

Incursions/excursion, camps and adventure activity policy

The nature and extent of excursions, camps and adventure activities conducted by Melton Primary School will depend on the general educational policies developed by the School Council in relation to the requirements and priorities of the School Strategic Plan and the school Annual Implementation Plan. The Department of Education development procedures and requirements relating to preparation and safety must be observed in the conduct of all excursions.

Ultimately, the responsibility for the safe and proper conduct of any school excursion, camp or adventure activity rests with the Principal, who must ensure that appropriate arrangements are made. The Principal will not permit any such activity to proceed unless the arrangements are considered to be satisfactory by all concerned.

Summary

- All excursions must be planned in accordance with the requirements outlined in this policy.
- It is also mandatory for schools to follow the requirements set out in the Excursion Guidelines, on the [Guidance tab](#).
- Further specific activity guidelines have been developed for adventure activities. These specific activity guidelines are also mandatory for schools to follow and require additional approval and risk management procedures.

Details

Excursions are an important part of the learning experiences of all students from Foundation to Year 12. Excursions can support quality curriculum delivery and can provide important social and emotional development opportunities for students that is often not available in the classroom. These might include teamwork, resilience and confidence-building through challenge, problem-solving, connecting with nature, creative and imaginative play and coordination and strength.

While the degree of planning involved will depend on the nature and likelihood of the risks involved, the conduct of any excursion or activity must take into account the following:

- the educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum or other educational value
- Department approval requirements for excursions and staff travel
- suitability of the venue and/or environment for the excursion
- informed consent from parents or carers
- adequate student and staff medical information
- adequate student preparation and clear behaviour expectations
- the importance of providing an inclusive excursion experience for all students, including students with disabilities and additional needs
- how school staff will meet their responsibilities under the Child Safe Standards
- requirements for any adventure activities

- assessment of excursion risks and appropriate risk minimisation strategies will be added on Compass
- a bushfire risk assessment will need to be completed
- maintenance of excursion records, including clear documentation of the planning process, in accordance with the Department's policy on management of school records – refer to [Records Management — School Records](#).

Staff must enter the excursion details into the [Student Activity Locator](#) (staff login required) at least 3 weeks prior to the excursion date.

When planning an excursion, staff must consider emergency warnings provided through VicEmergency and weather conditions including fire danger ratings.

The [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund \(CSEF\)](#) provides payments for eligible students to attend camps and excursions. Schools must advise eligible parents of this funding.

When planning and conducting excursions, schools must follow the mandatory Excursion Guidelines, on the [Guidance tab](#).

Excursion e-learning module

From 15 December 2022 onwards, school staff with primary responsibility for organising a school camp and/or water-based excursion activity must have completed the mandatory excursions e-learning module. These staff are encouraged to complete the module annually.

Staff responsible for organising excursions of any other type are also encouraged to complete the module.

The module is located in [eduPay](#).

The module aims to:

- increase awareness and understanding of the excursions policy and guidelines to ensure safety of students
- set out obligations for schools in managing excursions to ensure that they are aware of what steps they need to take
- establish awareness and understanding of the mandatory requirements for school excursions, including how to carry out risk assessments.

Approval for excursion, camps and adventure activities

School Council approval:

The School Council is responsible for the approval of all overnight excursions, school camps, interstate visits, excursions requiring sea or air travel or excursions involving weekends or vacations and all adventure activities. The Council needs to consider the contribution of the

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activity to the school program, its costs and the adequacy of planning and preparation. It must also consider the welfare and safety of the students, having regard to the advice given by the Principal.

Principal approval:

The Principal is responsible for the approval of any single day excursions other than those included above.

Permission Forms

Permission forms must be returned and signed by parents / carers before the excursion, consent can also be completed on Compass. If the Permission Form is not signed and returned, along with the relevant monetary payment, by the due date the student will not attend the activity.

For School Council approved excursions

- The School Council must be notified of a planned activity well in advance, enabling the School Council to make an informed decision, also allowing parents adequate time to pay.
- For excursions, camps and adventure activities, parents must be kept fully informed of all details well in advance of the planned activity.
- For overnight excursions, camps and adventure activities, if less than 80% of available students attend then the viability of the activity will be reviewed.
- Clear details of plans and organisation must be prepared for School Council.

Principal approved excursion

- The Principal must be informed of such an excursion no less than six weeks prior to the event.
- Parents must be notified at least five weeks prior to the excursion.
- The event must be set up on Compass and the approval process will be completed.

Guidelines for supervision

Additional assistance

- voluntary workers, parents, ancillary staff, external specialists and other adult members of the community can be used as excursion staff members and included in the staff-student ratios on school excursions provided that:

- for School Council approved excursions that the council is satisfied that each worker is able to provide effective supervision of the activities involved and that all excursion staff are approved by the school council prior to the excursion.
- for Principal approved excursions that the Principal is satisfied that each worker is able to provide effective supervision of the activities involved.
- sufficient teachers are present to maintain adequate control of the whole excursion and to control each activity.

In general, teachers shall comprise at least half the excursion staff.

Any additional adult helpers that are not part of Melton Primary School's staffing will be required to attend a short briefing session prior to the excursion being held. This session is to outline the support roles that they will be required to undertake during the excursion and the responsibilities that they have to the students attending the excursion. This briefing session is to be organised and run by the teacher in charge of the excursion and may be arranged at a time suitable to all parties.

NB Any additional helpers must have a current 'Working With Children Check'. It is therefore imperative that excursion coordinators plan their staffing well in advance.

External providers/supervision

Staff must supervise children at all times. It is the staff member's responsibility and duty of care to monitor the safety and welfare of all students at all times while the incursion/excursion is underway.

Staff Requirements

- Sufficient excursion staff to ensure proper supervision must be provided. In deciding what constitutes sufficient excursion staff, the Principal and School Council should take into account not only the provisos above, but also the previous experience of the excursion staff, the age and gender of the students, the size of the group, the nature and location of the excursion, the activities to be undertaken and any other factors of which they are aware. For all excursions involving overnight stays or adventure activities, at least two excursion staff must be present.
- (For primary schools, two adults, at least one of whom must be a teacher, must always be present). For all excursions involving overnight stays for mixed parties the excursion staff should include at least one person of each gender (For primary school this is not essential but it is desirable.)
- Staffing ratios recommended are provided to give guidance to organisers of activities. It is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that sufficient staff are present to ensure adequate supervision in each circumstance of the particular excursion and the activities to be undertaken on it. The council must satisfy itself that adequate supervision is provided.

Guidelines for staff- Student ratio

Supervision

To ensure appropriate and effective levels of supervision, the risk assessment should take into account:

- the experience, qualifications and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors and so on)
- the age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of students
- the ability and experience of the students
- the size of the group
- the nature and location of the excursion
- the activities to be undertaken
- known or anticipated weather conditions
- requirements outlined in the information for specific [Adventure activities](#)
- emergency response planning
- any other relevant factors.

Minimum supervision requirements

Department policy provides minimum requirements for staff-student ratios. Schools may need to enhance these measures with additional staff or volunteers to ensure student and staff safety.

Schools must take into account the likelihood of circumstances where a staff member may be unable to actively supervise the group (e.g. staff illness, staff needing to support a particular student because of illness, behaviour etc.), and the time it will take for a replacement staff member to arrive at the excursion destination.

Except where otherwise indicated, all excursions and camps must have a minimum of 2 staff members.

Local excursions

Regular class teacher-student ratios with an additional accompanying staff member (as required)

Day excursions

1:20 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff

Overnight base camps

1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff

Overnight study camps

1:15 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff

Interstate travel

1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff

Refunds for excursions

If your child is absent on the day of an excursion a medical certificate is required to obtain a part/ full refund. (If pre-paid tickets/food items have been purchased for an event, a full refund will not be possible)

Families with extenuating circumstances

PROCEDURES:

The following process is adopted in relation to collection of monies for excursions, swimming, visiting troupes and the like.

Notices are issued to relevant parents (that is for the classes concerned) no later than 5 weeks prior to the date of the event. Teachers are required to provide details of the incursion/excursion, the purpose in relation to curriculum cost involved, when the money is to be sent to school and the date of the event.

The closing date for payment of money is the week prior to the event. The closing date is to be clearly stated on notices and subsequent newsletters. The five working days gives teachers and office staff time to determine the number attending an event and thereby arrange adequate staffing of the event and to make adequate arrangements for supervision of children not attending. This timeframe enables office staff to finalize accounts for the excursion and to arrange EFT payments for those venues that require payment on the day. This also enables the school to advise excursion venues and Emergency Management of numbers of students and staff attending.

Current notices and return slips for forthcoming excursions and events are available on Compass or printed at the request of families or teachers from the office or in the foyer adjacent to the General Office.

Please note that all signed permission is collated and housed on Compass.

Excursion coordinators must download the final excursion handbook for the event with consent and emergency contact details. The original forms are to remain at school.

To ensure maximum attendance grade teachers should constantly remind children about the date of the event and the closing date for payments.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:

1. Parents who are experiencing financial difficulties may contact the school prior to the closing date for payments to negotiate a payment plan. If approval is given by the Principal the parent must sign and return the permission form prior to the closing date to ensure staffing can be suitably allocated. Payments may then be made according to the agreed plan.

2. Families who are experiencing financial difficulties MAY be offered assistance with payment. This is at the discretion of the Principal. However, they must approach the school prior to the closing date for payment of the event.
3. Children who enrol at Melton Primary School after the closing date for payment of an incursion/excursion and before the incursion/excursion is due to take place may be given permission to attend by the Principal. However, this will only occur if there is an available position on the bus and at the venue and it does not cause problems in relation to the adult/student supervision ratio. If given permission then a signed permission form must be submitted to the school prior to the incursion/excursion and full payment must be made by a date agreed to with the Principal.
4. The school will not accept payments for incursions/excursions once the closing date for payments has passed; other than in relation to points 1, 2 or 3 above.

School Council believes that the process described above is fair and gives all parents enough time and notice to pay for an event before the close of payment.

Accident Compensation for Teachers Concerned

For accident compensation purposes the Principal should issue a statement of assignment duties prior to the conduct of council approved excursions to cover members of staff concerned.

I, Principal of School, hereby allocate, pursuant to Regulation 2A of the Teaching Service (Governor in Council) Regulation, to being members of the Teaching Service employed at the said school, the duty of accompanying, supervising and ensuring the general care, safety and welfare of students of Year of the said school, travelling to and from and attending

Signature of the Principal

Melton Primary School Event Approval

The Incursions/Excursions Event Compass Form needs to be submitted via the Compass event form for approval at least 6 weeks prior to the event date. Please see the Compass event procedure on the steps to create an event. Longer time frames are required for camps, overnight events/sleepovers, or for events with significant cost.

Late submissions will not be allowed. Staff should allow a week for the event to go through the approval chain and charges to be raised on CASES21. The event will then be approved on Compass. Once the forms are ready for staff distribution, then the 5 weeks until payment deadline begins.

For events where no payment is required the timeline is still preferably at least 6 weeks, although 4 weeks is acceptable.

For a limited number of events (primarily sporting events) a timeline may be revised with Principal approval.

Once approval has been given, notification will be sent to the event organiser. Upon request of the parent or teachers. Teachers are able to print new forms from the Compass event. Staff should encourage students to complete the first form as this holds pre-printed information, rather than seek a replacement copy. Once the event has all required documentation it should be submitted for approval. Confirmed bookings must not take place until you receive a signed copy of the form approving the incursion/excursion.

MPS Events must be updated by office staff if payments are made through the office rather than directly on Compass. Notes to parents must go via Compass a minimum 5 weeks prior to the event, more if the amount exceeds \$50. Final payment date must be confirmed by the Office and is at least 5 school days prior to the event date.

Attached to the event submission on Compass must be a copy of all submissions, quotes, invoices, notices and permission drafts when first organising the event.

PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS

PLC meeting / discussion: Will the event meet curriculum expectations? Check the school calendar for dates which don't clash with other excursions. Begin with tentative arrangements: seek written information & quotes for venue/bus/extra items. Check on payment terms of creditors/suppliers. Create event form on Compass, ensuring to complete all sections.

SUBMISSION FOR APPROVAL

Complete the Event Approval Form on Compass. Seek assistance from PLC leader, a mentor or the office.

Attach a copy of all relevant information including quotes/invoices.

The Principal and established approval chain will look over all information and seek clarification if necessary. If required the event will be submitted for approval to Melton Primary School Council. When approved through the entire approval chain, the event organiser will receive an email advising of the event approval.

BOOKING THE EVENT

The event has been approved.

Prior to this point, no items should be purchased or promised.

A purchase order must be completed for each item that requires payment to a creditor.

Examples would be the bus, the entrance to the venue, staff reimbursement for item.

No purchase order = no payment (DET regulation).

A purchase order must be completed and then sent to approve the booking.

DURING THE PARENT PAYMENT PERIOD

Payment can be made via Compass or be delivered to the office via the Cash Pocket. At any time, any teacher can access the event via Compass for an updated list. Classroom teachers with students involved in the event must regularly remind students who have not paid regarding the deadlines for payment/form. Teachers should contact parents before and during the last week of payment.

Ratified at School Council March 15th 2023.