

Murtoa College

Camps and Excursion Policy



Rationale

The purpose of having a policy on School Camps & Excursions is to ensure the effective communication of procedures and to ensure that all staff follow the same procedures. This will minimise stress levels for all parties affected. Camps and excursions 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 and excursions may have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

A **camp** is defined as any activity that involves at least one night's accommodation.

An **excursion** is defined as any activity that involves students undertaking a learning activity outside the usual confines of the school and not involving any overnight stay.

Purpose

To provide students with the opportunity to participate in a camps and excursions program that is linked to social, cultural 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.

To further develop their problem solving and life survival skills

To extend understanding of their physical and cultural environment

To reinforce, complement and extend the 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 provide a safe, secure learning experience for students in a venue external to the school.

To further develop social skills such as cooperation, problem solving, tolerance, communication, individual and group interaction.

Implementation

Steps to Follow Prior to the Camps &/or Excursion's Departure:

1. All **camp**s must be approved by the Principal and School Council.
2. All **excursions** must be approved by the Principal and if considered of a risky nature, then also School Council.
3. The principal or their nominee will ensure that full records are submitted to school council regarding the camp or excursion well in advance of the starting date of the event and that no camp or excursion occurs unless all the formal record keeping has been completed and approved.
4. Staff wishing to organize a new camp or excursion should present the appropriate plans and activities with the Principal for approval. All camps and excursions must be approved prior to running.

This decision will be made by the Principal. The Principal, in consultation with appropriate staff, will consider the educational outcomes of the camp and or excursion as well as the impact on the school program for the proposed dates and cost to families.

5. The Principal in consultation with organizing teachers will ensure that all camps, transport arrangements, emergency procedures and student/staff ratios comply with DET guidelines.

6. Once the excursion or camp has been approved all relevant documentation must be completed.

7. The staff member in charge of the camp or excursion will complete the "Notification of School Activity" online at <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/forms/school/sal/Default.aspx> **four weeks** prior to the camp departure date. The staff member in charge of the camp or excursion will ensure all relevant details are entered in the Daily Organization Pad.

8. School Council is responsible for the approval of:

- Overnight excursions
- Camps
- Interstate visits
- International visits
- Excursions requiring sea or air travel, weekends or vacations
- Adventure activities

9. The Principal or her nominee is responsible for the approval of all single-day excursions other than those that must be approved by school council as mentioned above.

10. Please check the calendar to ensure there is a School Council meeting to approve documents in the correct term.

11. Speak with the Principal about the camp:

- How much the camp will cost?
- If the camp will be paid in instalments or if there should be a deposit.
- Understanding which parts incur GST.
- Methods of payment to providers and when the payments are due.
- Providing a detailed breakdown of all costs associated with the camp including transport, meals, accommodation and admission fees.

12. Send out initial letter advising parents of the camp or excursion – **allow as much time as is practical particularly for high cost camp and excursions**. Where available, give parents an indicative costing. Provide opportunities for initial deposits to be paid or money to be paid in instalments.

13. Go to outdoor camping guidelines website to assist with planning the camp and excursions.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/adventure.aspx>

14. Where camps are overnight or longer the forms from

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursions.aspx>

MUST be submitted to School Council to gain approval for the camp at least 4 weeks prior to the camp running. (School Council runs on the third Thursday of each month – limited to two per term). **If the excursion comes up without having the time for this notification to occur four weeks prior then contact with the principal ASAP is necessary.**

Expectations

The Department's requirements and guidelines relating to preparation and safety will be observed in the conduct of all camps and excursions.

The principal or their nominee will ensure that full records are maintained regarding the camp/excursion.

The principal or their nominee will ensure that adequate pre-excursion planning and preparation, including the preparation of students, takes place.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) will not be involved in any expense associated with the conduct of excursions. The school may choose to subsidise some excursions or some student's expenses.

Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable and safe behaviour at school will be invited to participate in camps or excursions. Students and their parents/carers need to be made aware that acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected during a camp or an excursion.

The emergency management process of the school will extend to and incorporate all camps and excursions.

All DET requirements and guidelines that apply to the conduct of excursions are also applicable to all overseas and interstate (domestic) camps/excursions.

PROGRAM

Consideration in planning must include:

Safety, Emergency & Risk Management, including Bushfires

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursionsafety.aspx>

Student Preparation & Behaviour

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/preparation.aspx>

Student Medical Information

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/medicalinfo.aspx>

Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/outdoor.aspx>

The principal or their nominee will ensure that full records are submitted to School Council regarding the camp/excursion well in advance of the starting date of the event and that no camp/excursion occurs unless all the formal record keeping has been completed and approved.

Prior to conducting any excursion, the formal approval of the School Council and principal will be obtained. In approving an excursion, consideration will include:

- the contribution of the activity to the school curriculum
- the adequacy of the planning, preparation and organisation in relation to the school policy and the guidelines and advice provided by DET
- information provided by community groups and organisations that specialise in the activity proposed
- appropriateness of the venue
- the provisions made for the safety and welfare of students and staff
- the experience and competence of staff relevant to the activities being undertaken
- the adequacy of the student supervision
- the high risk nature of some activities
- emergency procedures and safety measures
- staff-student ratios
- student experience

Students not attending a camp or excursion will be placed in another class and have an appropriate learning program provided by the class teacher.

Prior to the camp or excursion parent/carers are to be made aware that DET does not provide student accident cover and that they need to make their own arrangements for cover.

Access to camps and excursions:

All efforts will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend a camp or excursion, are invited to discuss

alternative arrangements with the principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the principal in consultation with the appropriate staff, on an individual basis. All aspects of the camp or excursion will be outlined to parents in writing, including cost, sleeping arrangements, itinerary, activities, clothing and equipment lists, contact telephone numbers, transport arrangements, student management processes, permission and medical forms and clearly stated payment finalization dates.

All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for camps and excursions. All parental and/or carer consent and medical forms must be completed, signed and returned and all money must be paid prior to departure. Copies of completed permission notes and medical information must be accessible at the camp or excursion location by all staff at all times.

Only students that have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be permitted to participate in school camps or excursions. Parents will be notified if their child is in danger of losing the privilege to participate in a camp or excursion due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the principal, home group teacher in consultation with the organizing teacher. Both the parent and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp or excursion. Students participating in a school camp or excursion may be asked to sign a contract agreeing to abide by all camp and excursion rules.

All school disciplinary measures apply to students on excursions consistent with the school's policy. In extreme cases the excursion staff, following consultation with, and the approval of, the principal or their nominee, may determine that a student should return home during an excursion.

In such circumstances, the parent/carer will be advised: of the circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home satisfactory arrangements will be made to provide continuous instruction for the students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying an excursion. of the time when the parents/carers may collect their child from the camp or excursion of the anticipated time that the student will arrive home of any costs associated with the student's return which will be the responsibility of the parents/carers

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 leadership team, will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.

Organization:

A designated "Teacher in Charge" will coordinate each excursion.

Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide organizing teachers and the principal with detailed records on a regular basis.

The teacher in charge must provide the School Office with a final student list as well as posting a copy on the staff notice board and informing staff at briefing.

In the case where a camp or excursion involves a particular class or year level group, the organizing home group teacher will ensure that there is an alternative program available for those students not attending the camp or excursion.

All students must have returned a signed permission note and payment to be able to attend the excursion. Copies of completed permission notes and medical information must be carried by excursion staff at all times.

The school will provide a first aid kit for each excursion. The teacher in charge is responsible for collecting these prior to leaving.

The teacher in charge will communicate the anticipated return time with the general office in the case where excursions are returning out of school hours. Parents will be informed prior to students leaving for the excursion, that they can telephone the office to receive an updated anticipated return time.

Parents may be invited to assist in the delivery of excursions.

All food, equipment, staffing, organization of activities and student management procedures must be addressed prior to the camp or excursion. Consideration needs to be given to students with special dietary and medical requirements. Parents should notify the staff in writing regarding special dietary and medical requirements when returning consent forms.

The school will provide a mobile telephone and first aid kit for each camp or excursion. The teacher in charge is responsible for collecting these prior to leaving. Alternatively, identify the staff personal mobile telephone being used on the activity.

Parents may be invited to assist in the delivery of school camps and excursions. When deciding which parents will attend the organizing teacher will take into account any valuable skills offered (e.g. bus licence, first aid, etc), gender balance and special needs of particular students.

For high risk Outdoor Education activities the staff member organizing must have suitable training and current qualifications. All staff members must be aware of the increased duty of care.

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.

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

Site Safety

All safety requirements must be considered and adequately resolved prior to the camp or excursion.

Telephone numbers of all emergency services must be provided to the school, and be taken on the camp or excursion. If any swimming activities are to occur, there must be sufficient staff attending with appropriate swimming qualifications to enable safe supervision.

Refer: "Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors"

A designated "Teacher in Charge" will co-ordinate each camp or excursion. All camps and excursions will have an experienced teacher in attendance where possible.

The Teacher in Charge will ensure all students and adults attending the camp or excursion 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. Parents will be informed of the anticipated return time home.

Forms and procedures

Staff organizing a camp or excursion should ensure they have checked the most recent DET guidelines for staff to student ratios, risk assessments etc.

The School Office maintains all records of camps and excursions and will inform school council of upcoming camps for approval.

The principal has overall responsibility for camps and excursions and will deliver an annual update on forms and procedures or in the event of changes to DET policy.

Checklist of things to take on camp or excursion:

1. A copy of student's medical information and a fully stocked first aid kit.
2. The school's mobile telephone.

Before leaving:

1. Ensure all student payments have been made prior to departure or arrangements for payment organized with the principal.
2. Provide two copies of the camp's or excursion's itinerary - including contact telephone numbers and participant list needs to be left at the office for emergency purposes (one to go to the principal for 24 hour contact if needed).
3. Complete a safety inspection of the vehicles being used.
4. Work out who suffers from car/bus sickness and position them up the front of the bus. (Make sure you have a sick bucket).

During the camp or excursion:

Where possible for longer duration camps please telephone the principal to provide a report of how things are going at least once per day during the camp or excursion.

Following the camp or excursion:

1. Provide a report to School Council about the camp or excursion and the outcomes achieved.
2. Ensure school vehicles and hire buses are cleaned and refuelled for the next user.
3. Retain the itinerary, participant medical list and staff list, and leave in the camps an excursions book in the front office. This documentation should be retained for seven years.
4. Produce a camp or excursion report for the school newsletter.

Evaluation

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

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