

EXCURSIONS AND CAMPS POLICY



PURPOSE

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Richmond West Primary School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by RWPS, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds, and to school sleepovers.

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

Richmond West Primary School will:

- ensure that excursions and camps are planned and approved appropriately;
- ensure that adventure activities are conducted safely;
- ensure camps and adventure activities are planned and approved in accordance with DET policy and guidelines;
- ensure that the school obtains informed consent from parents/guardians for their child to participate in an excursion or camp;
- reinforce, complement and extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom;
- develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.

DEFINITIONS

An excursion or camp is an activity organised by a school during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities (including 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, confrontation with environmental challenges, remoteness with limited access to telephone and services normally available in everyday life and/or exposure to natural elements with less than the normal physical protection afforded in everyday life.

Activities may include among others: abseiling, bushwalking, canoeing/kayaking, rope courses, orienteering, horse riding, overnight camping, surfing, rafting and cycling. Activities such as bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting and flying ultra-light aircraft are deemed unsuitable.

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 students are carefully briefed on its use and associated dangers;
- staff supervise all use;
- a safety harness is always used.

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POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Principal is responsible for the conduct of all excursions and camps 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;
- medical information;
- appropriate staffing and supervision;
- student preparation and behaviour;
- requirements for any adventure activities.

Further considerations

- the educational purpose of the excursion or camp and its contribution to the curriculum must be clarified and explained;
- there must be an assurance that the proposed activity meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedure.

Consent forms and medical information

- the school will give parents/guardians, who are to sign consent forms, sufficient information about the excursion or camp 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 and camps requiring School Council approval, the teacher-in-charge of the excursion or camp will take a copy of each consent form on the excursion;
- a confidential medical information form will be completed by parents/guardians before each School Council approved excursion or camp. The teacher-in-charge will take the medical information forms on the excursion or camp and ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations with copies also kept at school;
- the school will use the DET recommended medical form.

Venue selection and assessment

- 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);
- 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

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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.

Planning

- In planning excursion, camps or adventure activities, the teacher-in-charge, in conjunction with all staff attending must undertake a detailed analysis of all risks associated with the activity;
- Any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed will be taken into account;
- Planning must cover arrangements if the activity needs to be cancelled or recalled (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions).

Emergency management

- Staff and students will have appropriate clothing and personal equipment;
- Technical equipment will be in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken;
- School Council approved excursions and camps will have an emergency response plan;
- All excursion staff will be familiar with emergency procedures for each excursion and 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 students are familiar with them;
- Parents/guardians 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 or camp, if parents 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 in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion will be made;
- The Principal will be prepared to cancel an excursion or camp 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 students attending excursion, camps or other venues in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion or camp 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 and camps.
- In the event of an emergency, accident or injury, staff on the excursion or camp 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.

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- The Principal will ensure sufficient staff, including first aid trained staff, attend the excursion or 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 students, the ability and experience of the students, the size of the group, the nature and location of the excursion or camp, 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.
- Unless it is deemed that circumstances require a more liberal staffing arrangement, one staff member to ten students will be the ratio.
- Before attending an excursion or camp, all volunteers and parent/carer helpers must present a valid Working With Children's Check that is recorded at the school's office.
- The teacher-in-charge will ensure that sufficient first aid equipment is available including portable first aid equipment.
- Students (and parents/guardians) will be fully informed about the behavioural expectations and (misbehaviour) consequences of the excursion or camp. In extreme circumstances, after full consultation, a student may be sent home from the activity.

Extra information

- Continuous instruction will be provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion or camp.
- For an excursion or camp requiring School Council approval, an approval proforma 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 excursion, the teacher in charge also will submit a Student Activity Locator form online.
- The school will obtain written consent from parents/guardians for the school to take the child outside of the school environment for a day excursion or camp. The school will provide sufficient information to enable the parent to make informed consent.
- Incursions other than those listed above only require the approval of the Principal and the permission of parents/guardians.
- The Regional Director will be informed if an excursion or camp leaves a school unoccupied.
- When undertaking excursions and camps planning, the Principal, teachers 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.
- Students will not be denied attendance at any camp or excursion because of disability or medical condition. Richmond West Primary School will take reasonable steps to support the inclusion of all students.

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Communication requirements

- Staff and students must have appropriate clothing and personal equipment.
- Group or technical equipment must be in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken.
- Continuous instruction will be provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion.
- The regional director will be informed if an excursion leaves the school unoccupied.
- Any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed requirements for interstate or overseas excursions must be communicated.
- 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. The duty of care of the school staff to students cannot be delegated to a third party.
- The excursion meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedures including providing appropriate care and adhering to school and DET guidelines and implementation plans for those students with identified health and wellbeing needs such as Anaphylaxis, Asthma.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related School Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Work Place Bullying Policy

DET resources

Excursions and activities

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

Student Activity locator

[Student Activity Locator \(SAL\)](#)

[Excursions and Outdoor Education](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle