



# CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS Policy 2020

## PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Hopetoun P-12 College will use when planning and conducting camps, excursions and adventure activities for students.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Hopetoun P-12 College. This policy also applies to camps organised by other schools and organisations in which Hopetoun P-12 College students participate. Further, the policy applies to adventure activities organised by Hopetoun P-12 College, 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. Hopetoun P-12 College will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines when planning for and conducting camps and excursions.

## EXCLUSIONS

This policy does not apply to student workplace learning, intercampus travel or travel to another school for classes such as for VCE subjects.

## 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 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 website under Adventure Activities, at the following link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/Principals/spag/safety/pages/adventure.aspx>

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

## POLICY

The school's camping program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Camps may have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

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.

### **Aims:**

- To provide all children with the opportunity to participate in a sequential camping program.
- To provide shared class experiences and a sense of group cohesiveness.
- To reinforce and extend classroom learning.
- To provide a program that delivers skills and knowledge that may lead to a lifelong involvement in worthwhile leisure pursuits.
- To provide a program that promotes self-esteem, resourcefulness, independence, leadership, judgement, cooperation and tolerance.

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

For camps and excursions requiring school council approval, our school will also follow the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors](#).

All camps must be entered on the School Activity Locator at least three weeks before the camp. Day and half day excursions outside of Hopetoun must be entered on the Student Activity Locator at least one week before the activity. Local excursions are entered at the discretion of the Teacher in Charge or as directed by the Principal or their nominee.

### **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. Hopetoun P-12 College'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.

Hopetoun P-12 College 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.

Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed School Council approved camp, the Teacher in Charge and other key members must meet formally with the Principal, to present the Principal with a [planning summary](#), to discuss the camp, 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 Leadership approval is granted, detailed planning should commence using the [planning questions](#) proforma as a guide. This must include a [risk assessment](#).

The school only uses residential campsites accredited by the 'Australian Camps Association' or the 'National Accommodation, Recreation & Tourism Accreditation Program (NARTA)' for overnight camps.

When presenting information to School Council, the Teacher in Charge must be aware that Council will consider the following:-

What is the purpose of the camp and its connection to student learning?

Do staff members attending have the competence to provide the necessary supervision of students throughout the camp?

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 camp including during travel known?

Is a record of telephone contacts for supervising staff accompanying the 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 camp?

## Supervision

Hopetoun P-12 College 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.

While school camps are a team activity requiring the cooperation and common-sense of all participants, it is the Teacher in Charge who oversees the operations of the camp, takes charge of events, makes key decisions and accepts ultimate responsibility for the camp.

## Parent volunteers

Parents may be invited to assist with camps and excursions. Refer to our Volunteers Policy. 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 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.

## Volunteer and external provider checks

Hopetoun P-12 College 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.

## Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Hopetoun P-12 College will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Hopetoun P-12 College informs

parents about school camps and excursions by providing a 'green note' 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, Hopetoun P-12 College 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. Hopetoun P-12 College will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through the school newsletter or electronic medium. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Hopetoun P-12 College 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. All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for all activities. Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and payment finalisation dates. Students who have not finalised payment by the required date will not be allowed to attend unless the Principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.

Hopetoun P-12 College 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 and Business Manager. The Principal and Business Manager 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.

Any family who has not met the required alternative payment for a previous camp will be unable to participate in the camping program until the outstanding payment is finalised.

#### 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* and *Behaviour Management Plan*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal or their nominee, in consultation with the Organising Teacher. Additional consideration will be given to students with disabilities and special needs. 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 Engagement and Wellbeing Policy (2016/19),  
Behaviour Management Plan (2019) and  
Bullying Prevention Policy (2019).*

## Electronic Devices

Students will not be permitted to bring electronic devices to camps or excursions except with prior approval from the Principal and Organising Teacher. 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, Hopetoun P-12 College 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:

- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
  - [Excursions and Activities](#)
  - [Emergency and Risk Management](#)
- [Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors](#)
- [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#).
- [Code Red Days](#)

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

- Values and School Philosophy (2020)
- Student Engagement and Wellbeing Policy (2016/19)
- Volunteer Policy (2018)
- Duty of Care Policy (2019)
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy (2018)
- Parent Payment Policy(2017)

## REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated on 19 February 2020 and is scheduled for review in 2023.