

CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY

Rationale

Alkira Secondary College 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.

Purpose

The policy takes into account Excursion and Camps all of which are an important aspect of, the educational programs offered at Alkira Secondary College.

- 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.
- To provide shared experiences and a sense of connectedness to school
- To provide a program that delivers skills and knowledge that may lead to a lifelong involvement in worthwhile leisure pursuits
- To provide a program that promotes self-esteem, resourcefulness, independence, leadership, judgement, cooperation and tolerance.
- To make clear the processes and aspects considered when approving camps and excursions.

Scope

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Alkira Secondary College. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Alkira 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. Alkira 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 or intercampus travel.

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;
- Attend school 'sleep-overs' on school grounds e.g. VCAL Homeless sleepover

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://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/adventure.aspx>

Note: workplace learning activities (such as work experience) and intercampus travel are not considered school excursions.

Implementation

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: Excursions and Activities. For camps and excursions requiring school council approval, our school will also follow the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors.

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. Alkira Secondary College'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.

Alkira 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.

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. The Organising Teacher is made aware of this via correspondence sent to them following the final approval of their submission.

Supervision

Alkira 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

Alkira Secondary College may at times seek the participation of parent volunteers. 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

Alkira 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, Example School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Alkira Secondary College uses Compass to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent **and/or may also** inform parents about school camps and excursions by sending home a hard copy 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, Alkira Secondary College may take the option to 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. Alkira Secondary College will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through email/online parent communication tool/a note home in the student's bag/Compass. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Alkira Secondary College will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

Students who have not finalised consent by the required date will not be allowed to attend unless the Principal, or Principals nominee determines exceptional circumstances apply.

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 and/or other correspondence will have clearly stated payment amounts and payment finalisation dates.

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

Alkira 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, such as a payment plan, 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](#).

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. It is reasonable to assume that whilst out of the College students should conduct themselves adhering to same behaviours and values expected of them whilst at school.

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. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal or Principals nominee, 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. A refund again will be determined given consideration as to the information listed above.

If on a camp or excursion the Teacher in Charge or their nominee 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. Consideration when this decision is made is also based on aspects such as a student's previous known disability (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder), previous incidents and the overall wellbeing of the staff and students out on the activity-camp.

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 only be permitted to bring electronic devices (such as iPads, iPods, mobile phones) if these are listed in correspondence / approval information prior to the activity / camp going out. It is the Organising Teachers responsibility to ensure that this information has been communicated to all students/parent/guardians. If permission is not given by the Organising Teacher then items such as iPads, iPods, mobile phones may be confiscated for the duration of the activity in accordance with school policies related to these devices. If mobile phones are not listed as a requirement for the Camp or Excursion they should be left in the students locker at school.

Students are responsible for the care of any personal electronic device brought to a camp or excursions and the school will not be responsible for lost or damaged devices.

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, or the Organising Teacher has approved them being able to bring their own supply of food.

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, Alkira 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. There may be camps, such as those overseas organised through the College or Department where some insurance is provided for the travelling group, however parents should always look into this policy and seek further travel insurance if they deem it to be necessary.

Use of a Private Car

In general, the use of a Private Car should be avoided. However, small group sizes sometimes means that this is the most appropriate form of transport. If a Private Car is to be used the Organising Teacher should consult with the Principal or their nominee to ensure that all Departmental Guidelines are followed and the staff member involved has the appropriate comprehensive insurance.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/privatecar.aspx>

Supporting Documents

These documents can be found on Compass, or can be requested from the relevant Assistant Principal and should be referred to by the Organising Teacher as a matter of course when planning their activity:

- Excursions, Adventure Activities and Camps Application Process Guidelines
- Alkira Secondary College Proforma for all Overnight Excursions, Adventure Activities and Camps Requiring School Council Approval
- Incident &/or Medical Report following an Excursion, Adventure Activities and Camp
- Risk Assessment Form for Alkira Secondary College Adventure Activities and Camps
- DISPLAN for all Alkira Secondary College Excursion, Adventure Activities and Camps
- AA Guidelines/Processes for requesting Events and Excursions

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

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- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy

Further Information

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

- School Policy and Advisory Guide:
 - [Excursions and Activities](#)

- Emergency and Risk Management
- Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors
- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund.
- Code Red Days
- Parent Payment Policy

REVIEW CYCLE AND EVALUATION

This policy was last updated on April 2020 and is scheduled for review April 2024.