



CAMPS and EXCURSIONS Policy

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Officer Primary School will use when planning and conducting camps, excursions and adventure activities for students.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Excursions](#).

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Officer Primary School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Officer Primary School, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds, and to school sleep-overs.

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. Officer Primary School will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines when planning for and conducting camps and excursions.

DEFINITIONS

Excursions:

For the purpose of this policy, excursions are activities organised by the school where the students:

- are taken out of the school grounds (for example, a camp, day excursion, school sports);
- undertake adventure activities, regardless of whether or not they occur outside the school grounds;
- Attend school 'sleep-overs' on school grounds

Camps are excursions involving at least one night's accommodation (including school sleep-overs).

Local excursions are excursions to locations within walking distance of the school and do not involve 'Adventure Activities'.

Adventure activities are activities that involve a greater than normal risk. Further information and examples of adventure activities are available on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library, at the following link:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>

RATIONALE

- 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 skill 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.

AIMS

- 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 provide a safe, secure learning experience for students in a venue external to the school.
- To further develop social skills such as cooperation, tolerance, communication, individual and group interaction.
- To provide a program that promotes self-esteem, resourcefulness, independence, leadership, judgement, cooperation, tolerance and responsibility.
- To further develop problem solving and life survival skills.
- To extend understanding of their physical and cultural environment.
- To provide all children from years 3 to 6 with the opportunity to participate in a sequential Camping Program that is linked to social, cultural and educational outcomes for students.
- To provide shared class experiences, team building, co-operation and a sense of group cohesiveness.

IMPLEMENTATION

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. Officer Primary School's risk assessment will include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire activity in the excursion location. In the event of a Code Red Day being announced, excursions or camp activities in effected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason.

Officer Primary School is committed to ensuring students with additional needs are provided with an inclusive camps and excursions program and will work with families during the planning stage, as needed, to support all students' attendance and participation in camp and excursion activities.

In cases where a camp or excursion involves a particular class or year level group, the Organising Teacher will ensure that there is an alternative educational program available and appropriate supervision for those students not attending the camp or excursion.

- Children in year 3 to 6 will be provided, where possible, with at least one camping opportunity over a 2 year period.
- All camps must be approved by the Principal and School Council.
- The Principal or their nominee will ensure that full records are submitted to council regarding the camp well in advance of the starting date of the event and that no camp occurs unless all the formal record keeping has been completed and approved. Ideally all camps should be submitted to Council for in principle approval in the November/December Council meeting in the preceding year.
- The Principal in consultation with organising teachers will ensure that all camps, transport arrangements, emergency procedures and student/staff ratios comply with DEECD guidelines.
- Parents will be provided with a current camp schedule annually in Term 1.
- The School Council will ensure that all school camps are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost.

- All camps will be budgeted for three months in advance with approximate costing (as accurate as possible while acknowledging that numbers may have an impact) presented to the Principal.
- A letter confirming attendance with approximate costs will be sent out three months prior to the camp date.
- For camps to proceed minimum numbers of students attending must have been met by the date the deposit is required.
- In line with camp provider's policy, camp deposits will be non-refundable and withdrawing from camp up to four weeks prior to the camp date will result in loss of monies paid.
- Casual Relief Teacher costs (only if needed) are to be included in the overall cost of the camp.
- 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 camps. All parental consent and medical forms must be completed, signed and returned and all money must be paid prior to leaving. Copies of completed permission notes and medical information must be accessible at the camp location by staff at all times.
- Four weeks prior to departure, a list of non-payers will be given to the Principal who will contact parents for payment.
- Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide the 'Teacher in Charge' with detailed records on a regular basis.
- The designated 'Teacher in Charge' of each camp will ensure that all camps, bus arrangements and camp activities comply with the Department guidelines. The 'Notification of School Activity' form will be completed online at least four weeks prior to the camp departure date. <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/forms/school/SAL/>
- 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 finalisation dates.
- Classroom teachers will be given the first option to attend camps.
- Classroom teachers will arrange for the education of children not attending camp.
- 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.
- 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)
- A mobile phone will accompany teachers on camp at all times.
- A designated staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from camp. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person in regards to the anticipated return time.
- Parents may be invited to assist in the delivery of school camps and are invited to complete an expression of interest from which will be attached to the student's camp notice.
- In deciding which parents will attend the Principal will take into account –
 - Any valuable skills the parents have to offer.
 - The need to include both male and female adults.
 - The special needs of particular students.

- o Parents selected to assist with the camps program will be required to have a current Working with Children's Check.
- o Parent volunteers will be required to pay some or all of the accommodation and meals cost of the camp.
- Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in the camping program. A Parent/Student Agreement will be in place and 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. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher.
- Parents will be requested to collect their child from camp if their child exhibits behaviour that is considered unacceptable. The Teacher in Charge, in consultation with the Principal, will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.
- Parent information session(s) will be conducted in the lead up to each camp.
- Information presented to the School Council and at one of the parent information(s) sessions will include: -
 1. The educational aims and objectives of the camp.
 2. The names of all adults attending.
 3. Travel arrangements and costs.
 4. Venue details and an itinerary of events.
 5. Procedures followed to ensure the safety of the children.
 6. Camp Contact numbers.
 7. Parent/Student agreement.
 8. Alternative program for students not attending camp.
- The above information will be provided to the Principal at least a week before the School Council meeting date.

SUPERVISION

- Officer Primary School follows the Department's guidelines in relation to supervision of students during excursions and camps.
- All excursion staff (including parent volunteers) will be familiar with supervision requirements and the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each camp and excursion.
- 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.

PARENT/CARER CONSENT

- For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Officer Primary School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Officer Primary School informs parents about school camps and excursions by placing a note in student bags and asking parents/carers to return the part of the note that asks for parents/carers signature confirming they consent to their child's participation. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school to discuss any questions or concerns that they or their child may have with a proposed camp or excursion.
- For local excursions, Officer Primary School will provide parents and carers with an annual Local Excursions consent form at the start of each school year or upon enrolment if students enrol during the school year. Officer Primary School will also provide advance notice to

parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through a note home in the student's bag. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Officer Primary School will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

COST OF CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS, REFUNDS AND SUPPORT

- The cost of all camps and excursions are to be paid by parents/carers unless alternative arrangements have been agreed to by the Principal prior to the excursion. All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for all activities. Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and payment finalisation dates.
- Students who have not finalised payment by the required date will not be allowed to attend unless the Principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.
- Officer Primary School will make all efforts to ensure that students are not excluded for financial reasons. Families experiencing financial difficulty are invited to discuss alternative payment arrangements with the Business Manager or Principal. The Business Manager or Principal can also discuss family eligibility for the Department's Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF), which provides payments for eligible students to attend school activities, including camps and excursions. Applications for the CSEF are open to families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents and are facilitated by the school. Further information about the CSEF and the application form are available at [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#).
- If a camp or excursion is cancelled or altered by the school, or a student is no longer able to attend part or all of the camp or excursion, our school will consider requests for partial or full refunds of payments made by parents/carers on a case-by-case basis taking into account the individual circumstances. Generally we will not be able to refund payments made for costs that have already been paid where those funds have already been transferred or committed to a third party and no refund is available to the school. Where possible, we will provide information about refunds to parents/carers at the time of payment.

STUDENT HEALTH

- Parents and carers need to ensure the school has up-to-date student health information prior to camps and excursions. A member of staff will be appointed with responsibility for the health needs of the students for each camp/excursion. Teachers will administer any medication provided according to our *Medication* policy and the student's signed *Medication Authority Form*. To meet the school's obligations relating to safety, a first aid kit and mobile phone will be taken by teachers on all camps and excursions.
- It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure their child/children are in good health when attending excursions and camps. If a student becomes ill during a camp and is not able to continue at camp 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.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- Students will not be permitted to bring electronic devices to camps or excursions except with prior approval from the Principal. The Principal will only approve students bringing electronic devices to a camp or excursion in exceptional circumstances and when it is in the best interests of the student, and may place conditions on its location and use during the camp or excursion.

FOOD

- Students are not permitted to bring their own supply of food items to camps and excursions unless the item is medically indicated and discussed with the Organising Teacher, or included as an item on the clothing and equipment list for that camp or excursion.

ACCIDENT AND AMBULANCE COVER

- Any costs associated with student injury rest with parents/carers unless the Department is liable in negligence (liability is not automatic).
- Unless otherwise indicated, Officer Primary School and the Department do not provide student accident or ambulance cover. Parents/carers may wish to obtain student accident insurance cover and/or ambulance cover, depending on their health insurance arrangements and any other personal considerations.

SITE SAFETY

- All safety requirements must be considered and adequately resolved prior to the camp. Telephone numbers of all emergency services must be provided to the school, and be taken on camp. If any swimming activities are to occur, there must be sufficient staff attending with appropriate swimming qualifications to enable safe supervision.
- Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher responsible for the activity must understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted. The teacher must confer with the designated instructor about the supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility. If the teacher is not the designated instructor, he/she is to act on the advice of the designated instructor on technical safety issues.
Refer: Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/excursions/Pages/outdoorguidelines.aspx>
- A designated “Teacher in Charge” will coordinate each camp. All camps will have an experienced teacher in attendance where possible.
- Effective supervision is a critical factor in managing risk in the outdoors. A minimum of two staff members (adults) must be present for each activity. One staff member is to have responsibility for instruction in the activity and the other is to assist the instructor.
- Staff to student ratios: 2 adults for 1 – 20 students, 3 adults for 21 – 30 students (1:10)
- 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. Parents will be informed that they can phone the office to receive an updated anticipated return time.

- For further ratios refer to 4.4.2.6 of the Victorian Government Schools Reference Guide
- For further information regarding safety please check the policy documents below.

FURTHER INFORMATION, LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

DEECD Excursion Policy

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

Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors

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

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Pro-forma for school approval for all camps
- Appendix B: Pupil/Teacher Ratios
- Appendix C: Guidelines for teachers planning a camp or excursion
- Appendix D: Notification of School Activity (camps and excursions)
- Appendix E: Parent Camp Leaders

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

- [Excursions](#)
- [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#)

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Parent Payment Policy

EVALUATION

This policy was last ratified by School Council in **June 2021** and is due to be reviewed in **June 2024**