



WHPS-EXCURSIONS POLICY

RATIONALE

The school's excursion program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Excursions complement 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

Principals are responsible for the conduct of all excursions and must ensure:

- excursions are planned, approved and conducted in accordance with Department policy and requirements.
- an online notification of school activity form is completed at least three weeks prior to the activity using the [Student Activity Locator \(SAL\)](#) NOTE: The SAL should be used by all Victorian schools. Non-government schools should log on using 'NG' for the user ID.
 - see the [SAL user guide](#) for further information
 - compliance with the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, which are mandatory for excursions requiring school council approval.
- An excursion is defined as any activity beyond the school grounds.
- An incursion is defined as any activity within the school grounds.
- All excursions must be approved by the Principal. In doing so, the principal will determine a schedule of excursions for the school year, will ensure that all excursions are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost, and comply with all DEET requirements.
- Students will not be excluded from excursions simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend an excursion, 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 excursions. These costs are included in the annual student Excursions & Incursions contribution.
- Each excursion will be coordinated by a designated 'Teacher in Charge'.
- Prior to any child attending an excursion, parents/guardians must have provided to the school a signed permission form on paper or via Compass.
- When obtaining parental consent, the permission slip will have sufficient information to allow parents to make an informed decision about whether to permit their child to participate in the activity. The consent form should include information about the nature of the proposed activity, degree of supervision and the risks involved.
- The designated Teacher in Charge of each excursion will ensure that all excursions, transport arrangements and excursion activities comply with Department of Employment, Education and Training guidelines will complete an online notification of school activity form is completed at least three weeks prior to the activity using the [Student Activity Locator \(SAL\)](#) NOTE: The SAL should be used by all Victorian schools. Non-government schools should log on using 'NG' for the user ID.
- The staff on excursion will carry a mobile phone and a first-aid kit for all excursions, unless otherwise provide by the venue.
- Copies of completed Permission forms must be carried by excursion staff at all times.

- A staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from any out-of-school-hours excursion. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person with regards the anticipated return time.
- Parents of children involved in excursions may be invited to assist in the delivery of excursions. When deciding on which parents will attend, the Teacher in Charge will take into account –
 - Any valuable skills the parents have to offer. eg. bus licence, first aid etc.
 - The need to include both male and female parents.
 - The special needs of particular students.
- Parents selected to assist with an excursion may be required to pay costs associated with the excursion.
- Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in school excursions. Parents will be notified if a child is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in an excursion due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher and the Teacher in Charge.
- All excursion incursions require the Principal's approval. This approval is sought at a scheduled meeting at least three weeks prior to the departure date. Information presented to the the principal will include: -
 - 1.The educational aims and objectives of the excursion
 - 2.The names of all adults attending and their expertise and experience.
 - 3.Travel arrangements and costs.
 - 4.Venue details and an itinerary of events.
 - 5.Procedures followed to ensure the safety of the children.

BUSHFIRES AND CONTROL PROCEDURES ON EXCURSIONS:

- Pre-activity planning will include consideration of the possible fire risk and potential for bushfire in the relevant location when attending excursion. The excursion will be cancelled in the event of a bush fire. Alternatives will be planned to allow for last-minute change in the event of severe fire danger.
- Fires and open fire places will be used in accordance with the requirements of the fire and/or land management authorities.
- Students will be briefed on the safe site and use of fuel stoves and alerted to the risks associated with open flames in a bush setting.
- The communication strategy will include mechanisms to ensure that the group is alerted to a potential Total Fire Ban or other communications from fire authorities.
- In addition, staff will consider prevailing local conditions and adjust the excursion accordingly. Adjustments could include further consultation with the school and/or land management authorities to determine course of action, evacuation, changing location or cancellation of the activity.

Excursion Planning Requirements as outlined by DEET

While the degree of planning involved will depend on the risks involved, the conduct of any excursion or activity should take into account the following:

- Educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum
- Department approval requirements for excursions and staff travel
- Maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process
- Suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion
- Informed consent from parents or carers
- Adequate student and staff medical information
- Student preparation and behaviour
- Requirements for any adventure activities (these involve greater than normal risk - there are additional considerations associated with these activities)

Emergency and risk management

- Assessment of excursion risks
- Procedures in the event of an emergency

- Arrangements are in place if the excursion needs to be cancelled, recalled, or altered (for example: severe weather conditions, changes to DFAT travel advice, or students returning early due to illness/serious misbehaviour)
- Completion of an online notification of school activity form three weeks prior to the activity using the Student Activity Locator - see Department resources below
- First aid requirements

Cancellations or alterations

- Principals should inform parents that any costs associated with the student returning from an excursion early due to illness or serious misbehaviour are the responsibility of the parent.
- Parents should be advised of possible cancellations or alterations, and any cancellation fees imposed on the parents by third parties.
- With respect to arrangements between the school and third parties, principals should:
 - carefully negotiate terms and conditions with third parties (e.g. travel agents, travel insurance companies, camp providers, specialist instructors, expedition providers) prior to accepting arrangements
 - ensure the terms of any travel insurance offered to the school by the third party are satisfactory.

Staffing and supervision

- There must be sufficient staff to provide appropriate and effective supervision the experience, qualifications and skills of each staff member (including volunteers, instructors, etc) to allow them to provide effective supervision in general and for planned activities (as applicable)
- There must be appropriate levels of supervision in view of the activities undertaken and students involved.

Transportation requirements

- Public transport should be used if practicable
- Transport authorities should be consulted on appropriate travel times and at least a fortnight's notice of travel provided
- Excursions that run late, failing to meet times agreed to with private bus operators, are likely to incur significant costs.

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.

Important: Principals, teachers, school councillors and others involved in school excursions, 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.

EVALUATION

- This policy will be reviewed by the School Council as part of the school’s regular review cycle.
- Next review due July 2021.

This policy was last ratified by WHPS School Council in	July 2018
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Important Information to be considered when planning camps:

When undertaking excursion planning, principals, teachers and others involved in school excursions (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.

The excursion planning and approval process should take into account the following considerations:

- the educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum
- maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process
- venue selection:
 - the suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion
- safety, emergency and risk management:
 - € assessment of excursion risks
 - € procedures in the event of an emergency
 - € arrangements if the excursion needs to be cancelled or recalled (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions)
 - € completion of an online notification of school activity form three weeks prior to the activity
 - € first aid requirements
 - € any other measures necessary for student and staff safety and welfare.
- staffing and supervision:
 - € there are sufficient staff to provide appropriate and effective supervision in line with current department guidelines.
 - € the experience, qualifications and skills of each staff member (including volunteers, instructors, etc) will allow them to provide effective supervision in general and for planned activities (as applicable)
 - € there are appropriate levels of supervision in view of the activities undertaken and students involved.
- informed consent from parents or carers
- adequate student and staff medical information
- student preparation and behaviour
- requirements for any adventure activities
- transportation requirements, noting that:
 - € public transport should be used if practicable
 - € excursions that run late, failing to meet times agreed to with private bus operators, are likely to incur significant costs
 - € information on student concession cards is available at: [Public Transport Victoria](#)
- communication requirements
- that staff and students have appropriate clothing and personal equipment
- that group or technical equipment is in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken

- that continuous instruction is provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion
- any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed
- requirements for interstate or overseas excursions
- that the excursion meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedures.

Who approves the excursion

This table explains the approval required before the excursion occurs.

Excursion type	Then it must be approved by
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight excursions • Camps • Interstate and international visits • Excursions requiring sea or air travel • Excursions involving weekends or vacations • Adventure activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school council, or • Both school councils when it is a joint activity involving another school <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors must be followed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day excursions (other than those referred to above that must be approved by the school council). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the principal, or • both principals when it is a joint activity involving another school.

Joint-school activities

The nominated co-ordinating principal or teacher ensures:

- Planning and approval requirements are met
- Parents or carers are informed that their children may be supervised by teachers and other approved adults from the other school.

Note: All schools involved in a joint excursion must complete an online notification of school activity form.

Vic Gov't School Policy & Advisory Guide – Planning & Approvals for excursions