



CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY

PURPOSE

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

This document provides an overview of camping and excursions. Altona Primary School will ensure our camps and excursions:

1. Are safe and inclusive
2. Teach students resilience
3. Foster independence and self-reliance
4. Help develop interpersonal skills
5. Expose students to a range of activities and locations

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Altona Primary School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Altona Primary School, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds, and to school sleep-overs (where applicable)

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. Altona Primary School 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

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

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 (where applicable)

Camps are excursions involving at least one night's accommodation (including school sleep-overs). Altona Primary School may also run annual events for Foundation and Grade 1 students that require attendance outside school hours for a meal and associated activities.

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>

Activities may include among others: abseiling, bushwalking, canoeing/kayaking, rope courses, orienteering, horse riding, overnight camping, surfing, rafting and cycling. Activities such as bungee



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jumping, hang gliding, parachuting and flying ultra-light aircraft are deemed unsuitable.

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.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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.

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](#).

Altona Primary School provides a variety of camping experiences from Grade 1 to Grade 6. As students move from Grade 1 to Grade 6 the length, variety of experience and challenge involved in the camping experience increases. The school's excursions and camps program enable students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Excursions and camps may have a cultural, environmental or outdoor emphasis and are an important aspect of and complement the educational programs offered at our school.

The Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors are in place to support the planning and approval of excursions and camps, including interstate and overseas excursions involving weekends or vacations and adventure activities. These excursions and camps all require the approval of the School Council.

When undertaking excursions and camps planning, the Principal, teachers, School Councillors and others involved in school excursions and camps 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. Altona Primary School's emergency management planning extends to and incorporates school excursions and camps.

The Principal is responsible for the conduct during all excursions and camps and must ensure an online notification of school activity form is completed prior to the activity.

A planning and approvals process is undertaken, to ensure camps, excursions and adventure activities are planned and approved in accordance with DET policy and guidelines, which takes into account the following considerations:

- venue selection;
- safety, emergency and risk management;
- informed consent from parents/guardians for their child to participate in an excursion or camp;
- medical information;
- appropriate staffing and supervision;
- student preparation and behaviour;



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- requirements for any adventure activities.
- The camp or excursion reinforces, complements and extends learning opportunities beyond the classroom;
- The camp or excursion develops an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.

Staff organising camps will complete the following steps to ensure camps are safe and inclusive for Altona Primary School students:

- Distribute an expression of interest with preliminary details and an estimated cost to families;
- Ensure transport has been organised, including buses with seatbelts where relevant;
- Obtain signed informed consent from parents/guardians;
- Obtain a completed medical form for all students and staff. If a student requires medication, they must complete the medication authority form;
- Send a copy of the DET guidelines regarding administration of analgesics to each family for overnight camps;
- Ensure there is at least one level 2 trained first aid staff member. This may be a paramedic hired specifically for the camp. This staff member will collate the medication authority forms and distribute all medications throughout the camp;
- Create a detailed itinerary with specific locations and contact numbers;
- Source a copy of a map of the camp, with a map name, access routes and grid references if required
- Distribute staff and student clothing and equipment list;
- In consultation with Principal class, create a supervision plan for activities and non-programmed periods. This may form part of the itinerary. It must also adhere to DET mandated staff/student ratios for specific activities;
- Complete the staffing details pro-forma;
- Obtain a risk management plan from the camp, or develop a risk management plan for school on-site activities;
- Develop/obtain an emergency response plan including contacts for police, ambulance, doctor, hospital, fire brigade and 24 hour school emergency number. This is to be held by staff on the excursion and by the nominated school contact person;
- Complete school council approval documentation;
- Hold a parent information evening two weeks before overnight camps;
- Ensure one staff member has a comprehensively insured car available on site.

In addition to these steps, staff will ensure:

- Students will not be excluded from camps for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their child to attend camp, can discuss their individual situation with the Principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment requirements will be made by the Principal on a case-by-case basis.
- Students have the right to attend camp only if their behaviour is such that staff are confident they will be safe and reliable in an environment other than the school. Parents/Carers may be asked to collect from the camp any student whose behaviour whilst on camp is deemed to place themselves or others at risk.

Approvals

All excursions and camps must be approved before they can take place. All camps and excursions will comply with Department planning requirements.



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Staff wishing to organise an excursion or camp must complete an excursion/camp proposal form for approval by the Principal (or their nominee) for the approval of all single-day excursions or to the School Council for approval of:

- Overnight excursions
- Camps
- Interstate visits
- International visits
- Excursions requiring sea or air travel, weekends or vacations
- Adventure activities

Duty of Care

Altona Primary School 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. Ratios are reflective of the Department requirements.

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.

All school staff attending the camp or excursion owe a duty of care to the students. This means that they must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent any reasonably foreseeable harm to students. This duty is non-delegable, which means that it cannot be delegated to external camp or education providers, parents or volunteers. The designated teacher in charge has ultimate responsibility for all students in their care.

Teachers participating in an excursion and/or camps will:

- understand the purpose of the program and its connection to student learning;
- be aware of their supervisory responsibilities throughout the program;
- know who the nominated member of staff is who will provide first aid if required;
- know the exact location of students they are responsible for at all times including during travel.

In addition, the nominated teacher-in-charge will:

- know the exact location of students at all times including during travel;
- maintain a record of telephone contacts for the supervising staff accompanying the excursion;
- know who the school contact person is and their phone number;
- have a copy of the names of family contacts for all students and staff on the excursion;
- have copies of the parental approval and medical advice forms for those students on the excursion;
- maintain a copy of the completed approval form (including all attachments) submitted to the school council, see: [Approval pro forma](#) (Appendix B);
- have submitted a notification of school activity using the Student Activity Locator online form three weeks prior to the excursion, see: [Student Activity Locator online form](#) (EduMail password required).

External education providers and para-professionals must have appropriate certification (e.g. Working with Children's Suitability Check) and ensure that supervision guidelines are followed.



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First Aid

At least one member of staff responsible for each group of students will hold an appropriate first aid qualification. For adventure activities, the minimum acceptable level of first aid training is the senior first aid certificate (often referred to as a level 2 first aid qualification) or its competency based equivalent HLTAID003 Apply First Aid.

For remote activities, a higher level of first aid training is required appropriate to the setting, such as Wilderness First Aid or its competency based equivalent THHGHS11A Manage casualty in a remote area.

Staff must also have a first aid kit appropriate to the excursion location and activities undertaken.

Students with Disabilities

Students should not be denied attendance to any excursion or camp because of disability or medical condition. Parents and carers will be consulted about reasonable adjustments that may be implemented by the school to enable the student to safely attend the excursion or camp.

Principals will ensure that appropriate emergency and risk management planning is undertaken for students with disabilities attending excursions and camps.

Parent volunteers

Parents may be invited to assist with camps and excursions. School staff will notify parents/carers of any costs associated with attending. School staff are in charge of camps and excursions and parent/carer volunteers are expected to follow teachers' instructions. When deciding which parents/carers will attend, the Organising Teacher will take into account: any valuable skills the parents/carers have to offer (e.g. bus licence, first aid etc.) and the special needs of particular students.

Volunteer workers will be expected to comply with any reasonable direction of the principal (or their nominee). This will include the requirement to follow our school's policies, including, but not limited to our [Child Safety Policy / Statement of Commitment to Child Safety], our Child Safety Code of Conduct and our Statement of Values and School Philosophy. Volunteer workers will also be expected to act consistently with Department of Education and Training policies, to the extent that they apply to volunteer workers, including the Department's policies relating to Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Workplace Bullying.

Volunteer and external provider checks

Altona Primary School requires all parent or carer camp or excursion volunteers and all external providers working directly with our students to have a current Working with Children Suitability Check. For more information, please view our Volunteers Policy.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Altona Primary School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Altona Primary School uses Compass to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent. 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, Altona Primary School 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. Altona Primary School will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through Compass. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for



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sports lessons), Altona Primary School will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

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.

Altona Primary School 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 Principal and/or the Business Manager. The Principal and/or the Business Manager 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, (consistent with our Parent Payment Policy). 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*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal or Assistant Principal, in consultation with the Organising Teacher. Both the parent/carer and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp or excursion.



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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.

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 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 (consistent with our school's *Mobile Phone Policy*), 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 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, Altona Primary School 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.

Overseas Travel

The [Smartraveller](#) website is the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), travel advisory and consular assistance service. This site also provides useful travel information and tips.

Altona Primary School will ensure that they:

- comply with any DFAT travel advice current for the proposed location;
- subscribe to receive automatic travel advice updates from the Smartraveller website both prior to the excursion and when overseas;
- review their risk assessment if there are any changes to the DFAT travel advice.

The cost of medical and hospital treatment is high in some countries; therefore, Altona Primary School recommends that all students and staff take out travel and medical insurance for the entire overseas trip.

Emergency Notifications and Communications

In the event of an emergency, to ensure information is provided to emergency services, Altona Primary School will notify the:

- DET of any approved school camp or excursion at least three weeks beforehand using the [Student Activity Locator online form](#). A user guide has been developed to help schools complete the online form, see: [Student Activity Locator - User Guide](#)



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- [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(DFAT\)](#) of overseas travel plans so that DFAT can help staff and students remain safe and secure while overseas.

Parents or carers 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. Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion will be made.

Consent forms will remain at the school with the designated school contact person and copies of each form will be taken on the excursion by the teacher in charge. In the event of an emergency, accident or injury:

- staff on the excursion will:
 - o take emergency action as documented in the excursion and camp's emergency and risk management plan
 - o immediately notify the school principal
- the principal will make arrangements for the Department's Security Services Unit to be telephoned on 9589 6266.

Fire Danger or Ban

The Principal may need to cancel excursions and camps 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 with students attending camps in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required.

When required, Altona Primary School will follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Related School Policies

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

Related DET Resources

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

- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
 - o [Excursions and Activities](#)
 - o [Emergency and Risk Management](#)
- [Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors](#)
- [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#).
- [Code Red Days](#)

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle and/or in response to any critical incident, and/or if circumstances and regulations change. Proposed amendments to this policy will be discussed and will include consultation with school council.