earthquake, storm, flood etc.
9. Prior to any child attending an excursion, parents/carers must have provided to the school a signed permission form, a signed "Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved Excursions" form (if appropriate).
10. Information will be provided to all parents/carers of non-English speaking families in a manner that allows them to provide an informed consent to their children attending excursions.
11. The designated Teacher in Charge of each excursion will ensure that all excursions, transport arrangements and excursion activities comply with DET guidelines. The "Notification of School Activity" form will be completed and forwarded to the DET (if required) three weeks prior to the excursion departure date.
12. Classroom teachers will be given the first option to attend excursions.
13. The school will continue to provide the opportunity for teachers to update first aid skills.

14. The school will provide a mobile phone and a first-aid kit for all excursions.
15. Copies of completed Permission forms, and signed "Confidential Medical Information for School Council Approved Excursions" forms must be carried by excursion staff at all times.
16. A senior staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from any out-of-school-hours excursion. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person with regards to the anticipated return time.
17. All parents/carers of Foundation (Prep) children will be invited to attend the major excursion each year. Parents/carers of children involved in all other excursions may be invited to assist in the delivery of excursions.
18. Parents/carers selected to assist with an excursion may be required to pay costs associated with the excursion. They are also required to undertake a Working with Children Check.
19. Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in school excursions. Parents/carers will be notified if a child is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in an excursion due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher and the Teacher in Charge.
20. Excursions are at the discretion of the Principal.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in 2017. Next Review 2020.