

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

POLICY

Rationale:

- Outdoor education provide students with the opportunity to significantly broaden their learning experiences, to participate in a variety of new outdoor environments, and to participate in exciting and unique activities that develop skills, build confidence and foster self-esteem.

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Aims:

- To provide students with challenging and exciting but safe outdoor education activities and learning experiences that complement and enhance the curriculum.

Implementation:

- Outdoor education activities are defined for the purpose of this policy as any organised and supervised school activities that require children to venture from the school boundary.
- Educators owe all students a duty of care to take such measures as are reasonable to protect students in their care from risks of injury that the educator should have reasonably foreseen.
- Effective risk and safety management assessments must be undertaken and all safety measures implemented for outdoor education activities to ensure they are planned and conducted safely.
- The principal is responsible for the approval of all non-adventure single-day excursions other than those that must approved by the School Council. Principal approved excursions are detailed in the school's 'Excursions' policy.
- School Council is responsible for approval of all overnight excursions; camps; interstate and overseas visits; excursions requiring sea or air travel; excursions involving weekends or vacations; and adventure activities. School Council approved excursions are detailed in this 'Outdoor Education' policy.
- Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed School Council approved Outdoor Education activity, the organising teacher and other key members must meet formally with the principal, to present the principal with a [planning summary](#), to discuss the proposed activity, and to seek 'in principle' support for the event. The principal will complete the [Principal Checklist](#) to ensure all information and planning is in order.
- If the principal's approval is granted, detailed planning should commence using the [planning questions](#) proforma as a guide. This must include a site visit and [risk assessment](#).
- Prior to seeking School Council approval for the activity, organising staff are required to meet again with the principal and present him/her with all documentation, including the completed School Council [approval](#) proforma and all attachments, ensuring that time permits for the matter to be placed on a School Council agenda and, if approved, that the online [Notification of School Activity](#) form then be submitted three weeks prior to the activity.
- When presenting information to School Council, organising staff must be aware that Council will consider the following:-
 - What is the purpose of the program and its connection to student learning?
 - Do staff members attending have the competence to provide the necessary supervision of students throughout the program?
 - Is an appropriately trained member of staff able to provide [first aid](#) ?
 - Have staff members who are not registered teachers completed a Working with Children Check?
 - Is the location of staff and students throughout the program including during travel known?
 - Is a record of telephone contacts for supervising staff at camp available?

- Is a record of the names and family contacts for all students and staff available?
- Are copies of the [parental consent](#) and [confidential medical advice](#) forms for those students on the excursion completed to be taken to the activity, with copies retained at school ?
- Has a copy of the completed School Council [approval](#) proforma (including all attachments) been submitted and approved?
- Will the online [Notification of School Activity](#) form be submitted three weeks prior to the excursion?
- Adventure activities are those that involve greater than normal risk such as base camping, bush walking, canoeing, snow activities, orienteering, cycling, horse riding, rock climbing and abseiling, challenge ropes courses, swimming (other than school swimming programs), surf activities, sailboarding, and similar activities. School Councillors may not have detailed knowledge of adventure activities. In such instances organising staff should consult the [adventure activities](#) website, or seek advice from peak bodies or skilled and experienced staff with recent experience instructing the activity to satisfy Council’s requirements.
- [Emergency management plans](#) are to be developed when adventure activities are being undertaken.
- School Council requires that students only travel on buses fitted with seatbelts.
- School Council requires that a report be tabled after each outdoor education activity, detailing feedback regarding the event, in particular any mishaps or areas for future improvement.
- The primary references that must be consulted when considering all outdoor education activities (including adventure activities) is the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoor website: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/safety/pages/outdoor.aspx> as well as the Victorian government ‘*School Policy and Advisory Guide*’.
- To be read in conjunction with “Camping” and “Excursions” policies.

Evaluation:

- * This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s regular review cycle, or after any unexpected event originating from an outdoor education activity.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on....

February 2015

