



CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Mentone Girls' Secondary 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 Mentone Girls' Secondary College. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Mentone Girls' Secondary College, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds.

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. Mentone Girls' Secondary College will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines when planning for and conducting camps and excursions.

Processes will be in place to identify student needs in relation to participation in camps and excursions. These include:

- Design of curriculum and extra-curricular activities to ensure all students can participate
- Careful revision of consent forms to ensure inclusivity
- Risk assessments completed and quality assured so that all necessary needs are identified, and any accommodations, modifications or adjustments required to ensure student access, engagement and participation in camps and excursions is actioned and implemented
- Debrief and reflection following camps and excursions to review performance and determine if any adjustments are required for future camps or 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;

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://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/policy?Redirect=1>

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

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. For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's Policy Advisory Library: Excursions and Activities and the Department's Policy Advisory Library: Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

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. Mentone Girls' Secondary College 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 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.

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

Mentone Girls' Secondary 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.

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 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 individual needs of particular students, including students with disability.

Volunteer and external provider checks

Mentone Girls' Secondary College requires all excursion volunteers and all external providers working directly with our students to have a current Working with Children Check card and two have had two doses of the Covid-19 vaccination.

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. 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.

Mentone Girls' Secondary 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 Business Manager. The 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.

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 the signed medication 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.

Pandemic

During a pandemic, such as the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, government schools are required to comply with the Department of Education and Training's Operations Guides applicable to that specific pandemic.

The Department updates the Operations Guides as required during a pandemic based on advice from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These Operations Guides cover procedures for management of camps and excursions.

The current COVID-19 Operations Guide includes a COVIDSafe Plan for Schools that ensures schools remain safe environments. Please contact the Principal to view the current Operations Guide.

Behaviour expectations

Staff will explicitly define, teach and reinforce expected behaviours on camps and excursions.

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.

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 be permitted to bring electronic devices (such as iPads, iPods, mobile phones) but these may only be used during times set by the Teacher in Charge, unless used by a student as their functional communication system. Students are responsible for the care of any personal electronic device brought to a camp or excursions and the school will not be responsible for lost or damaged devices.

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, Mentone Girls' Secondary 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

- Policy and Advisory Library:
 - o Emergency Management 6
 - o Excursions and Activities
 - o Rick 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:

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Parent Payment Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	June 2022
Approved by	Linda Brown, Principal
Next scheduled review date	June 2024