



CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS

Monash SDS is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This will be the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Monash SDS has zero tolerance for child abuse. Monash SDS is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the [cultural safety of Aboriginal children](#) and [children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, vulnerable children](#) as well as the safety of children with a [disability](#).

Every person involved in Monash SDS has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure the inclusion, wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

PURPOSE

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

SCOPE

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

At Monash SDS we are dedicated to providing quality learning opportunities for all students. We strive to provide a well-rounded education which values and supports the intellectual, physical and emotional development of each student. We have a commitment to ensure that quality learning and teaching are the central focus of all our learning environments. We are committed to transferring the skills the students have acquired in the classroom setting, into practice within the community as well as providing opportunities for enrichment and sensory stimulation. All excursions are chosen for their educational value to our students.

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;
- attend school “sleep overs” on 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://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/adventure.aspx>

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.

Camps, as with other excursions, are seen as an integral part of our school curriculum as they enable students to explore, extend and enrich their learning and their social skill development, in a non-school setting. Camps may include a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school. A camp is defined as any activity that involves at least one night’s accommodation.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department’s School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Excursions and Activities](#). For camps and excursions requiring school council approval, our school will also follow the Department’s School Policy and Advisory Guide: [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. Monash SDS 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.

Monash SDS 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 Leading Teacher will ensure that there is an alternative educational program available and appropriate supervision for those students not attending the camp or excursion.

Excursions e-learning module

From 15 December 2022 onwards, school staff with primary responsibility for organising a school camp and/or water-based excursion activity must have completed the mandatory excursions e-learning module. These staff are encouraged to complete the module annually.

Staff responsible for organising excursions of any type are also encouraged to complete the module.

The module is located in [eduPay](#).

The module aims to:

- increase awareness and understanding of the excursions policy and guidelines to ensure safety of students
- set out obligations for schools in managing excursions to ensure that they are aware of what steps they need to take
- establish awareness and understanding of the mandatory requirements for school excursions, including how to carry out risk assessments.

Excursion Requirements

- All arrangements are documented in teacher work programs
- Teachers complete the Excursion request form
- Team leader signs the request form
- SALS form is completed and a receipt is attached
- Risk assessment is completed
- Out of school book located in the office hallway is filled in.
- Students have their identification cards
- Staff have going out bags that contain medical information/parent contact details/Medication required.

Supervision

Monash SDS 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.

Placement student volunteer option for camps and excursions

This section compliments and is aligned with Monash Special Developmental School Volunteers Policy and the following considerations are made when selecting eligible candidates:

Students completing a work placement at Monash Special Developmental School may be invited to attend camps and excursions. School staff will notify persons of any costs associated with attending. School staff are in charge of camps and excursions and volunteers are expected to follow teachers' instructions. When deciding which volunteers will attend, the Organising Teacher will consider: any valuable skills the volunteer(s) have to offer (e.g. bus licence, first aid etc.) and the special needs of particular students.

Volunteer and external provider checks

In line with the school's current volunteer policy, all camp or excursion volunteers and all external providers working directly with our students must have a current Working with Children Check card.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Monash SDS will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Monash SDS uses written notices to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent about school camps and excursions by placing a note in student bags 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, (within walking distance) Monash SDS will provide parents and carers with an annual local excursions consent form at the start of each school year or upon enrolment if students enrol during the school year. Monash SDS will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through a note home on the Seesaw app. For individual excursions (not within walking distance) or that occur on a recurring basis (for example an excursion to the zoo or weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Monash SDS will gain parent consent for individual excursions or on a termly basis for recurring excursions.

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. Every effort will be made by the school to keep costs to a minimum.

Monash SDS 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/Principal. The Business Manager/Principal, 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 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 encouraged to cooperate and display appropriate behaviour to ensure the camp or excursion is a safe, positive and educational experience for all students involved. Monash SDS is a SW – PBS school and strategies used on camp are consistent with our school's Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy, Student Code of Conduct and Bullying Prevention Policy.

Electronic Devices

Students will not be permitted to bring electronic devices to camps or excursions except with prior approval from the Principal. 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. 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, Monash SDS 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.

Communication

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

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Department policies and guidelines:

- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
- [Excursions and Activities](#)
- [Emergency and Risk 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:

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Parent Payment Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	December 2022
Approved by	Principal: Lindy Abernethy Date: December 2022
Next scheduled review date	December 2025