

## CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS

### PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Armstrong Creek School will use when planning and conducting camps, excursions and adventure activities for students.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Armstrong Creek School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Armstrong Creek School, 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. Armstrong Creek School 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

**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 Policy and Advisory Library, at the following link:

[Adventure Activities Guidelines](#)

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

### POLICY

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.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's Policy and Advisory Library: [Excursions](#).

## Planning process for camps and excursions

All camps and excursions will comply with Department planning requirements and be approved by the Principal or nominee.

At Armstrong Creek School, a sequential camps program provides opportunity for students to progressively experience a range of leisure pursuits which help to promote our school values of Care, Collaboration and Commitment as well as developing skills in independence, leadership and resilience. Starting in Prep, successive programming of these experiences mean that students are prepared for a formal camp experience (offsite) by the time they reach Grade 3. From Grade 3 up, overnight stays in a variety of locations across Victoria take place for one to two nights at a minimum.

The School Council is responsible for the approval of:

- Overnight excursions, camps, interstate visits, international visits, excursions requiring sea or air travel, weekends or vacations and adventure activities

The School Council needs to be made aware of:

- The high risk of some activities and the emergency procedures put in place
- [Staff and Student Ratios](#)
- Consideration to ensure a child safe environment

The Principal or nominee is responsible for the approval of all single-day excursions other than those that must be approved by school council as mentioned above.

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 including the relevant camp/activity providers specific risk assessments and profiles. Child safe needs to be a standard on all Risk Assessments. Armstrong Creek School's risk assessment will include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire activity in the excursion location.

Armstrong Creek School is committed to ensure that all students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Out of Home Care children, children with disabilities, and children who are vulnerable will be able to attend the excursion and camps. All reasonable measures need to be put in place to support all students to attend camp according to their ability and needs.

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.

## Supervision

Armstrong Creek School 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.

All staff need to know the exact location of students they are responsible for at all time during the camp and excursion.

Please refer to [Staffing Responsibilities](#)

## **Parent volunteers**

Parents may be invited to assist with camps and excursions. 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**

Armstrong Creek School 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.

Please refer to the Volunteers Policy and the Working with Children's Check Policy.

## **Parent/carer consent**

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Armstrong Creek School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Armstrong Creek School uses Compass to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent. 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, Armstrong Creek School will 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. Armstrong Creek School will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through COMPASS (online parent communication tool). For local excursions, Armstrong Creek School will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

## **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 and all efforts will be made not to exclude students simply for financial reasons. Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and payment finalisation dates.

Students who have not finalised payment by the required date (24 hours prior to the commencement of the camp/excursion) will not be allowed to attend unless the Principal determines exceptional circumstances apply. Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide organizing teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.

Armstrong Creek School 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 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.

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 set out in the school's *Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy* as well as the *Student Code of Conduct*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal or Assistant Principal, 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.

If on a camp or excursion the Teacher in Charge 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.

Sometimes a student's disability may manifest in challenging or unsafe behaviour. In consultation with the parents/carers, Armstrong Creek School staff will develop a Safety Plan to support students which may present with behaviours or safety concerns to attend camp. Principals will ensure that appropriate emergency and risk management planning is undertaken for students with disabilities attending excursions and camps

Disciplinary measures apply to students on camps and excursions consistent with our school's *Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

## **Fire Danger or Ban**

The Principal may need to cancel excursions and camps at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. On such days, the Security Services Unit liaises with fire authorities to obtain up to date information for communication to schools that may be affected by wildfire, including schools with students attending camps in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required.

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.

When required, Armstrong Creek School will follow the Department's emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities.

## **Electronic Devices**

Students will not be permitted to bring electronic devices to camps or excursions except with prior approval from the Principal. The Principal will only approve students bringing electronic devices to a camp or excursion in exceptional

circumstances and when it is in the best interests of the student, and may place conditions on its location and use during the camp or excursion.

## **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.

## **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, Armstrong Creek School 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.

Armstrong Creek School may consider obtaining travel insurance for excursions that they consider involve a greater than normal risk, for example interstate or overseas trips. Information about travel insurance is available [here](#).

## **FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

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

- [Excursions \(Policy, Guidance and Resources\)](#)
- [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#)

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

- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Inclusion Policy
- Volunteer Policy
- Duty of Care Policy
- Parent Payment Policy
- Bullying Prevention Policy
- Student Code of Conduct Policy

## **REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy was last updated in October 2020 and is scheduled for review in October 2023.