

## CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY



### PRINCIPLES:

- The program should function as an extension of the school curriculum by providing all students with access to experiences not normally possible within the usual school context.
- Camps should be activity based, learning area based or year level based.
- Activity based camps are to provide the opportunity for all students to engage in developing interests and skills in outdoor activities that may not be normally accessible to students through regular curriculum provision or community activities.
- Learning area based camps are to engage, extend and enrich students in learning and skills that are closely connected with the learning area's curriculum.
- Year level camps are to promote the social and emotional development of students, improve their connectedness of students to their peers, as well as develop greater understanding of the geography, history, economy and cultures of Australia.
- The program should promote the development of friendly and harmonious relationships between teachers and students, and students and their peers. It should allow the participants to experience group living, and the socialisation and adjustments involved therein.
- The program should create the opportunity for students to learn self-reliance and to exercise initiative. It should provide students with as wide a range of choice as possible in decisions affecting them.
- The program should expose students to different and unfamiliar environments, and should allow them to develop attitudes, skills, and techniques, which will promote a responsible and informed use of the resources associated with that environment.
- During the period of any camp a priority is to be given to ensuring that students who do not attend the camp, attend school and are provided with a program that is worthwhile and educationally sound.

### ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES:

The camps program for the school year must be organised and/or approved by the following bodies in Term 4 of the previous year:

#### Camps Coordination

- The Camps Coordinator develops and administers the overall camps program. The organisation and approval process of individual camps is the responsibility of the staff initiating planning and undertaking the camp. The Camps Coordinator has the responsibility of ensuring that this happens according to policy and within timelines.
- The Camps Coordinator has the responsibility to provide information and assistance to those organising and participating in camps.
- It is also the responsibility of the Camp Organiser to notify the College Principal or School Council President of any changes to non DE&T personnel prior to the camp.

**Consultative Committee.** This committee will judge whether the camps program can be resourced and whether the organisational aim of the Camps Policy has been met. Applications for camps must be forwarded to the Consultative Committee in plenty of time to notify students and families.

**Education and Policy Committee.** The committee will make an informed judgement of the camps program and ensuring that the program meets the educational aims of the Camps Policy.

**School Council.** School Council can endorse, reject or modify the recommendation of both committees in terms of the overall program. Camps within the program still require individual School Council approval.

#### General Guidelines

- Those organising camps must ensure that there is minimal disruption to the school program.

- If multiple year level camps are to be run at a specific year level, they must be programmed for the same time.
- Camps must be self-resourcing in terms of finance and use of teaching staff resources (see below).
- The advertised and approved camps program must not be altered without the approval of the Consultative Committee and the College Principal. If the camp is in progress the program can only be altered for safety reasons.
- The appropriate Year Level Coordinator and Head of Junior/Senior School must approve attendance of each student.
- General information for any camp should be sent to parents at least 3 terms prior to the camp.
- Specific information such as Camp Booklets must be circulated to students at least 4 weeks before camp.
- At least one staff member attending camp must hold current level 2 first aid qualification.

### **Staffing**

- Staffing of all camps must meet the DE&T Safety Guidelines for camps. See guidelines <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/excursions.aspx>
- Staff shall be surveyed and volunteers sought to staff the various camps (It is the responsibility of the Camps Coordinator to ensure that staff are treated equally in this process).
- All staff should be encouraged to attend at least one camp in a period of three years.
- Where it is allowed under DE&T guidelines, parents and other members of the school community can be used in a supervisory capacity for school camps. It is the responsibility of the College Camps Coordinator and individual Camp Leader to ensure that non-teaching staff (adult volunteers) have had the required Working with Children card (that is to be copied and filed with the Administration Manager) and are of a suitable maturity & experience level to responsibly supervise students. It is also mandatory that the Camp Leader meets with the volunteer prior to departure to ensure that the individual is aware of the College expectations of students and staff whilst on Camp.
- The majority of supervisors on any camp must be part of the teaching staff of the school. A variation of this part of the policy will need to be authorised by the College Principal.
- Where camps create additional classes for teachers this must be offset by teaching resources that are freed by the collapse of forms that attend school camps. The financing of camps should account for any need to employ casual relieving teachers and the charge for this should be included in the camp cost to the students.
- There should be a rotation of staff on camps. The only constraint on this rule would be if there are special qualifications or experiences required by the camp that cannot be met otherwise.

### **Costs**

The camps program should be designed to be within the financial reach of all students. Where camps are particularly expensive, students should be notified at least two years in advance of the cost of that camp and thus have the opportunity to save for the camp.

### **Subsidies**

The only school fund available to subsidise students who are in financial hardship is from money raised by the running of camps. The Camps Coordinator should ensure that a small surplus is made for each camp so that money is available to provide a subsidy in particular needy cases (a \$5.00 per person charge is to be built into every Camp Budget as a contingency fee). The surplus can also be used to acquire camp equipment and to repair camp equipment.

### **Students with Special Needs**

The College will endeavour to support the inclusion of students with disabilities and additional learning needs both through the camps program and excursion offerings. 'Reasonable adjustments' will be made to accommodate a student with a disability. When planning such an adjustment for the student, the school should consult with the parent/guardian/carer(s) and, where appropriate, the student, through the Student Support Group process.

### **Time Payment**

Students/parents have the opportunity for time payment on a camp however the period of payment should not extend beyond one semester unless for an extensive trip such as an overseas trip. Where the camp is being run towards the end of the year then the time payment process should commence well before the camp and be completed before the camp departs.

### **Non-refundable Deposits**

If parents are faced with a non-refundable deposit the implications of this should be made clear to all parents.

- Deposits need to be of sufficient value to heavily commit students to a camp and to deter consideration of withdrawal.
- Initial paperwork for a camp **MUST** include a statement indicating that deposits represent a commitment to the camps and will not be refunded unless there is:
  - Exceptional medical circumstances
  - Exceptional family circumstances
  - A student on a waiting list is able to fill the vacancy.
- Deposits will be returned if the Camp fails to proceed for any rational reason.
- An Administration fee of \$50 will be charged on all withdrawals from camp, except where camp fails to run.

### **College Refund Policy for Camps**

Camp organisers should collect a non-refundable deposit from parents to heavily commit students to a camp and to deter the consideration of withdrawal. The College Refund Policy for Camps must be clearly communicated to parents with initial camp information and on the Compass Parent Portal.

Students withdrawing from camps and excursions will not automatically be entitled to a refund. An administration fee of \$50 will be charged on all withdrawals from camp, except where the camp fails to run.

Where no cost is incurred by the College, a full refund will be payable to the student when:

- The student's place is filled by another student.
- The College deems the student's withdrawal was unavoidable (e.g. illness). Proof of reason of withdrawal (certificate) will be requested in such circumstances.

A partial refund shall be payable to the student withdrawing when:

- The College deems the student's withdrawal was unavoidable but has incurred expenses relating to the withdrawal. In such cases, the refund will be the amount paid by the student, less expenses incurred by the College as a result of the withdrawal.

No refund will be payable to the student withdrawing when:

- The College deems the withdrawal was avoidable and has incurred the full costs of the excursion or camp.

Where the withdrawal from a camp or excursion is due to student behaviour concerns, the Campus Principal/Camps Coordinator will determine whether a partial or full refund is possible. Where a camp or excursion has to be rescheduled because of Government warnings (e.g. overseas travel), parents may request a refund of monies paid by them less any funds retained by the booking firm for the rescheduled trip.

### **Staff Budgetary Guidelines (Pre Camp)**

A proposed Camp Budget must be submitted to the Camps Co-ordinator / Business Manager prior to the Camp information being released to parents and students. This must be approved prior to submission to Consultative Committee and School Council.

### **Staff Budgetary Guidelines (Post Camp)**

Financial reconciliation for all camps (including a finalised Camp Budget & Petty Cash reconciliation) must be completed by the Camp Leader and submitted to the Camps Coordinator / Business Manager within two weeks of the camp being completed (All invoices from external providers eg Activity Instructors / Accommodation Venues must also be processed within 3 weeks of the camp concluding). All camps should be budgeted to break even.

### **Alternative Programs**

It is the responsibility of the appropriate Head of Junior/Senior School to provide educationally viable alternative programs for students not participating in camps. It is the expectation that all students who do

not attend the camp will attend school and take part in this alternative program. The alternative program should be seen as a meaningful educational activity.

### **Camp Venues/Activity Providers**

Camp organisers planning to use residential campsites for overnight camping must use accredited campsites, to ensure these venues meet minimum criteria regarding safety and suitability. Residential campsites are campsites which usually have permanent facilities (such as cooking and eating facilities, beds and an amenities block). This definition does not include caravan parks, hotels/motels, ski lodges or Victorian government residential schools. Camp organisers using such venues must ensure they comply with DET guidelines for venue selection and assessment.

### **Communication**

Camp organisers must develop a communication strategy as part of the excursion's Emergency Response Plan. The communication strategy should enable you to: receive weather forecasts and warnings, communicate with the school, and engage support in the case of an incident or emergency. A YHSC staff member attending the camp should be contactable at all times. Should 24 hour contact be infeasible at the chosen venue, this limitation must be documented in the Emergency Response Plan.

### **Emergency contacts**

An emergency contact person (not attending the camp) must be identified prior to departure (preferably a Campus/College Principal). Parents or carers should be advised of the telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) for the designated school contact person in the event of an emergency. During the excursion, if parents have reason to believe an emergency may have occurred (such as a media report) they should be informed that in the first instance they should call the contact person and not personnel on the excursion as this will keep the telephone lines free at the excursion site.

**Please note:** This Policy must be viewed/used alongside the 'Staff Guide for Compass Events – Camp & Excursion/Incursion Guidelines' document.

**Ratified by School Council May 2017**