

Camps and Excursions Policy (2027)



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact the Morang South Primary School office.

Purpose

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Morang South 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 Morang South Primary School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Morang South Primary School, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds, and includes any school sleep-overs if applicable.

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. Morang South Primary School will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines when planning for and conducting camps and excursions.

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.

Camps are excursions involving at least one night's accommodation (including school-based 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. School camps offer children a variety of experiences. They assist with the development of collaboration, confidence, independence, self-esteem, initiative and responsibility. School camps reinforce and extend on Social and Emotional Learning programs and provide an extension on core classroom content. Camps may have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

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. Morang South Primary 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.

Morang South 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 identify appropriate support for 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. Students not attending camps or excursions should still attend school to access the alternative programs or learning.

The Organising Teacher must ensure that **Excursion and Camp Planning Process** (Appendix A) are following and the necessary approvals and planning steps are followed. School staff with primary responsibility for organising a school camp and/or water-based excursion activity must have completed the mandatory excursions e-learning module. This module is located on Edu-pay.

Supervision

Morang South Primary School follows the Department's guidelines and ratios in relation to supervision of students during excursions and camps.

All excursion staff (including parent volunteers) will be made 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 if there are any costs associated with a volunteer 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. Volunteers are required to be familiar with the school's Volunteer policy and Child Safety related policies which can be located on the school's website.

Volunteer and external provider checks (WWCC)

Morang South 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 and to have registered Morang South Primary School under the 'My Check' section of the WWCC website as a location for volunteering.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Morang South Primary School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Morang South Primary School uses Compass to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent or in particular circumstances may provide detail via a by placing a note in student bags, asking parents/carers to read, return or respond to the provided information. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact their child's teacher or the school to discuss any questions or concerns that they or their child may have with a proposed camp or excursion.

For local excursions, Morang South Primary School will provide parents and carers with annual Local Excursions consent via Compass at the start of each school year or upon enrolment if students enrol during the school year. Morang South Primary School will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through a Compass News notification.

For excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for interschool sports sessions), Morang South Primary 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 Morang South Primary 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 clear finalisations dates, and families will be given sufficient time to make payments.

Where parents have not finalised payment by the required date for camps and excursions provided on a user pays basis, students will not be able to attend. The Principal's discretion may apply where exceptional circumstances are determined with organisational arrangements permitting attendance.

Where a camp or excursion is identified as an expected curriculum requirement, parents are invited to make a voluntary contribution but all students will have access to attend.

Financial Help for Families

Morang South 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 school office staff 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](#).

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 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.

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 who had been unwell 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. Students of Morang South Primary School are expected to show the school values and to conduct themselves in line with these at excursion and camp-based venues.

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, Engagement and Inclusion Policy* or *Bullying and Harassment 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. Where students have identified disabilities that can present with challenging behaviour the nominee will discuss the concerns with the Principal prior to determining action.

Disciplinary measures apply to students on camps and excursions consistent with our school's *Student Wellbeing, Engagement and Inclusion Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct* and *Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy*.

Electronic Devices

Students will not be permitted to bring electronic devices to camps or excursions, including mobile phones and smart-watches 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 indicated by the Organising Teacher or if the item is medically related and has been discussed with the Organising Teacher. Parents should note that the safety of all students is paramount including students with allergies and anaphylaxis. Parents are asked to refrain from sending any undisclosed 'treats' with their child.

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).

Morang South 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.

Planning – Bushfires

Fire is a risk factor in any excursion or camp where bushland is located in the vicinity. During the months from November to April this risk increases. A careful, informed and sensible approach to the risk-management associated with bush fire is required by the school in planning for Camps or Excursions in settings which hold a bushfire risk. The Organising Teacher and the Teacher in Charge will need to consider or ensure;

- Risk management planning includes consideration of risks associated with bushfires or grass fires based on the local context and environment, access to and from the property and wider vicinity, activities planned and any Campsite or External Provider's Emergency Management Plan.
- Staff are familiar with the Camp site's or External Provider's Emergency Management Plan or relevant advice in a Teacher's Information Booklet including related Bushfire emergency processes.
- Sufficient staff will have mobile phone signal coverage while attending the camp or excursion or on activities in the surrounding areas.
- Teacher in Charge checks local CFA reports regarding presence of any bushfire prior to departure for camp or excursion in a bushfire prone setting, and has downloaded the Vic Emergency App and set up an alert zone for the region.
- Where a bushfire is identified within the wider vicinity of the campsite or excursion location that they liaise with the DET Emergency Management and Security Unit, local CFA authorities and the Camp or External Providers, in regard to the safety of the area, including consideration of the planned activities for the camp or excursion, e.g. bushwalking.
- Alternative groups programs are sort-out and implemented where any activity could pose a risk in relation to bushfire, grassfire, or smoke inhalation e.g. asthma management.
- In the event of a bushfire related emergency, that staff follow evacuation procedures as enacted and directed by emergency services and the Campsite or External Provider's Emergency Management Plan and that the DET Emergency Management and Security Unit is notified.

If after consultation with the DET Emergency Management and Security Unit, local CFA authorities and the Camp or External Providers it is determined that the risk presents the need to cancel a camp or excursion, the school will discuss alternative arrangements with the Providers. This may include postponing or full cancellation of the event. Costs may be incurred by parents where cancellation is made against the advice of a Provider, but where the school determines the risk is significant enough to warrant cancellation.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Included in team leader briefings
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in links with the staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent camp briefing sessions
- Communication regarding policy location in school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

Further information and resources

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

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

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing, Engagement and Inclusion Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	October 2015; April 2019; April 2023
Consultation by School Council	26th of April, 2023
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	April 2027

Appendix A

Excursion and Camp Planning Process

The Organising Teacher will need to identify the correct documentation required for planning any excursion, camp or adventure-based activity. The Organising Teacher should note that additional guidelines may be provided from the Department of Education for specific adventure-based activities and should be read in conjunction with general documentation relating to excursions or camps.

The document [Summary of Excursion Documentation \(DOCX\)](#) – should be utilised to make sure the Organising Teacher is meeting the minimum documentation requirements.

Pre-approval (In-principle approval)

The Organising Teacher must ensure;

- All excursions and camps are planned and implemented according to the [guidelines of the Department of Education](#).
- All necessary documentation is provided based on Department of Education requirements. Please check the [specified details](#) for circumstances related to documentation and use the Summary of Excursion Documentation guideline to confirm requirements.
- Ensure correct ratios are in place **based on the different types of programs** being offered, whether this be general excursion, overnight camp or involve adventure based activities including swimming supervision ratios.
- Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed day excursion or camp, the Organising Teacher must gain permission from the Principal to seek 'in-principle' support for the event.
- If day excursions include adventure-activities the Organising Teacher should consult the [Activity-Specific Risk Registers](#) and discuss any required provisions with the Principal.
- If the Principal's 'in-principle' approval is granted, detailed planning should then commence. This must include required risk assessments and if identified by the Principal a site visit if felt necessary.

When presenting information to the Principal, the Organising Teacher must be aware that the Principal will consider the following:

- What is the purpose of the excursion/camp and its connection to student learning?
- Do staff members attending have the competence/required certification or qualification to provide the necessary supervision of students throughout the excursion or camp?
- Is an appropriately trained member of staff or volunteer able to provide first aid?
- Have supervisory adults (volunteers) who are not registered teachers provided current Working with Children Checks?
- Is the location or venue suitable and can provide any required Emergency Management Plans and Risk Assessments?
- Is a record of phone contacts for supervising excursion staff available?
- Is a record of the names and family contacts for all students and staff available?
- Are copies of the parental consent and where relevant medical-advice forms/documentation for those students on the excursion/camp completed?
- Have the requirements for any adventure related activities, including swimming been implemented?
- Have the needs of students with disabilities or identified needs been considered and supports been provided for attendance?
- Will an alternative program or learning be provided for students not attending the excursion or camp?
- Has the SAL been completed 3-weeks prior to the excursion or camp?

School Council consultation must be sort for all overnight excursions; camps; interstate and overseas visits; excursions requiring sea or air travel; excursions involving weekends or vacations; and adventure activities, (required if metropolitan schools travelling beyond the greater metropolitan area).

Final approval will be granted by the Principal for all excursions and camps.

Attempts must be made to spread excursions, incursions and events as evenly as possible throughout the year to help families budget.

Planning Phase - General

In planning for the excursion/camp the Organising Teacher will consider/facilitate;

Completion of the Student Activity Locator (SAL) Online Form three weeks prior to the activity.

Completion of required documentation for School Council is submitted for approval (camps/adventure activities/Interstate Trips).

Students travel on buses fitted with seatbelts where available.

Bushfire risk factors and management to be considered in line with the points mentioned above in the section *Planning - Bushfire*.

Excursion notices distributed to parents no later than 2 weeks before an excursion and preferably 4 weeks where payment is required. Excursion and camp notices should contain detailed information of the excursion/camp, including location and the educational value to the children and seek parental/guardian consent for attendance.

Camp notices distributed to parents the term prior to the camping event.

Details of camp location/venue location are provided to staff for emergency management purposes.

Failure to return the appropriate permission notice by the requested due date may result in students being unable to attend the excursion or camp.

Requests for updated medical information and for camps the distribution of Confidential Medical Information forms.

Excursion/camp notices should be submitted to the Principal Class Officers before distribution.

Wherever possible details of upcoming excursions or camps should be notified to community on the Compass Calendar, well in advance.

Prior to any child attending an excursion, parents/carers must have provided consent to the school either as signed permission form or digital signature.

Provision of students experiencing financial concerns. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend a day excursion, will be required to discuss their individual situation with the Principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Principal (or nominee) on a case-by-case basis. Some families may be able to access The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF).

All families being given sufficient time to make payments for excursions. Children whose parents have not paid deposits by the due date, who do not make full payment by the due date, or who have not made alternative arrangements with the Principal will not be eligible to attend.

Supervising teachers to monitor Compass for payments and consent. Where suitable reminder notifications are encouraged prior to the due date.

Office staff and supervising teachers ensuring that information will be provided to all parents of non-English speaking families in a manner that allows them to provide an informed consent to their children attending excursions and camps.

Classroom teachers being considered as the first option to attend excursions, as they are most familiar with their students.

First-Aid trained staff attending camps and excursions. The school will continue to provide the opportunity for teachers to update their first aid skills.

Organisation related to taking/use of First-Aid kits, medical equipment, medicines and any associated medical documentation related to students.

A mobile phone and a first-aid kit to be taken by teachers on all day excursions.

Provision or direction to print excursion/camp Compass Handbooks to be taken by supervising teachers/teacher-in-charge to activity.

For a senior staff member to be in attendance at school where the children are returning from any out-of-school-hours excursion. The Organising Teacher will communicate with this person with regards to the anticipated return time.

Allocation of a Teacher in Charge (this may also be the same Organising Teacher) who oversees the operations of the excursion or camp, takes charge of events, makes key decisions and takes responsibility for the excursion or camp.

Parents or volunteers being invited to participate in excursions or camps. All volunteers assisting with any school program must have a Working With Children Check prior to their participation and have had the WWC verification process completed and registered by office staff. All volunteers will be provided induction booklet in relation to Morang South Primary School's child safety practices, including reporting obligations and procedures. Camp volunteers are also required to attend a Camp briefing. Our school has a Statement of Commitment to Child Safe, Child Safe Policy, Volunteers Policy and a Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy which all volunteers should be made aware of. These policies are located on the school website.

Children who have lived by the School Values and displayed sensible, safe, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in school excursions or camps. Parents will be notified if a child is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in an excursion due to poor behaviour or conduct at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the Organising Teacher and the Teacher in Charge, and with consideration of the context, supervision and support available.

Recording of any medical administration, incidents, mishaps or concerns is completed and that office staff or the Teacher in Charge enters details into Edusafe where required.

When determining parents/volunteers who will attend an excursion or support an event the Teacher in Charge will consider;

Any valuable skills the parents/volunteers have to offer. eg. bus licence, first aid etc

The special needs of particular students.

The preference to include both male and female parents.

Occasionally, parents/volunteers selected to assist with excursions may be required to pay their excursion/camp costs.