Excursion Policy

Definitions:
- Day excursions are defined for the purpose of this policy as any organised and supervised school activities that require children to venture beyond the school boundary.

Rationale:
- The school’s excursion program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Day excursions complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

Aims:
- To reinforce, complement and extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom.
- To develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.

Implementation:
- The Principal is responsible for the approval of all non-adventure single-day excursions other than those that must be approved by the School Council.
- School Council is responsible for approval of all overnight excursions; camps; interstate and overseas visits; excursions requiring sea or air travel; excursions involving weekends or vacations; and adventure activities.
- A designated ‘Teacher in Charge’ will coordinate each day excursion.
- Prior to the commencement of any detailed planning relating to a proposed day excursion, the teacher in charge and other key members must meet formally with the Principal, to present the Principal with a planning summary, to discuss the proposed activity, and to seek ‘in principle’ support for the event.
- If the Principal’s approval is granted, detailed planning should commence using the excursion checklist as a guide. It must include a risk assessment of the site if adventure activities are planned.
- When presenting information to the Principal, organising staff must be aware that Council will consider the following:-
  - The purpose of the excursion and its connection to student learning.
  - The competence of staff members attending in relation to being able to provide the necessary supervision of students throughout the excursion.
  - The presence of a trained member of staff able to provide first aid.
  - The completion of a Working with Children Check by supervisory adults who are not registered teachers.
  - The location of staff and students throughout the excursion including during travel.
  - The importance of having a record of telephone contacts for supervising excursion staff available.
  - The importance of having copies of the parental consent and confidential medical advice forms for those students on the excursion available.
  - School Council requires that students only travel on buses fitted with seatbelts.
- If day excursions include adventure activities, organising staff should consult the adventure activities website, or seek advice from peak bodies or skilled and experienced staff with recent experience instructing the activity to satisfy the Principal’s requirements.

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If approved, that the online DET Notification of School Activity form then 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).

Excursions/incursions will not be planned before March 1st in each calendar year excluding necessary sporting excursions.

The schedule of excursions, including costs, will be distributed as early in the year as possible.

Parents will be notified two weeks prior to an excursion or incursion

All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for excursions including the option for a payment plan for swimming and camping programs.

Parents will be sent notices before the excursion date reminding them of the need to finalise payment. **Children whose payments have not been finalised at least 24 hours before the departure date will not be allowed to attend unless alternative payment arrangements had been previously organised with the Principal.**

All endeavours will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend a day excursion, will be required to discuss their individual situation with the Principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Principal on a case-by-case basis.

Office staff and teaching staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide classroom teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.

Information will be provided to all parents of non-English speaking families in a manner that allows them to provide informed consent for their children attending excursions.

Staff attending excursion will be requested to carry their mobile phone and a first-aid kit for all day excursions.

The school will continue to provide the opportunity for teachers to update their first aid skills.

Copies of completed Permission forms, and signed ‘Confidential Medical Information’ forms must be carried by excursion staff at all times.

A senior staff member will be in attendance at school whilst the children are returning from any out-of-school-hours excursion. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person with regards to the anticipated return time.

Parents of children involved in excursions may be invited to assist on the excursions. When deciding on which parents will attend, the Teacher in Charge will take into account –

- Any valuable skills the parents have to offer. eg. bus licence, first aid etc
- The need to include both male and female parents.
- The special needs of particular students.
- Holding of a current Working With Children Check
- Parents selected to assist with day excursions may be required to pay their excursion costs.

Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in school day excursions. Parents will be notified if a child is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in an excursion due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher and the Teacher in Charge.

Students with special needs will be provided with appropriate supervision and support to participate in the excursion program.

Students will wear school uniform on all out of school excursions including school lanyards unless otherwise advised

Students not attending excursions/incursions will be provided with alternative activities

The primary references that must be consulted when considering all day excursions is the Vic Govt Schools Reference Guide 4.4.2.2 – Student Safety & Risk Management.

**Bushfires and Control Procedures on Excursions or Camps**

- The school will be closed on a Code Red fire rating day, therefore any camps or excursions planned for a Code Red day will be postponed or cancelled. If the camp is already in progress when a Code Ratified in 201…
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 an excursion. Alternative dates will be provided where 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. 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:

- Gembrook Primary School offers a varied program of excursions and incursions to reinforce, complement and extend learning.
- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s three-year review cycle.

References:

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