

Rationale

Camps and excursions are seen as an integral part of the Weeroona College Bendigo school curriculum as they enable students to explore, extend and enrich their learning and their social skills development, in a non-school setting. Camps and excursions complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at the College.

Aims

- To provide clear guidelines to staff who are responsible for organising camps and excursions.
- To ensure that all camps and excursions are appropriately planned and approved in accordance with Departmental policy and requirements and that all camps and excursions requiring school council approval meet the requirements of the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.
- To reinforce, complement and extend the learning opportunities beyond the classroom.
- To develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.
- To provide a safe, secure learning experience for students in a venue external to the school.
- To further develop social skills such as cooperation, tolerance, communication, individual and group interaction and to promote self-esteem, resourcefulness, independence and leadership.
- To further develop problem solving and life survival skills.
- To extend understanding of the physical and cultural environment.
- To provide all students with the opportunity to participate in a sequential camping program.
- To ensure all camps have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis.
- To provide shared class/year level/learning community experiences and a sense of group cohesiveness.

Definitions

An excursion is defined as any activity beyond the school grounds.

A camp is defined as any activity involving at least one night's accommodation.

An adventure activity is defined as a camp or excursion that involves greater than normal risk.

Planning and Approvals

- All camps and excursions must be entered onto Compass for approval.
- The Compass Event must include sufficient information about the event to enable approval by the Principal and where necessary to be presented to College Council, and to allow parents to provide informed consent.
- A detailed budget for the event must be provided which includes all revenue and expenses, including staff coverage costs.
- The risk assessment (Appendix A) and Student Activity Locator notification (Reference B) must also be attached to the Compass event. Camps and excursions will not be approved until all appropriate documentation and information is received.
- The staff member organising the excursion must ensure that full records are maintained regarding the event and where appropriate, forwarded to the General Office for archiving.
- The staff member organising the event must also ensure that satisfactory arrangements will be made to provide continuous instruction for the students remaining at the College during the event.

The camps and excursions planning and approval process should take into account the following considerations:

- The educational purpose of the event and its contribution to the curriculum.
- The financial cost of the camp or excursion.
- Maintenance of full records.
- The suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion.
- Risk assessment.
- Procedures in the event of an emergency.
- Arrangements if the event needs to be cancelled or recalled (for example, due to forecast severe weather conditions).
- Completion of an online notification of school activity form at least three weeks prior to the activity.
- First aid requirements.
- Ensuring there are sufficient staff to provide appropriate and effective supervision of students and that the staff involved have the appropriate experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of the activity.
- Informed consent from parents or carers.
- Adequate student and staff medical information.
- Transportation requirements.
- Requirements for interstate or overseas excursions.
- That continuous instruction is provided for students remaining at the College during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion.
- That reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that students with a disability are able to participate.

Approval required before the excursion occurs

Excursion Type	Approval Required
Overnight Excursions	The school council, or
Camps Interstate & International Visits	Both school councils when it is a joint activity involving another school and
Excursions requiring sea or air travel Excursions involving weekends or vacations Adventure activities	The Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors must be followed.
Day Excursions (other than those referred to above that must be approved by the school council).	The Principal or Principal's Nominee, or Both Principals when it is a joint activity involving another school.

Approval required for the staff who are accompanying the camp or excursion

Location	Approval Required
Interstate	The Regional Director
Overseas	The Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group.

Joint-school activities

It is the responsibility of the nominated co-ordinating principal to ensure that planning and approval requirements are met however, parents or carers must be informed that their children may be supervised by teachers and other approved adults from the other schools.

Staffing & Supervision

Department guidelines provide minimum requirements for staff-student ratios

Type of Camp / Excursion	One staff member per
Day Excursion	Twenty (20) students
Adventure Activities	Specific guidelines for the activity. See: Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors within DET resources.
Overnight Excursions (Domestic)	Ten (10) Students
Overseas Tours	Ten (10) Students With a minimum of two staff

Further Supervision Requirements

For	The Excursion Must
Most excursions	Be under the direct control of a teacher employed by the Department or the school council with at least one other excursion staff member present. Have teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff.
Overnight Stays for mixed gender groups	Include excursion staff of at least one person of each sex.
Small group excursions in the local area	With the approval of the principal, be supervised by one or more staff employed by the Department of school council (including ES staff)

Venue Selection

Camp and excursion venues must be assessed and selected on the basis of their safety and suitability for the activities proposed. Criteria for assessing venues such as campsites or overnight accommodation venues should include:

- Health & hygiene
- Buildings & facilities
- Activity equipment
- Certification & qualifications of venue staff
- Risks posed by other users of the site
- Emergency and risk management plans or venues
- Fire Precautions
- First aid facilities

- Quality assurance
- Relevant accreditations
- References from other schools

Parent or Carer Consent

The College must obtain informed consent from parents or carers for their child to participate in a camp or excursion. Informed consent means that parents or carers have been given sufficient information about the camp or excursion to make an informed decision.

Parent consent must be obtained for the school to:

- Take the student out of the school environment for a day excursion.
- Have the student in its care after normal school hours on an overnight camp or excursion.
- Enable the parent or carer to alert the school to any medical conditions or allergies.

Further parent or carer authorisation must be sought:

- For the financial costs of the camp or excursion.
- For any adventure activities that may be undertaken during the excursion.
- For students to be sent home from a camp or excursion in the event of serious misbehaviour and for the costs of the student's return to be the parent or carer's responsibility.
- That if needed the school can consent to emergency medical treatment.

Parent Payments for Camps and Excursions

The College Council will ensure that all school camps are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost, and comply with the Department's Parent Payment Policy.

The College will endeavour to provide all parents or carers with sufficient notice and time to make payments for individual camps and excursions.

Camps and Excursions may fall into the category of *Essential Student Learning Item* or *Optional Item*. Students may access optional camps and excursions on a user pay basis. If the student attends the camp or excursion, payment is required.

All efforts will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the College's Business Manager to discuss alternative payment arrangements. Circumstances will be considered on a case by case basis.

The College will promote the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) to parents to provide financial assistance for low income earning families.

In most cases, the College Council subsidises the cost of replacing teachers (CRT) who are involved in excursions and camps.

Student Medical Information

A confidential medical information form (Reference C):

- Must be completed by parents or carers before each school council approved excursion.
- Provides parents or carers with the opportunity to vary any information previously given to the school.

The College will:

- Ensure that the Teacher in Charge takes the medical information forms on the excursion.
- Keep copies of the forms at the school.

First Aid Requirements

Please refer to the *Weeroona College Bendigo First Aid Policy*.

Student Preparation and Behaviour

Only students who have displayed sensible and reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in camps and excursions.

The Teacher in Charge of the camp or excursion must ensure that:

- Students are adequately prepared for excursions by being informed of the organisational arrangements, relevant safety arrangements or emergency procedures and the expected standards of behaviour.
- Disciplinary measures apply to students on excursions consistent with the College's Engagement and Wellbeing Policy. In extreme cases the excursion staff, following consultation with and the approval of the Principal or Principal Nominee, may determine that a student should return home during an event. In such circumstances, the parent/carer will be advised:
 - Of the circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home.
 - Of the time when the parents/carers may collect their child from the excursion or the anticipated time that the student will arrive home.
 - Of any costs associated with the student's return which will be the responsibility of the parent or carer.

Adventure Activities

Adventure activities must be approved by College Council regardless of whether the activity is associated with a day excursion or an overnight camp and regardless of whether they occur on school grounds or not. The Teacher in Charge of an adventure activity must refer to the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors (Reference D) which includes specific activity guidelines.

Interstate and International Tours

Please refer to the Principal for further information.

Safety, Emergency and Risk Management (including bushfires)

The College's emergency procedures include the effects of an emergency on student supervision in the event of excursion staff being required to assist injured students or to go for help.

All excursion staff and, where appropriate, the students, will be familiar with the specific procedures for dealing with emergencies on each excursion.

On days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban, the Principal or Principal Nominee may need to cancel an excursion at short notice. Where an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be implemented.

Excursion groups will be equipped with mobile telephones and first aid kits to be used in emergency situations.

For any event, Risk Assessment documentation must be completed prior to approval. See Appendix A.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually

References

Appendix A: Risk Assessment Documentation

<S:\Excursions\Risk Assessments\Weeroona College Bendigo Risk Management for off site activity.xlsm>

Reference B: Notification of School Activity

<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/forms/school/sal/>

Reference C: Confidential Medical Information Form

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/outdoorforms.aspx>

Reference D: Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/outdoor.aspx>

DET Excursion Policy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursions.aspx>

DET Staff Travel Policy

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/management/Pages/travelforstaff.aspx>

