

CAMPS and EXCURSIONS

PURPOSE

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

SCOPE

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

This policy does not apply to student workplace learning or intercampus travel.

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 [delete if your still does not hold 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. 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>

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.

Ripponlea Primary School runs camps and excursions to enable students to develop their learning skills in a non-school setting. RPS camps and excursions are an important aspect of the school's educational program.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Excursions](#).

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. Ripponlea 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.

Ripponlea 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.

Supervision

Ripponlea 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 must follow teachers' instructions. When deciding which parents/carers will attend, the Organising staff 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

Ripponlea 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. RPS values the many volunteers that assist in RPS classrooms, with sports events, camps, excursions, school concerts and other events and programs. To ensure that RPS is meeting its legal obligations

under the Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic) and the Child Safe Standards, RPS is required to undertake suitability checks which may include a Working With Children Check (WWC Check), proof of identity, work history involving children and/or reference checks.

Considering the legal obligations imposed on RPS and the commitment of RPS to ensuring that RPS is a child safe environment, RPS will require volunteers to obtain a WWC Check and produce their valid card to RPS office staff for verification in the following circumstances:

- Volunteers who are not parent/family members of any student at RPS are required to have a WWC Check if they are engaged in child-related work regardless of whether they are being supervised.
- Parent/family volunteers who are assisting with any classroom or school activities involving direct contact with children in circumstances where the volunteer's child is not participating, or does not ordinarily participate in, the activity.
- Parent/family volunteers who assist with excursions (including swimming), camps and similar events, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- Parent/family volunteers who regularly assist in school activities, regardless of whether their own child is participating or not.
- Parent/family volunteers who volunteer as coach for RPS school sport teams (for example netball or basketball), regardless of whether their own child is participating or not. Parents who volunteer in this capacity will also be required to the 'Coach Agreement' (refer to [Volunteers Policy](#) Appendix 2).

In addition, depending on the nature of the volunteer work, RPS may ask the volunteer to provide other suitability checks at its discretion (for example, references, work history involving children and/or qualifications). Proof of identity may also be required in some circumstances.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Ripponlea Primary School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Ripponlea Primary School uses 'COMPASS' (Web-based tool) 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, Ripponlea Primary School 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. Ripponlea Primary School will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through COMPASS, another web-based tool and/or note in student bag. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Ripponlea Primary School 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 excursion. With consultation with the School

Council, all families will be given sufficient time to make payments for all activities as agreed by School Council. Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and payment finalisation dates, with reference to QkR™ if payment is required. Camps and excursions will be selected having consideration to the impact of cost on the participation of students. The cost of camps and excursions is to be paid by parents/carers. Students who have not finalised payment by the required date will not be allowed to attend unless the Principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.

Ripponlea 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 Principal. The Principal 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 and Bullying Prevention Policy*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal class, in consultation with the Organising staff. 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 Organising teacher 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* 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, in conjunction with the school's Mobile Phone Policy. 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, Ripponlea 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:

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

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

- About Our School – Values, Philosophy and Learning
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement
- Bullying Prevention
- Volunteers
- Duty of Care
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Parent Payment & Voluntary Financial Contributions

Ratified by School Council: June 2021

Next review date: June 2024