

Moonee Ponds West Primary School



Camps & Excursions Policy

PURPOSE

The school's excursions and camps program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Excursions and camps may have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

The Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors are in place to support the planning and approval of excursions and camps, including interstate and overseas excursions involving weekends or vacations and adventure activities. These excursions and camps all require the approval of the School Council.

When undertaking excursions and camps planning, Principals, teachers, School Councillors and others involved in school excursions and camps 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.

The emergency management planning in schools extends to and incorporates school excursions and camps.

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SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Moonee Ponds West. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Moonee Ponds West, 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. Moonee Ponds West will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines when planning for and conducting camps and excursions.

DEFINITIONS

An **excursion** or **camp** is an activity organised by the school during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities (including sport).

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

Adventure activities are included in this definition (regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds or not). **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>

Camps are activities that involve at least one night's accommodation (including school sleep-overs) for students. Moonee Ponds West Primary School also runs annual events for Foundation and Grade 1 students that require attendance outside school hours for a meal and associated activities.

This document provides an overview of camping and excursions, and then describes what Moonee Ponds West Primary School will do to ensure our camps and excursions:

1. Are safe and inclusive
2. Teach students resilience
3. Foster independence and self-reliance
4. Help develop interpersonal skills
5. Expose students to a range of activities and locations

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.

Moonee Ponds West Primary School provides a variety of camping experiences from Foundation to Grade 6. As students move from Foundation to Grade 6 the length, variety of experience and challenge involved in the camping experience increases.

The policy will be reviewed as part of the review cycle, in line with DET policy and directives. Reviewed 9th August 2021. Approved 23rd August 2021. Due to be reviewed in 2022.



The table below outlines our camping program:

Foundation/Grade 1	Activities after school, followed by dinner then parent/carer pick up
Grade 2	Activities after school followed by a sleepover on school grounds
Grade 3/4	Two nights
Grade 5/6	Three nights
MVIMP Music Camp	Music Camp (three nights)
Japan Tour (biannual)	Overseas language tour (12 nights)

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Process

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.

The Principal is responsible for the conduct during all excursions and camps and must ensure an online notification of school activity form is completed prior to the activity.

All camps offered at Moonee Ponds West PS need to be accessible to all students. When choosing activities on the camps they must demonstrate 'reasonable adjustment' for maximum participation.

A planning and approvals process is undertaken, to ensure camps, excursions and adventure activities are planned and approved in accordance with DET policy and guidelines, which takes into account the following considerations:

- venue selection is safe and inclusive of all students;
- safety, emergency and risk management;
- informed consent from parents/carers for their child to participate in an excursion or camp;
- medical information;
- appropriate staffing and supervision;
- student preparation and behaviour;
- requirements for any adventure activities;
- The camp or excursion reinforces, compliments and extends learning opportunities beyond the classroom;
- The camp or excursion develops an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.

Staff organising camps will complete the following steps to ensure camps are safe and inclusive for Moonee Ponds West Primary School students:

- Distribute an expression of interest with preliminary details and an estimated cost to families
- Ensure transport has been organised, including buses with seatbelts where relevant, with all student needs accommodated.
- Obtain signed informed consent from parents/carers

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- Obtain a completed medical form for all students and staff. If a student requires medication, they must complete the medication authority form.
- Send a copy of the DET guidelines regarding administration of analgesics to each family for overnight camps
- Ensure there is at least one level 2 trained first aid staff member. This may be a paramedic hired specifically for the camp. This staff member will collate the medication authority forms and distribute all medications throughout the camp
- Create a detailed itinerary with specific locations and contact numbers
- Source a copy of a map of the camp, with a map name, access routes and grid references if required
- Distribute staff and student clothing and equipment list
- In consultation with Principal class, create a supervision plan for activities and non-programmed periods. This may form part of the itinerary. It must also adhere to DET mandated staff/student ratios for specific activities.
- Complete the staffing details pro-forma
- Obtain a risk management plan from the camp, or develop a risk management plan for school on-site activities.
- Develop/obtain an emergency response plan including contacts for police, ambulance, doctor, hospital, fire brigade and 24 hour school emergency number. This is to be held by staff on the excursion and by the nominated school contact person
- Complete school council approval documentation
- Hold a parent/carer information session 1-2 weeks before expression of interest forms are due before overnight camps
- Ensure one staff member has a comprehensively insured car available on site as an emergency vehicle.

Supervision

Staff will follow 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.

Minimum supervision requirements

Except where otherwise indicated, all excursions and camps must have a minimum of 2 staff members.

- **Local excursions**
Regular class teacher-student ratios with an additional accompanying staff member (as required)
- **Day excursions**
1 to 20 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
- **Overnight base camps**
1 to 10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
- **Interstate travel**
1 to 10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
- **Overseas travel**
1 to 10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
- **Adventure activities**
Specific ratios for each activity, see section on Adventure Activities

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.

Any parent/carer volunteer and all external providers working directly with our students to have a current Working with Children Check.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, parents/carers will be provided with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. The school's communication platform, Compass, will be used to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent **OR** 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, Moonee Ponds West 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. Moonee Ponds West will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through the school's communication platform, Compass. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports

lessons), Moonee Ponds West 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 activity. 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 will not be excluded from camps for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their child to attend camp, can discuss their individual situation with the Principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment requirements will be made by the Principal on a case-by-case basis.

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 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 have the right to attend camp only if their behaviour is such that staff are confident they will be safe and reliable in an environment other than the school. 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 Engagement and Wellbeing Policy* or *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.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

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

Related School Policies

- Duty of Care Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Work Place Bullying Policy
- Child Safe Policy
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy

Related DET Resources

Student Activity locator

Student Activity Locator (SAL)

Excursions and Outdoor Education