Camp/Outdoor Education Policy

Rationale:
- The Gembrook Camp/Outdoor Education Program endeavours to promote the development of a child’s independence and self-reliance skills, in addition to fostering such social skills as co-operation, tolerance, leadership and environmental awareness.

Aims:
- To provide an opportunity for students to experience the richness of camp communal life in a variety of environmental settings.
- To give students the opportunities to further develop friendships and relationships with fellow students and teachers in a different setting.
- To reinforce the values of our ‘You Can Do It’ program and school values in another setting.
- To provide Camp/Outdoor Education experiences which promote the values of independence, safe risk taking, having a go, respect and community.

Implementation:
- The Camp/Outdoor Learning Program at Gembrook provides all students in grades Foundation to 6 the opportunity to participate in activities in a range of environments- local, beach, bush and urban.
- Camp/Outdoor Education Activities may include overnight stays or extended days.
- It is our aim to provide a variety of settings – local, environmental, beach, urban – for children to experience and enjoy.
- Camp/Outdoor Education experiences will be offered every year to all year levels.
- Camp co-coordinators will adhere to DEECD guidelines and procedures. The online Student Activity Locator will be completed on line and forwarded to the Department of Education and Training two weeks prior to the camp departure date.
  
- A risk assessment will be undertaken of all camps and camp activities as part of the camp planning process.
  

- All Camp/Outdoor Education experiences will be approved by School Council.
- Clear and detailed information regarding camp location, facilities, activities, supervision details and the overall benefits of Camp/Outdoor Education participation will be distributed to parents with the initial Camp/Outdoor Education information.
- All parents attending camp will need to provide current Working with Children Check documentation.
- Parent information sessions will be held, where appropriate.
- Students will further consolidate their Camp/Outdoor Education experiences and knowledge through pre and post Camp/Outdoor Education activities.

Bushfires and Control Procedures on Camps or Excursions
Ratified in 2015.
• The school will be closed on a Code Red fire rating day, therefore any camps planned for a Code Red day will be postponed or cancelled. If the camp is already in progress when a Code Red Day at the camp location is declared, students will be returned to school the night before or at the discretion of the principal/camp coordinator and campsite manager. The campsite emergency management plan/risk assessment will provide a guide for decision making.
• Pre-activity planning will include consideration of the possible fire risk and potential for bushfire in the relevant location when attending the camp or excursion. Alternative dates will be provided if possible to allow for last-minute change in the event of severe fire danger.
• Fires and open fire places will be used in accordance with the requirements of the fire and/or land management authorities.
• Where relevant, students will be briefed on the risks associated with open flames in a bush setting.
• The communication strategy will include mechanisms to ensure that the group is alerted to a potential Total Fire Ban or other communications from fire authorities.
• In addition, staff will consider prevailing local conditions and adjust the excursion accordingly. Adjustments could include further consultation with the school and/or land management authorities to determine course of action, evacuation, changing location or cancellation of the activity.

Learning with External Providers
Before an external provider is selected to assist with the delivery of a program, a thorough check should be completed by the school to ensure that they are appropriate for the program.

Prior to commencement of a program the school should ensure that the external provider has:

• a current public liability insurance certificate (minimum $10 million) provided by an APRA approved insurer
• discussed with the school who has responsibilities for first aid, emergency communications and other specialist equipment
• demonstrated that staff have the correct qualifications and/or experience for their specific role/s
• a documented system in place to ensure that students are supervised by either a registered teacher or an approved staff member with a current Working with Children Check
• ensure that supervision of students is overseen at all times by a staff member or other individual that has a completed Working with Children Check
• discussed with the school who will be responsible for emergency procedures, and that these are well understood prior to the activity taking place
• read the relevant sections of the Department's Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors and understood their obligations under these guidelines.

Schools cannot sign 'Waivers of liability' on behalf of students. Regardless of the role of the external provider, schools retain overall responsibility for the program and any activities involving students.

Government schools using residential campsites in Victoria as a venue for their camp or excursion are required to use only accredited campsites. For more information see: School Policy and Advisory Guide - Venue Selection

Accreditation schemes include Australian Camps Association Accreditation, Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP) and National Accommodation, Recreation & Tourism Accreditation

Where not directly responsible for the instruction of the activity or assisting the instructor, the teacher present must understand the activity and the environment in which it will be conducted.

Ratified in 2015.
This teacher must confer with the designated instructor about the supervisory role and establish areas of responsibility. If the teacher is not the designated instructor he/she is to act on the advice of the designated instructor on technical safety issues.

**Evaluation**
- Evaluation by teachers, students and parents will be observational, descriptive and interpretive. These may include surveys, written reports, check sheets and anecdotal evidence.
- Direct observation by teachers and students of Camp facilities – food, accommodation and camp activities whilst on site will take place.
- This policy will be for three year review.

**References:**