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| POLICY | CAMPS and EXCURSIONS |
| DATE | September 2022 |
| SCHOOL COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT | |
| REVIEW DATE | September 2025 |

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Blackburn ELS will use when planning and conducting camps, excursions and adventure activities for students.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Blackburn ELS. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Blackburn ELS 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. Blackburn ELS will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines when planning for and conducting camps and excursions.

This policy does not apply to student workplace learning or intercampus travel.

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.

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/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.

Blackburn ELS' student cohort comprises newly-arrived students from diverse cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds and the camp, excursion and incursion program is an important part of these students' settlement in, and familiarisation with, their new country.

The program of activities enables students to further their English language learning and social skill development in a non-school setting.

Incursions and excursions are an integral part of the teaching and learning program, providing common experiences before, during and after which English language learning opportunities are developed.

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. Blackburn ELS'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.

Blackburn ELS 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.

SUPERVISION

Blackburn ELS 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.

EXTERNAL PROVIDER CHECKS

Blackburn ELS requires 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, Blackburn ELS will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Blackburn ELS informs parents about school camps and excursions by sending notices home 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 Blackburn ELS asks parents and carers to sign a consent form at enrolment.

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.

Parents/carers of students who have not finalised payment by the required date will be notified and a meeting will take place if required. The school will not exclude students for financial reasons. Families experiencing financial difficulty are invited to discuss alternative payment arrangements with the principal as appropriate.

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, the 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 the school 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 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*, *Student Code of Conduct* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the principal or their nominee in consultation with the SWC and Teacher-in Charge. 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.

Sometimes a student's disability, which may or may not be diagnosed, may manifest in challenging behaviour. Examples of disabilities that can present with challenging behaviour includes Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder. In these cases, excluding a student from a camp or excursion may raise disability discrimination law issues. In this situation the school will contact Legal Division for advice if considering excluding a student for failing to comply with behavioural standards, if their disability presents with challenging behaviour.

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 are not permitted to bring electronic devices to camps or excursions except with prior approval from the Principal where such devices are to be used for an educational purpose. 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 unless the item is medically indicated and discussed with the Teacher in Charge or included as an item on the clothing and equipment list for the camp.

Arrangements for students to bring snacks and lunch on excursions will be indicated on information notices sent home to parents/carers.

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, Blackburn ELS 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.

IMPLEMENTATION

School Camps

- Secondary students at the Maroondah campus participate in a three day residential camp (DOXA). DOXA is accredited by the 'Australian Camps Association' for overnight camps.
- School Council will ensure that all school camps are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost and comply with all Department of Education requirements.
- At enrolment, parents/guardians/carers will be provided with approximate dates and costs associated with any residential camp planned for the period of their son/daughter's program.
- Parents/guardians/carers will be notified of the exact costs and other relevant details of individual camps as soon as practicable.
- Parents/guardians/carers experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their son/daughter to attend camp, will have the opportunity to negotiate a payment plan with the school.
- All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for individual camps.
- The school camp will be conducted on a self-funded basis. As an outdoor education activity, the camp is subject to specific planning and approval guidelines. These will be followed by the school.
- School Council is responsible for approval of all overnight excursions; camps and adventure activities.
- 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. If the principal's approval is granted, detailed planning should commence using the planning questions proforma as a guide. This must include a risk assessment.
- Prior to seeking School Council approval for the camp, the Teacher in Charge is required to meet again with the principal and present him/her with all documentation, including the completed School Council approval proforma and all attachments, ensuring that time permits for the matter to be placed on a School Council agenda and, if approved, that the online Notification of School Activity form then be submitted three weeks prior to the activity.
- When presenting information to School Council, the Teacher in Charge must cover the following:
 - there is a clear, educational purpose of the camp.
 - staff members attending have the competence to provide the necessary supervision of students throughout the camp.
 - an appropriately trained member of staff, to provide first aid, is in attendance.
 - that any staff member attending the camp, who is not a registered teacher, has completed a Working with Children Check.
 - the location of staff and students throughout the camp, including during travel, is known.
 - there is a record of telephone contacts for supervising staff accompanying the camp and this is available and easily accessed.
 - there is a record of the names and family contacts for all students and staff available and easily accessed.
 - there are copies of completed 'parental consent' and 'confidential medical advice' forms for all students attending the camp and copies are retained at school.

- a copy of the completed School Council approval proforma (including all attachments) is ready for submission and approval.
- the online Notification of School Activity form will be submitted three weeks prior to the camp.
- Adventure activities are those that involve greater than normal risk such as base camping, bush walking, canoeing, snow activities, orienteering, cycling, horse riding, rock climbing and abseiling, challenge ropes courses, swimming (other than school swimming programs), surf activities, sailboarding, and similar activities. School Councillors may not have detailed knowledge of adventure activities. In such instances the Teacher in Charge should consult the adventure activities website, or seek advice from peak bodies or skilled and experienced staff with recent experience instructing the activity to satisfy Council's requirements.
- Emergency management plans are to be developed when adventure activities are being undertaken.
- School Council requires that a report be tabled after each school camp, detailing feedback regarding the event, in particular any mishaps or areas for future improvement.
- Home group teachers will be given the first option to attend camps.
- A senior staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the students are returning from camp. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person regarding the anticipated return time.
- 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.
- Parents/guardians/carers may be requested to collect their son/daughter from camp if their son/daughter exhibits behaviour that is considered unacceptable or they become unwell. The Teacher in Charge will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.

School Excursions

- The principal is responsible for the approval of all non-adventure single-day excursions and city programs, other than those that must be approved by the School Council.
- A designated Teacher in Charge will coordinate each day excursion and city program.
- Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed day excursion or city program, the Teacher in Charge must meet formally with the principal to present the planning summary, to discuss the proposed activity/ies, and to seek 'in principle' support for the event/s. If the principal's approval is granted, detailed planning should commence using the school's Excursion Request proforma. This must include a risk assessment.
- When presenting information to the principal, the Teacher in Charge must cover the following assurances:
 - there is a clear, educational purpose to the excursion/city program and that it is connected to classroom learning.
 - staff members attending have the competence to provide the necessary supervision of students throughout the excursion/city program.
 - an appropriately trained member of staff, to provide first aid, is in attendance.
 - that any staff member attending an excursion/city program, who is not a registered teacher, has completed a Working with Children Check.
 - the location of staff and students throughout the excursion/city program, including during travel, is known.
 - there is a record of telephone contacts for supervising staff accompanying excursions/city programs and this is available and easily accessed.
 - there is a record of the names and family contacts for all students and staff available and easily accessed.
 - there are copies of completed 'parental consent' forms and confidential medical advice forms (if relevant) for all students attending excursions/city programs and copies are retained at school.
- If day excursions/city program activities include adventure activities then the Teacher in Charge should consult the adventure activities website, or seek advice from peak bodies or skilled and experienced staff with recent experience instructing the activity to satisfy the principal's requirements.

- If approved, the online Notification of School Activity form should be submitted three weeks prior to the activity (if required, ie: schools travelling beyond the local area, metropolitan schools travelling beyond the greater metropolitan area).
- The principal requires that a report from the Teacher in Charge occur after each day excursion/city program if any mishaps or concerns have arisen.
- Parents/guardians/carers experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend camp, will have the opportunity to negotiate a payment plan with the school.
- All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for excursions/city program.
- Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide sector coordinators or the Teacher in Charge with detailed records on a regular basis.
- The school will continue to provide the opportunity for teachers to update their first aid skills.
- Copies of completed permission forms and signed Confidential Medical Information forms must be carried by excursion/city program staff at all times, and copies remain at school.
- A senior staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the students are returning from any out-of-school-hours excursion. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person with regards the anticipated return time.
- While school excursions/city programs 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 excursion/city program, takes charge of events, makes key decisions and accepts ultimate responsibility for the excursion/city program.
- Parents/guardians/carers will be notified if their son/daughter is not allowed to participate in an excursion/city program due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the principal in consultation with the Teacher in Charge.

COMMUNICATION

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

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required

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:

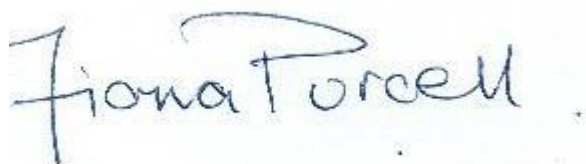
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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| Policy last reviewed | September 2022 |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | September 2025 |

ENDORSEMENT

This **Camps, Excursions and Incursions Policy** was endorsed by the School Council of Blackburn ELS on Tuesday 5 October 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Purcell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'F'.

Fiona Purcell
School Council President

This Policy will be reviewed in October 2025.