



CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS

POLICY

PURPOSE

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

Ringwood Heights Primary School offers the opportunity for students to attend camps and excursions:

- To provide experiences that enhances and supports curriculum programs
- To provide opportunities for students to experience special events as they arise
- To provide opportunities for teachers to contextualise learning unit key concepts through a shared experience

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Ringwood Heights Primary School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Ringwood Heights 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. Ringwood Heights 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;

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 website under Adventure Activities, at the following link:

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

POLICY

Camps and excursions can provide a valuable educational experience for our students which are complementary to their learning, as they provide access to resources, environments and expertise that may not be available in the classroom.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: Excursions and Activities.

Planning process for camps and excursions

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. Ringwood Heights 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.

Ringwood Heights 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.

Camp and Excursion Guidelines:

- Excursions/school visits will be carefully researched, selected and evaluated by staff to enhance, enrich and support the curriculum needs of the students and school programs
- Excursions/school visits where applicable, will have links to the Inquiry unit being studied and will support student learning
- Consideration will be given to other school events when planning excursions/ school visits
- Where appropriate, access to the local environment will be used as a focus for curriculum support
- A member of each Learning Team will be appointed to coordinate specific excursion/school visit programs, working in liaison with the Specialist Learning Team and Leadership Team as appropriate
- A risk analysis will be completed for all excursions and must include bushfire risk and safety.
- It is expected that teams will plan forthcoming excursions and school visits in advance, so as to inform parents of the Term Payment cost at the beginning of each term
- Parent helpers with the required WWCC (Working With Children Check) will be utilised for excursions, in order to comply with required student adult supervision ratios during these activities
- Buses will be utilised in accordance with current DET guidelines in relation to the required availability of seat belts and safety features, as necessitated by the location and duration of bus travel during an excursion

- Excursions/school visits are to be communicated to parents via the school newsletter in calendar dates and through notices home as soon as practicable prior to the event
- Notices will outline the purpose of the activity and seek consent and relevant medical details
- Teachers in charge of arranging excursions and school visits, in liaison with the first aid officer, must ensure that the appropriate first aid requirements are taken on these activities. The first aid officer must also verify that teachers attending excursions are provided with knowledge of the medical conditions of students who have allergies, potential for anaphylactic reactions and/or receive medication at school, prior to these students participating in camps/excursions
- Excursion/ school visit organisers must enter the dates and relevant information including facility bookings, in the School Diary
- On Code Red Days excursions will be cancelled
- The school will provide supervision ratios in line with Department's policy as outlined in the DET School Policy & Advisory Guide, depending on the nature and location of the school activity
- Term planner whiteboards will be maintained by the office administration staff and updated weekly
- Any alterations that need to occur for the requirements of the excursion/school visit, in regards to daily timetabling is to be discussed with the Specialist Team Leader, Assistant Principal or Principal

Supervision

Ringwood Heights 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 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.

What do parents need to do as a volunteer?

- **Actively participate and assist with all aspects of the camp/excursion unless incapable of doing so.**
- **Understand and accept that they may not necessarily be assigned to or work with their child throughout the excursion/camp.**
- **Ensure that they have only the personal information required to undertake their role as a volunteer.**
- **Maintain confidentiality with any personal or sensitive information that they may have accessed in their role as a volunteer.**

- **Ensure that personal data is appropriately secured, particularly if it is taken off the school premises, e.g. medical information taken on an excursion.**
- **Seek advice/approval from staff if in doubt about the handling of personal information.**
- **Posts, photos/videos, phone calls, text messages or use of social media to other community members in relation to the excursion/camp they are volunteering at, is not permitted unless permission has been sought by, or a request made by the organising teacher.**
- **Apply basic first aid if competent. All medication requests to be passed on to the assigned staff member of the excursion/camp**

Volunteer and external provider checks

Ringwood Heights Primary School requires all parent or carer camp or excursion volunteers and all external providers working directly with our students to have a current Working with Children Check card.

Parent/carers consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Ringwood Heights Primary School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Ringwood Heights Primary School uses Flexibuzz to inform parents about camps and excursions and seek their consent by giving students notices to take home and asking parents/carers to return the part of the note that asks for parents/carers signature to confirm 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.

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.

Ringwood Heights 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/Organising Teacher. The Business Manager/Principal/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 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.

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* and the *Student Code of Conduct*. 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, Ringwood Heights 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.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
 - Excursions and Activities
 - Emergency and Risk Management
- Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors
- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund.
- Code Red Days

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

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

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in June 2019 and is scheduled for review in June 2022 or as per DET guidelines.