

## Camps and Excursions Policy



**Help for non-English speakers**

**If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Portland Secondary College on 03 5523 1344 or [portland.sc@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:portland.sc@education.vic.gov.au).**

### PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Portland Secondary College will use to plan for and safely undertake excursions, including camps and adventure activities for students.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Portland Secondary College. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Portland Secondary 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. Portland Secondary 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;
- Attend school 'sleep-overs' on school grounds [delete if your still does not hold 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'.

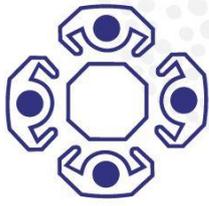
**Adventure activities** are activities that involve a greater than normal risk. Further information and examples of adventure activities are available on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Adventure Activities](#).

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.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Excursions](#).



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## 1. 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. Portland Secondary 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.

Portland Secondary 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.

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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.

Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed school camp, the organising teacher and other key members must meet formally with the Daily Organiser and relevant Sub-School Assistant Principal to discuss the proposed camp, and to seek 'in principle' support for the event.

If the approval is granted, detailed planning should commence using the Principal Approval template and the Excursions and Camps Planning Checklist.

When considering costing for the camp, staff must deem whether the camp/excursion is part of the standard curriculum program with all students expected to attend or whether the camp/excursion is an optional event. If the camp/excursion is deemed part of the standard curriculum program, parents cannot be charged for any costs of the camp/excursion that fall under free instruction (the teaching staff, administration and provision of school facilities in connection with the instruction of the curriculum program). Parents may be charged for their child's food transport, accommodation and entry fees but may not be charged for CRT coverage. If the camp/excursion is deemed optional, parents can be charged for all costs including the cost of transport, entry fees, food, accommodation and CRT support.

Prior to seeking School Council approval for the camp, organising staff are required to meet again with the Daily Organiser/Assistant Principal and present them with all documentation, including notification that the online Notification of School Activity form has been submitted three weeks prior to the activity.

School Council requires that a report and financial report be tabled by the organising teacher and Business Manager after each school camp, detailing feedback regarding the event, in particular any mishaps or areas for future improvement.



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If approved, by the Daily Organiser, the staff member running the excursion must create an event on Compass including the creation of permission forms, staffing, costs and the SAL notification which should be submitted three weeks prior to the activity if required (required if country schools travelling beyond the local town/city, rural schools travelling beyond the local area, metropolitan schools travelling beyond the greater metropolitan area). The excursion must then be entered onto the College Calendar. Once the event on Compass has been approved by the Daily Organiser, the staff member organising the activity may proceed.

Prior to the excursion staff must be informed via email, Compass and briefings and a list of students attending posted on Compass.

## **2. Supervision**

Portland Secondary College 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.

A senior staff member shall be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from camp. The Teacher in Charge shall communicate with this person in regard to the anticipated return time.

## **3. 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.

## **4. Volunteer and external provider checks**

Portland Secondary 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.

## **5. Parent/carer consent**

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Portland Secondary College will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Portland Secondary College 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, Portland Secondary 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. Portland Secondary College 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 sports lessons), Portland Secondary College will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

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

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Most camps and excursions provided by Portland Secondary 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.

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.

## **7. Financial Help for Families**

Portland Secondary 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 Finance Manager. The Finance 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](#).

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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*

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*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.

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*.

## **11. Electronic Devices**

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.

## **12. 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.

## **13. 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, Portland Secondary 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
- Included on staff Knowledge Base
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies on the Department's Policy and Advisory Library (PAL):

- [Excursions](#)
- [https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidanceCamps, Sports and Excursions Fund](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidanceCamps_Sports_and_Excursions_Fund)
- [Parent Payments Policy](#)



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Our school policies and documents can be found at [portlandsc.vic.edu.au/our-school/policies/](http://portlandsc.vic.edu.au/our-school/policies/)

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	March 2026
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	Before March 2029