



Camps and Excursions

Policy

Policy review team members: Dean Charge, Deb Gardener, Jane Herring, Carolyn Smith, Kim Wheeler, Bev Harvey, Michelle Polley

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 2/8/21

Purpose:

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

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.

Scope:

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

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 website under Adventure Activities, at the following link:

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

Implementation:

Planning process for camps and excursions:

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

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. Mt Eliza PS's 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.

Mt Eliza PS 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.



Supervision

Mt Eliza PS 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

Mt Eliza PS 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, Mt Eliza PS will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Mt Eliza PS 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 parent's/carer's 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, Mt Eliza PS 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. Mt Eliza PS will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through the newsletter, Sentral and the year level weekly What's Happening. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis Mt Eliza PS 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.

Mt Eliza PS will:

1. Communicate clearly and effectively:
 - a) Clear timelines for excursion planning and communication have been developed and will be maintained.

Three weeks prior to reminder	One week prior to due date	Four school days prior to excursion date	Excursion date
Six weeks prior if the excursion is greater than \$50			
Initial Note home	Reminder for those who haven't paid	Due date for money and signed permission form	
Paper copy sent home with child. Plus Newsletter, Website, Facebook or Flexibuzz.	Contact is made with parent/carer using either note, email, personal contact or phone call.	Booking, numbers and payment will be confirmed with the excursion/incursion provider.	Late payments will not be accepted unless a payment plan has been developed with the AP before the due date.

- b) Options for payment plans and process for accessing them will be communicated via the school newsletter every term.
- c) Options for payment plans and process for accessing them will be communicated via permission/information forms for all camps and excursion forms for all events costing more than \$50.00.

Students who have not finalised payment or not returned their permission form by the required date will not be allowed to attend unless the Principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.

Mt Eliza PS 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 Assistant Principal. The Business Manager and Admin staff 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. Please refer to the Parent Refund Policy.

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/First Aide Officer 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.

The staff will implement the Sunsmart policy when they are offsite on an excursion.

Behaviour expectations

Students participating in camps and excursions are required to co-operate 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.

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 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, Mt Eliza PS 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.

Cancellations

Cancellations of Camps and Excursions may be directed by Government Departments such as the Health Department. In such cases the school will follow the recommendations of the current School Operations Guide. The Principal may need to cancel or alter excursion arrangements at short notice, for safety reasons or due to circumstances beyond the control of the school, and while the Principal will try to minimise inconvenience or financial losses to parents, these may be unavoidable.

Contract Tracing

Some excursion venues are required to collect contact details and are responsible for managing record keeping for contract-tracing in line with current public health directives.

Most venues are required to use electronic record keeping that connects with an Application Programming Interface (API) linked provider or a digital system provided by Services Victoria.

The Department of Health has strongly recommended that a contact number for each individual student is provided. A school phone number alone is not considered sufficient. Providing contact details for individual students will expedite contact tracing so that individuals can be contacted by the Department of Health if required.

Parents/carers/guardians are advised that, when required, the school will be providing excursion venues with contact details for students. The phone number on school file for the student will be provided as the nominated contact number.

Venues will be collecting student names and contact phone numbers for a legitimate purpose and are subject to Victorian privacy laws so will handle the information securely and only retain it for the required 28-day period.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

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

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

- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Parent Payment Policy
- Sunsmart policy

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of MEPS four-year review cycle

School Council President: Dean Charge

Signature:

Date: