



STAWELL SECONDARY COLLEGE

Camps and Excursions Policy



HELP FOR NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Stawell Secondary College on 03 5358 1700 or stawell.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Stawell Secondary 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 Stawell Secondary College. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Stawell Secondary College, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds, and to school sleep-overs.

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. Stawell 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 (work experience) or intercampus travel.

DEFINITIONS

Excursions:	For the purpose of this policy, excursions are activities organised by the school where the students: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	Excursions involving at least one night's accommodation (including school sleep-overs).
Local excursions	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 .



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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](#).

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. Stawell 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. Stawell 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.

Implementation

1. All camps must be approved by the Principal, Operations Team and School Council.
2. All excursions must be approved by the Principal and if considered of a risky nature, then also School Council.
3. The principal or their nominee on the Operations Team will ensure that full records are submitted to school council regarding the camp or excursion well in advance of the starting date of the event and that no camp or excursion occurs unless all the formal record keeping has been completed and approved.
4. Staff wishing to organise a new camp or excursion should present the appropriate plans and activities with the Principal for approval. All camps and excursions must be approved by the Operations Team prior to running.
5. This decision will be made by the Operations Team. The Operations Team, in consultation with appropriate staff, will consider the educational outcomes of the camp and or excursion as well as the impact on the school program for the proposed dates and cost to families.
6. The Operations Team in consultation with organising teachers will ensure that all camps, transport arrangements, emergency procedures and student/staff ratios comply with DET guidelines.



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7. Once the excursion or camp has been approved all relevant documentation must be completed.
8. The staff member in charge of the camp or excursion will complete the "Notification of School Activity" online at <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/forms/school/sal/Default.aspx> four weeks prior to the camp departure date. The staff member in charge of the camp or excursion will ensure all relevant details are entered in the Daily Organization Diary.
9. School Council is responsible for the approval of:
 - a. Overnight excursions
 - b. Camps
 - c. Interstate visits
 - d. International visits
 - e. Excursions requiring sea or air travel, weekends or vacations
 - f. Adventure activities
10. The Operations Team is responsible for the approval of all single-day excursions other than those that must be approved by school council as mentioned above.
11. Please check the calendar to ensure there is a School Council meeting to approve documents in the correct term.
12. Where camps are overnight or longer the forms from <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursions.aspx> MUST be submitted to School Council to gain approval for the camp at least 4 weeks prior to the camp running. If the excursion comes up without having the time for this notification to occur four weeks prior then contact with the principal ASAP is necessary.

Expectations

- The Department's requirements and guidelines relating to preparation and safety will be observed in the conduct of all camps and excursions.
- The principal or their nominee on the Operations Team will ensure that full records are maintained regarding the camp/excursion.
- The principal or their nominee on the Operations Team will ensure that adequate pre-excursion planning and preparation, including the preparation of students, takes place.
- The Department of Education and Training (DET) will not be involved in any expense associated with the conduct of excursions. The school may choose to subsidise some excursions or some student's expenses.
- Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable and safe behaviour at school will be invited to participate in camps or excursions. Students and their parents/carers need to be made aware that acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected during a camp or an excursion.
- The emergency management process of the school will extend to and incorporate all camps and excursions. All DET requirements and guidelines that apply to the conduct of excursions are also applicable to all overseas and interstate (domestic) camps/excursions.
- The principal or their nominee on the Operations Team will ensure that full records are submitted to School Council regarding the camp/excursion well in advance of the starting date of the event and that no camp/excursion occurs unless all the formal record keeping has been completed and approved. Prior to conducting any excursion, the formal approval of the School Council and principal will be obtained.



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- In approving an excursion, consideration will include:
 - contribution of the activity to the school curriculum
 - the adequacy of the planning, preparation and organisation in relation to the school policy and the guidelines and advice provided by DET
 - information provided by community groups and organisations that specialise in the activity proposed
 - appropriateness of the venue
 - the provisions made for the safety and welfare of students and staff
 - the experience and competence of staff relevant to the activities being undertaken
 - the adequacy of the student supervision
 - the high risk nature of some activities
 - emergency procedures and safety measures
 - staff-student ratios
 - student experience

Access to camps and excursions

1. All efforts will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend a camp or excursion, are invited to discuss alternative arrangements with the business manager. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the principal in consultation with the appropriate staff, on an individual basis.
2. All aspects of the camp or excursion will be outlined to parents in writing, including cost, sleeping arrangements, itinerary, activities, clothing and equipment lists, contact telephone numbers, transport arrangements, student management processes, permission and medical forms and clearly stated payment finalisation dates.
3. All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for camps and excursions. All parental and/or carer consent and medical forms must be completed, signed and returned and all money must be paid prior to departure.
4. Copies of completed permission notes and medical information must be accessible at the camp or excursion location by all staff at all times.
5. Only students that have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be permitted to participate in school camps or excursions. Parents will be notified if their child is in danger of losing the privilege to participate in a camp or excursion due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the principal, home group teacher in consultation with the organising teacher. Both the parent and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp or excursion.
6. Students participating in a school camp or excursion may be asked to sign a contract agreeing to abide by all camp and excursion rules. All school disciplinary measures apply to students on excursions consistent with the school's policy. In extreme cases the excursion staff, following consultation with, and the approval of, the principal or their nominee, may determine that a student should return home during an excursion. In such circumstances, the parent/carers will be advised of the circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home, satisfactory arrangements will be made to provide continuous instruction for the students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying an excursion.
7. The Organising Teacher will notify the School of the time when the parents/carers may collect their child from the camp or excursion of the anticipated time that the student will arrive home of any costs associated with the student's return which will be the responsibility of the parents/carers



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8. Parents will be requested to collect their child from camp if their child exhibits behaviour that is considered unacceptable or a danger to others. The teacher in charge, in consultation with a member of the leadership team, will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.

Supervision

Stawell 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.

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 and external provider checks

Stawell 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.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Stawell Secondary College will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Stawell Secondary College uses to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent and also informs parents 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, Stawell 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. Stawell Secondary College will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through communication with the student, the school newsletter and/or via XUNO.. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Stawell Secondary 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 School_name 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.



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Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and finalisation 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.

Financial Help for Families

Stawell 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 Business Manager. 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](#).

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*. 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* 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.

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. Students will often be asked to bring a packed lunch on the first day whilst travelling to the location. This is the only expectation for students to bring food on a 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, Stawell 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 in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- 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](#)
- [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#)



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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	October 2023
Consultation	Consultation with School Council
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	October 2026

History of changes

First Issued	March 2020
Date of update	Summary of Changes
October 2023	Transferred to the new DET Template Removal of definitions DET, SSC and Operations Team. Definitions included local excursions and adventure activities. Included the implementation, expectations and access to camps and excursions information from previous policy.