

# CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY



## Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

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

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. For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [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. 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;

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- 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.

Further information and examples of adventure activities are available on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library, at the following link:

[Excursions/adventure-activities](#)

## 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. The educational purpose of the excursion or camp and its contribution to the curriculum must be clarified and explained. Camps enable students to develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world. An assurance that the proposed activity meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedure must also be in place.

### Planning

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;
- The teacher in charge will submit a [Student Activity Locator](#) form online at least three weeks prior to the excursion

Part of the planning process includes conducting risk assessments, to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risks associated with each proposed camp or excursion. Richmond West 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 must cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions).

The 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;

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- appropriate staffing and supervision;
- student preparation and behaviour;
- requirements for any adventure activities.

## Supervision

Richmond West 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. The duty of care of the school staff to students cannot be delegated to a third party.

## Parent volunteers

Parents may be invited to assist with camps and excursions. School staff will notify parents/carers of any costs associated with attending. School staff are in charge of camps and excursions and parent/carer volunteers are expected to follow teachers' instructions. When deciding which parents/carers will attend, the Organising Teacher will take into account: any valuable skills the parents/carers have to offer (e.g. bus licence, first aid etc.) and the special needs of particular students.

## Volunteer and external provider checks

Richmond West Primary School requires all parent or carers, camp or excursion volunteers and all external providers working directly with our students to have a current Working with Children Clearance card. Before attending an excursion or camp, all volunteers and parent/carer helpers must present a valid Working with Children's Clearance that is recorded at the school's office. (For more information see the schools *Visitors Policy* and *Volunteers Policy*).

## Consent forms and medical information

Richmond West primary School will ensure the excursion meets the requirements to provide appropriate care adhering to school and DET guidelines and implementation plans for those students with identified health and wellbeing needs such as Anaphylaxis and Asthma.

- 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

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will use the DET recommended medical form)

**Note:** Richmond West Primary School will take reasonable steps to support the inclusion of all students. Students will not be denied attendance at any camp or excursion because of disability or medical condition.

## 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 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.

## 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 be followed up by the Principal to determine whether exceptional circumstances apply.

Richmond West 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, Principal and/or the Organising Teacher. The Business Manager, Principal and/or the Organising Teacher 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

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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.

## Behaviour expectations

Students participating in camps and excursions are required to cooperate and display appropriate behaviour to ensure the camp or excursion is a safe, positive and educational experience for all students involved.

Parents/carers will be notified if their child is in danger of losing the privilege to participate in an excursion or camp due to behaviour that does not meet the standards of behaviour set out in the school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal or Assistant Principal, in consultation with the Organising Teacher. Both the parent/carer and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp or excursion.

If on a camp or excursion the Teacher in Charge considers an individual student's behaviour does not meet required standards, then the Principal or their nominee may determine that a student should return home during the camp or excursion. In these circumstances the parent/carer is responsible for the collection of the student and any costs associated with this.

Disciplinary measures apply to students on camps and excursions consistent with our school's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

## 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, Richmond West 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.

## Emergency management

School Council approved excursions and camps will have an emergency response plan and all

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excursion staff will be familiar with emergency procedures for each excursion and camp. When staying at a residential campsite the local emergency procedure 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 by the Principal. When required, schools must follow the school's Emergency management Plan (EMP) and adhere to 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.

## Additional information

- Staff and students will have appropriate clothing and personal equipment;
- Technical equipment will be in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken;
- 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.
- Continuous instruction will be provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion or camp.

## COMMUNICATION

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

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website and communication platform (COMPASS)
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter

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- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### Related School Policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Anaphylaxis and Asthma Policies
- Child Safe Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Health Care Needs Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

### Related DET Policies

The Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

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

Student Activity locator

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

### Appendices

- Appendix A - Camps and Excursions Supervision Ratios
- Appendix B - Camps and Excursions Approval Form
- Appendix C - Camps and Excursions Planning Checklist

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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

Policy last reviewed	February 2022
Approved by	Principal
Consultation	School Council noting March 2022
Next scheduled review date	February 2026