



## **CAMPS & EXCURSIONS**

### **Rationale**

- The Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors are in place to support the planning and approval of overnight excursions, camps, interstate and overseas visits, excursions requiring sea or air travel, excursions involving weekends or vacations and adventure activities. These excursions all require the approval of the School Council.
- When undertaking excursion planning, Principals, teachers, School Councillors and others involved in school excursions (including camps and adventure activities), must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.
- The emergency management planning in schools extends to and incorporates school excursions.
- The school's excursion program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Excursions complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

### **Purpose**

- To ensure that excursions at Seaholme Primary School are planned and approved appropriately.
- To ensure that adventure activities are conducted safely.
- To ensure camps and adventure activities are planned and approved in accordance with DET policy and guidelines.
- To ensure that the school obtains informed consent from parents/guardians for their child to participate in an excursion.
- To reinforce, complement and extend 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.

### **Definitions**

An excursion is an activity organised by a school during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities (including camps and sport). Adventure activities are included in this definition (regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds or not).

An adventure activity is an activity that involves greater than normal risk which may include travel into a relatively undeveloped area of the country in which vehicle contact is difficult or uncertain, confrontation with environmental challenges requiring greater reliance upon personal resources than would normally be required in day-to-day life, less than normal contact by person or by telephone, medical or other public services and/or exposure to natural elements with less than the normal physical protection afforded in everyday life.

Activities may include among others: abseiling, artificial climbing and abseiling walls, bushwalking, canoeing/kayaking, challenging rope courses, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, cycling, orienteering, horse riding, overnight camping, surfing, windsurfing, water skiing, sailing, scuba diving, sea kayaking, snorkeling, recreational swimming, rafting and cycling. Activities such as bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting and flying ultra light aircraft are deemed unsuitable.

**Note:** Bush walking, cycling and overnight camping may be considered adventure activities where they involve greater than normal risk (as outlined above) and in the circumstances outlined in the activity descriptions in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

Flying foxes may be used at school camps provided:

- safety precautions are taken in its construction and maintenance
- it can be locked or have the carriage removed when not in use
- all students are carefully briefed on its use and associated dangers
- staff supervise all use
- a safety harness is always used.

Residential campsites are campsites which usually have permanent facilities (such as cooking and eating facilities, beds and an amenities block) and adventure recreation options. This definition does not include caravan parks, hotels/motels, ski lodges or Victorian government residential schools.

The Department recognises three accreditation providers:

Australian Camps Association's Campsite and Outdoor Activity Provider program see: ACA Accredited Camps  
 Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP) see: ATAP Accredited Businesses (select Accredited Camp and Adventure Activity Provider)

National Accommodation, Recreation and Tourism Accreditation (NARTA) program see: NARTA Accredited Camps

Other venues may include:

- overnight campsites and venues that only provide accommodation such as caravan parks, hotels/motels or ski lodges
- Victorian government residential schools (for example: Rubicon Outdoor Centre or Bogong Outdoor Education Centre)
- interstate camps or excursions
- overseas venues.

ACA or NARTA programs' accreditation criteria may be used to assess the suitability and safety of these venues. However this criteria should be used when assessing overseas venues.

### **Implementation**

- The Principal is responsible for the conduct of all excursions and must ensure:
  - an online notification of school activity form is completed prior to the activity
  - a planning and approvals process is undertaken, in accordance with DET policy and requirements, which takes into account the following considerations:
    - venue selection
    - safety, emergency and risk management
    - informed consent from parents
    - medical information
    - appropriate staffing and supervision
    - student preparation and behaviour
    - requirements for any adventure activities.
- The planning and approval process will take into account the following considerations:
  - The educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum must be clarified and explained.
  - Venues will be assessed and selected on the basis of their safety and suitability for the activities proposed. Where possible, venues will be selected based on the recent and first-hand knowledge (for example, through an inspection of the site by at least one member of the planning and supervising staff).
  - Criteria for assessing venues such as campsites or overnight accommodation venues include health and hygiene of buildings and facilities, activity equipment and the conduct of activities, certification and qualifications of venue staff, participant supervision provided, risks posed by other users of the site, emergency and risk management plans of venues, fire precautions, first aid facilities, quality assurance and consumer protection, relevant accreditations and references from other schools.
  - Safety, emergency and risk management

- the teacher-in-charge, in conjunction with all staff attending must undertake a detailed analysis of all risks associated with the activity, procedures to be used in event of an emergency, arrangements if the activity needs to be cancelled or recalled e.g. due to adverse weather conditions, first aid requirements, any other measures for student and staff safety.
- Staffing and supervision
  - The Principal will ensure sufficient staff, including first aid trained staff, attend the camp. In determining the pupil/staff ratio, the experience, qualifications and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors, etc.), the age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of students, the ability and experience of the students, the size of the group, the nature and location of the excursion, the activities to be undertaken, the requirements outlined in the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, for specific adventure activities and any other relevant factors including supervision factors if a student is injured or other emergency. Please refer also to joint excursions below.  
For day excursions, one staff member to twenty students is the minimum. Unless it is deemed that circumstances require a more liberal staffing arrangement, one staff member to ten students will be the ratio for overnight excursions. Please refer also to the attached supervision ratio for the circumstances requiring a specific ratio.  
Excursions must be under the direct control of a teacher employed by the DET, have enough DET employed staff to maintain control of the excursion and each activity with teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff.  
Overnight stays for mixed gender groups must include a staff member of each sex.  
For small excursions in the local area, the Principal may approve supervision by a non-teacher employed by DET e.g. an integration aide.  
Approved staff may include teachers, parents or carers, Education Support Class officers, community members, trainee teachers, campsite staff, specialist instructors. Excursion staff who are not teachers, must have a Working with Children Check.
  - Transportation requirements : public transport should be used if practicable with transport authorities consulted as to appropriate travel times and with at least two weeks' notice
- There must be an assurance that the proposed activity meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedure.
- The school will obtain written consent from parents/carers to take the students out of the school for a day excursion or to have the student in its care after normal school hours or overnight.
- Such parent/carer authorisation includes financial costs, any adventure activities that may be undertaken, for students to be sent home in the event of serious misbehaviour (with costs to be met by the parent/carer) and if necessary the school can consent to emergency medical treatment.
- Consent must also enable the parent/carer to alert the school to any medical conditions or allergies.
- The school will give parents/guardians, who are to sign consent forms, sufficient information about the camp/excursion to enable them to make an informed decision. This includes the nature of the proposed activity, degree of supervision and the risks involved.
- Consent forms will be kept at the school with a designated contact person and for excursions requiring School Council approval, the teacher-in-charge of the excursion will take a copy of each consent form on the excursion.

- A confidential medical information form will be completed by parents/guardians before each School Council approved excursion. Any changes to medical information previously provided to the school must be highlighted. The teacher-in-charge will take the medical information forms on the excursion and ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations. Copies will be kept at school.
- The school will use the DET recommended medical form.
- Any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed will be taken into account.
- Staff and students will have appropriate clothing and personal equipment.
- Technical equipment will be in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken.
- School Council approved camps/excursions will have an emergency response plan.
- All excursion staff will be familiar with emergency procedures for each camp.
- When staying at a residential campsite emergency procedures must be explained as soon as practicable after arrival and a trial evacuation exercise should be carried out immediately to ensure that procedures are appropriate and staff and students are familiar with them.
- Parents/guardians will 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 will 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.
- Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion will be made.
- The Principal will be prepared to cancel an excursion at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. On such days, the Security Services Unit liaises with fire authorities to obtain up to date information for communication to schools that may be affected by wildfire, including schools that may have students attending camps or other venues in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required. When required, schools must follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities for all excursions.
- In the event of an emergency, accident or injury, staff on the excursion will take emergency action, then immediately notify the School Principal who should make arrangements for the Department's Security Services Unit to be telephoned on 9589 6266.
- The teacher-in-charge will ensure that sufficient first aid equipment is available including portable first aid equipment.
- Students (and parents/carers) will be fully informed about the organisational arrangements, safety and emergency procedures, and the behavioural expectations and (misbehaviour) consequences of the camp/excursion. In extreme circumstances, after full consideration, consultation and information, a student may be sent home from the activity.
- Continuous instruction will be provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion.
- For an excursion requiring School Council approval, an approval pro forma ensuring compliance with the above will be completed and submitted to the Principal and School Council before the excursion may proceed.
- At least three weeks prior to the excursion, the teacher in charge also will submit a Student Activity Locator on line form.
- Full records including documentation of the planning process will be maintained.
- Excursions and incursions other than those listed above only require the approval of the Principal and the permission of parents/guardians.
- The Regional Director will be informed if an excursion leaves a school unoccupied.
- When undertaking excursion planning, the Principal, teachers, School Councillors and others involved in the activity (including camps and adventure activities), must anticipate the

possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.

- For joint school activities, a nominated Coordinating Principal (or teacher) will ensure all planning and approval requirements are met and will advise parents/carers that their children may be supervised by teachers and approved adults from the other school.
- Students will not be denied attendance at any camp or excursion because of disability or medical condition. Seaholme Primary School will take reasonable steps to support the inclusion of all students.
- Interstate or overseas excursions require special consideration and must be approved by the Regional Director.
- Please refer also to the school's *Duty of Care Policy* and the *Risk Management Policy*.

### **Evaluation**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle or if guidelines change (latest update late December 2015).

This update February 2016 was ratified by School Council on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016

References:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/planning.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/planning.aspx)  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/adventure.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/adventure.aspx)  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/consent.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/consent.aspx)  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/staffing.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/staffing.aspx)  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/venue.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/venue.aspx)  
[www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/medicalinfo.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/medicalinfo.aspx)

## Pupil/Teacher Ratios

<b>Abseiling and Rock Climbing</b>		<b>Ropes Course</b>	
1:1	Rock Face	1:12	3 students to any one element, 1 participating and 2 spotting
1:10	Others	<b>NOTE:</b>	No student on any element unless supervised
2	Experienced Staff		
<b>Base Camping</b>		<b>Scuba Diving</b>	
1:10	Residential; canvas	1:8	Pool Training
1:15	Study: residential	1:4	Diving, 2 buddy systems
		<b>NOTE:</b>	2 qualified staff
<b>Board Sailing</b>		<b>Shooting</b>	
1:3	Beginners	1:1	New or Inexperienced
1:5	Novice; intermediate; advanced	1:5	On track or mound
2	Experienced sailors	1:15	Observers or waiting
<b>Boats, Small Sailing – (Dinghies, Catamarans)</b>		<b>Snorkelling</b>	
1:8	Enclosed Waters	1:8	Closed water: Pool
1:6	Open Waters	1:4	Open Water
1:4	Open Waters, Adverse	<b>NOTE</b>	2 qualified Staff
<b>Bush Walking</b>		<b>Snow Activities</b>	
1:5	Overnight	1:8	Alpine, Nordic – overnight
1:10	Day	1:10	Alpine, Nordic – day
		1:10	Non-Skiing
<b>Canoeing</b>		<b>Surf Activities</b>	
1:6		1:5	Beach
		1:5	Surf
<b>NOTE</b>	2 staff members	<b>NOTE</b>	1 teacher/instructor in water and 1 teacher/instructor on beach No more than 50 in the group
<b>Cycling</b>		<b>Swimming</b>	
1:10		1:10	Enclosed pools
		1:5	Open Water
<b>Horse Riding</b>		<b>Water Skiing</b>	
1:1	Basics	1:20	Shore
1:5	Beginners	1	Students on two at any one time: if highly experienced two may be taken together
1:8 Semi-experienced			
Riding School		2	People in boat – driver and observer; one must be a staff member
1	Experienced teacher with instructor		
2	Experienced teachers if no instructor or group exceeds 10		
<b>Orienteering</b>			
1:10	Bush		

*Please note that the publishing of this pupil/teacher ratio does not imply that Seaholme Primary School will participate in all of these activities if available.*