**HEPBURN Primary School**

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**Established 1864 No. 767**

**Camps and Excursions Policy**

**Definition:**

An excursion is an activity organised by a school (not including work experience) during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities (including camps and sport). Adventure activities are included in this definition (regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds or not).

**Rationale:**

The school’s camps and excursions program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Excursions and camps 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 outside world.

**Principals are responsible for the conduct of all excursions and must ensure:**

* Excursions are planned, approved and conducted in accordance with Department policy and requirements.
* An online notification of school activity form is completed at least three weeks prior to the activity using the Student Activity Locator.
* Compliance with the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, which are mandatory for excursions requiring school council approval.

**Implementation:**

DET requirements and guidelines relating to preparation and safety must be observed in the conduct of all excursions. Staff responsible for organizing camps and excursions must read the guidelines accessed through the following link: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/Pages/excursionsafety.aspx#link4>

* Satisfactory arrangements must be made to provide continuous instruction for the students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying an excursion.
* Sufficient time for parents to make payment for excursions will be given. In arrangement with the Principal and Business Manager, payments by instalment may be made.
* Parents will be sent notices in advance informing them of the final payment date for excursions.
* Unless alternative payment arrangements have been organised by parents with the principal, students will only be permitted to attend camps and excursions if the full cost has been paid.
* All excursions require parent consent.
* Consent forms must provide parents with sufficient information about the nature of the proposed activity and the risks involved, and the degree of supervision, to enable them to make an informed decision and to ensure the school obtains a proper consent.
* A permission form signed by parents/guardians must be completed before a student may attend an excursion. Verbal permission is not sufficient. Payment alone does not allow a student to attend an excursion.
* Parents must sign a Confidential Medical Information form for school council approved camps.
* The school council is responsible for the approval of overnight excursions, camps and adventure activities.
* All camps must be approved by School Council. Camp proposals must be submitted to School Council for approval.
* The principal is responsible for the approval of all other single-day excursions. As a courtesy they are taken to school council as well.
* All excursions and camps will be staffed in accordance with DET regulations i.e. 1:20 for day excursions and 1:10 for overnight activities. These are minimum requirements and a lower student staff ratio may be required to ensure appropriate and effective supervision.
* If needed, suitable parent helpers may be asked by the classroom teacher to assist on an excursion. Principal approval must be granted for the use of parent helpers.
* All parent helpers must have a current Working With Children’s Check.
* Only parents who are assisting as helpers are to accompany or interact with the students on an excursion.
* Online notification of school activity form is to be completed three weeks prior to the activity using the Student Activity Locator.
* The Regional Director is to be informed if an excursion leaves the school unoccupied.
* Hepburn Primary School will utilise camps accredited by Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP). ***Camp/Adventure Activity Provider Accreditation has been designed to ensure the camping or outdoor experience is able to be conducted in a manner where the safety of participants and staff is assured. This means the buildings are appropriate and that proper activity equipment is provided and used in a safe manner. It ensures there are clear procedures for supervising campers and administering bookings and proper planning has been done to manage emergencies should they arise.***
* Students do not have an automatic right to attend camps and excursions. The principal may exclude any student whom they believe does not consistently demonstrate the expectations for student behaviour contained in the Hepburn Primary School Student Engagement Policy and Hepburn Primary School Behaviour Management Policy.

**Returning a student home**

In extreme cases the excursion staff, following consultation with and the approval of the school principal, may decide to return a student to their home from an excursion. Excursion staff should advise the student’s parent or carer of the:

* Circumstance associated with the decision to send the student home.
* Time when the parent or carer may collect their child from the excursion or the anticipated time that the student will arrive home.
* Consider the age and maturity of the student when making travelling arrangements.

Policy reviewed and ratified by School Council on October 24th 2017.