

CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY



Camps and Excursions Policy

From 15 December 2022 onwards, school staff with primary responsibility for organising a school camp and/or water-based activity must have completed the mandatory Excursions e-Learning Module. Staff responsible for organising excursions of any other type are also encouraged to complete the module. The module is in eduPay. All staff are encouraged to complete the module annually.

Aim

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. These events provide students with the opportunity to nurture experiential education, build intergenerational relationships and result in a different style of learning.

School staff involvement is vital to every successful camp, with the bonds between students and staff strengthened away from the classroom. Our students can form relationships through first-hand experiences with trained, caring adult role models and experience a sense of achievement in a supervised, safe, and positive environment as a result.

Purpose

The requirements set out in this policy are mandatory and must be complied with by all staff for all camps and excursions that occur off site.

Scope

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Montague School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Montague School, regardless of whether they take place on or off school grounds. This policy should be read in combination with the department's policy and guidelines on excursions, camps, and adventure activities which all Victorian government schools are required to follow. Montague 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	Camps	Local Excursions	Adventure Activities
Activities organised by the school where the students are taken out of the school grounds (day excursions).	Excursions involving at least one night's accommodation.	Locations within walking distance of the school and do not involve adventure activities.	Are activities that involve a greater than normal risk

Note: workplace learning activities (such as work experience) and intercampus travel are not considered school 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.

Montague School's risk assessment will include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire or other natural disaster activity in the excursion location. In the event the bureau of meteorology forecasts a catastrophic fire danger rating (FDR) day, excursions or camp activities in affected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling, or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason.

Montague 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.

Guiding Principles for Camps

- All camps must be accredited with the Australian Camps Association.
- All Camps, Excursions and Incursions must be cost neutral to the school.
- All Camps, Excursions and Incursions must compliment the school curriculum and comply with all DET requirements.
- All Camps, Excursions and Incursions must meet the DET staffing supervision ratio requirements.
- All student contact details and medical information which are on the consent forms must be taken on the excursion (print out of the Compass event Handbook) so that contact can be made with parents/guardians if necessary: Student Medical Information.

To ensure information is provided to emergency services, schools must notify the Department of any approved school camp or excursion at least three (6) weeks beforehand. This must be recorded on the Department's Student Activity Locator (SAL). To obtain effective consent, schools need to provide sufficient information to parents about the nature of and risks associated with the excursion.

Parents must be able to give informed consent to their child's participation in the excursion after considering the risks. Specific information about the excursion should be included here or provided as an attachment. There must be full disclosure. Parents should also be given the opportunity to ask questions.

A risk assessment of all adventure activities must be completed and submitted to the school council as part of the approval process.

Supervision

Montague 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. School staff will retain overall responsibility for the supervision and care of students throughout all camps and excursions (including adventure activities), regardless of whether 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 oversee camps and excursions, and parent/carer volunteers are expected to follow teachers' instructions. When deciding which parents/carers will attend, the organising teacher will consider: any valuable skills the parents/carers have to offer (e.g., Bus licence, first aid etc.) and the special needs of students.

Working with Children Check

Montague School requires all parents, carers, or volunteers, along with all external providers working directly with students, to have a current Working with Children Check card.

Parent/Carer Consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Montague School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Montague School uses compass to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent to inform 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, Montague 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. Montague School will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through Compass, email and/or phone. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Montague School will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

Parent Payments for Camps and Excursions

Most camps and excursions provided by Montague School enhance and broaden the schooling experience of our students but are not a mandatory component of our curriculum. These activities are provided on a user-pays basis in accordance with the department's parent payments policy.

Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and finalisation dates, and families will be given sufficient time to make payments.

Students who have not finalised payment by the required date for camps and excursions provided on a user pays basis will not be able to attend unless the principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.

Where a camp or excursion is provided as part of the standard curriculum requirements, parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution, but all students will be able to attend regardless of whether their parents contribute.

Financial Help for Families

Montague 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 parent and are facilitated by the school. Further information about the CSEF and the application form is available at camps, sports, and excursions fund.

Refunds

If a camp or excursion is cancelled or altered by the school, or a student is no longer able to attend part or all 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 considering 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. 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, Montague 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.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following way:

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training.
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook.
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required.
- Included in transition and enrolment packs.
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions.
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request.

Policy Review and Approval

Reviewed	23 November 2024
Consultation	School Council
Approved by	Principal
Review date	Term 1, 2026