



## CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY (INCLUDES ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES)

### RATIONALE:

Camps and excursions are organised in accordance with the Departmental policy and requirements and the college curriculum to extend the students' experience in an alternative environment to that of the college.

### PURPOSE:

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Melbourne Girls' College will use when planning and conducting camps, excursions and adventure activities for students.

### SCOPE:

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Melbourne Girls' College. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Melbourne Girls' College, 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. Melbourne Girls' College 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 (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 Policy and Advisory Library, at the following link:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>

Note: workplace learning activities (such as work experience) and intercampus travel are not considered school excursions.

### 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. At Melbourne Girls' College we aim to:

- To provide learning situations for students to gain skills for an active and healthy lifestyle.
- To provide learning situations to enrich the curriculum.
- To assist students to develop independence and leadership skills.
- To provide adventure and a sense of responsibility for personal safety and the safety of others.



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- To provide activities which promote positive and productive behaviour that foster cooperative social interaction.
- To develop skills in observation, recording and reporting.
- To provide access to a broad range of extra-curricular experiences.

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. Melbourne Girls' College's risk assessment will include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire or other natural disaster activity in the excursion location. In the event the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts a Catastrophic fire danger rating (FDR) day, excursions or camp activities in affected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason.

Consideration must be made of the risk of bushfire when choosing the activity location.

Melbourne Girls' College 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.

### Further Planning Guidelines for Staff:

Planning must comply with DET guidelines covering areas of safety and legal liability as stated in the School Policy & Advisory Guide.

- Camps and excursions must have a clearly stated purpose and the particular activities and experiences must be clearly justified.
- All camps and tours must strive for maximum student involvement.
- Special interest camps not involving the whole year level may be organised. As far as possible, these camps must be at weekends, school holidays or part of the end-of-year arrangements.
- Staff must contact an Assistant Principal for the Camps and Excursions Planning OneNotes
- Dates should be organised with the Assistant Principal responsible for camps/excursions and, as far as possible, bookings made by the end of the year prior to the activities.
- The College Principal must approve all overnight and adventure activity excursions.
- A budget must be included with the application for any camp or excursion, and approval must be obtained from Council before any deposits are made.
- Applications for camps to be approved by School Council must be made on the official DET Camp Application Proforma at the October meeting. The Assistant Principal responsible for camps must ensure that all documentation presented to School Council meets the requirements of this policy.



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- A risk management strategy must be included with the application for any camp or excursion and meet DET requirements.
- Camps must be recorded on the DET Student Activity Locator (SAL) [Excursions: Student Activity Locator | education.vic.gov.au](https://education.vic.gov.au) site at least three weeks prior to the camp or excursion taking place.
- For interstate or overseas activities, the relevant authority must approve attendance by DET staff as per DET staff travel policy.

### Further Procedures for Organising Staff:

- Full details of the activity and any costing variations to the original budget must be submitted to the Assistant Principal and Accounts Receivable Officer at least six weeks prior to the camp.
- Travel insurance (for overseas camps) will be managed through the DET approved travel agency. Parents will not be able to offer up an alternative travel insurance provider for their daughter.
- The excursion or camp must be recorded online on COMPASS.
- Consideration must also be made during the planning and ongoing monitoring of camps and excursions relating to community health and other local issues.
- A mobile phone must be taken on all excursions and camps and the mobile number recorded at the office.
- Documentation relating to the parent approval and medical details of students must be left with the Assistant Principal before any excursion or camp departure.
- MGC will not manage parent requested changes to an international camp itinerary and we will only agree to such requests where they do not detrimentally affect the camp for other students or the responsible teachers.
- Parents will seek approval to meet or pick up students on an overseas camp at an alternative time to the itinerary during the application stage.
- Approval of any such changes may only be given if there is no change in cost or itinerary to the other students on the camp.
- Parents will collect students at a pre-agreed location and time that does not interrupt the camp for the other members within the group. Appropriate time buffers will be built in to ensure that camp staff can meet their duty of care.

### Supervision

Melbourne Girls' College follows the Department's guidelines in relation to supervision of students during excursions and camps.

Supervising staff must have the appropriate skills and qualifications required for the camp as outlined in the School Policy & Advisory Guide.

All supervising staff are considered to be on duty for the duration of the camp and must be aware of the school's Emergency Management Plan for Camps & Excursions.

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.



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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.

### **Parent volunteers**

Parents with WWCCs 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.

All volunteers on camps or excursions must sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct.

These adults may be included in the excursion staff count.

### **Volunteer and external provider checks**

Melbourne Girls' College 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 Check card.

These adults may be included in the excursion staff count.

### **Parent/carer consent**

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Melbourne Girls' College will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Melbourne Girls' College uses Compass to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent - 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, Melbourne Girls' College 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. Melbourne Girls' College will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through Compass emails. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Melbourne Girls' College will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

### **Parent Payments for camps and excursions**

Most camps and excursions provided by Melbourne Girls' College enhance and broaden the schooling experience of our students but are not a mandatory component of our curriculum. These activities are provided on a user-pays basis in accordance with the Department's Parent Payments Policy.

Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and finalisations dates, and families will be given sufficient time to make payments.

Students who have not finalised payment by the required date for camps and excursions provided on a user pays basis will not be able to attend unless the Principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.



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Where a camp or excursion is provided as part of the standard curriculum requirements, parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution but all students will be able to attend regardless of whether their parents contribute.

### **Financial Help for Families**

Melbourne Girls' College 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 Team. The Business Manager/Principal Team 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](#).

### **Refunds**

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 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* or *Bullying Prevention 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.

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* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

### Electronic Devices

The Teacher in Charge of the event will notify parents in the consent form, if Students will be permitted to bring electronic devices (such as iPads, iPods, mobile phones), but these may only be used during times set by the Teacher in Charge. Students are responsible for the care of any personal electronic device brought to a camp or excursions and 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/or discussed with the Organising Teacher, or included as an item on the consent, 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, Melbourne Girls' College 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
- For staff MGC Intranet > Curriculum > School Documentation > Policies
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions as required
- Reminders on Compass as required
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request



### Help for non-English speakers:

If you need help to understand the information in this policy please contact: 9428-08955

### FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

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



## MELBOURNE GIRLS' COLLEGE

- [Excursions](#)
- [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#)
- [Parent Payments Policy](#)

The following school policies are also relevant to this Camps and Excursions Policy

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

### **POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL:**

Policy last reviewed	July 2023
Consultation	Staff Meeting
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	3-4 Years – July 2027