



Plenty Parklands  
Primary

# CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY

(including local excursions and in school activity)

## PURPOSE

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

## AIMS

- To reinforce, enrich and extend authentic learning opportunities.
- To develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.
- To enable students to further their learning and social skills development in a non school setting.

## SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps, in school activities and excursions organised by Plenty Parklands Primary School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Plenty Parklands Primary School, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds.

This policy is intended to complement the Department's policy and guidelines on camps, excursions and adventure activities which all Victorian government schools are required to follow. Plenty Parklands Primary School will follow both this policy, as well as the Department's policy and guidelines, when planning for and conducting camps and excursions.

## DEFINITIONS

**Camps** are excursions involving at least one night's accommodation.

**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;

**Local excursions** are excursions to locations within walking distance of the school and do not involve 'Adventure Activities'.

An **in school activity** is defined as any activity held within the school grounds where parents may be asked to pay.

**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:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/adventure-activities>

## POLICY

Camps, in school activities 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. Camps, activities and excursions are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

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

### 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 and excursion. Plenty Parklands Primary School's risk assessment will include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire or other natural disaster activity in the camp location. In the event the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts a Catastrophic fire danger

rating (FDR) day, excursion or camp activities in affected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason.

Plenty Parklands Primary School 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.

The PPS camp or excursion process and supporting documentation must be used.

Each camp and excursion will be organised by a designated coordinator.

Camps and excursions are to be advertised well in advance and included in each year level's list of important dates.

Camps, excursions and in school activities are to be spread as evenly as possible throughout the year to help families budget.

Camp/excursion coordinator must enter the details into the [Student Activity Locator](#) (staff login required) at least 3 weeks prior to the excursion or camp date.

A risk register assessing risks across the entire excursion or camp must be completed and submitted to the principal when seeking approval for the excursion (refer to [Excursions risk register and emergency management plan template \(DOCX\)](#)).

In cases where a camp or excursion involves a particular class or year level group, the camp/excursion coordinator will ensure that there is an alternative educational program available and appropriate supervision for those students not attending the camp or excursion.

The school only uses camp sites accredited by the 'Australian Camps Association'.

### **Approval**

All camps require Principal and School Council approval.

Day excursions (including local excursions) and special events, require approval from the leading teacher assigned to the year level and the principal.

### Principal

For excursions that include an overnight component, adventure activities, interstate, overseas or travel by air or water, a completed [Excursions – principal approval form \(DOCX\)](#) must be submitted to the principal. This principal approval form includes detailed information that may be needed in an emergency such as:

- the exact location of the excursion participants at all times, including during travel
- the relevant contact number/s through which excursion staff may be reached in an emergency
- the names and family contact details for all students and staff.

Additional to the principal approval form, the following documentation must be submitted to the principal:

- copies of the parental consent and medical advice forms of students
- a copy of the risk register including emergency management plan.

This documentation must be approved by the principal prior to the excursion starting.

### School Council

The following information is to be provided to school council approximately 8-12 months prior to the camp.

- Venue and location
- Educational aims and objectives of the camp
- Activities to be participated

School council approves the camp in so far as it relates to the school's budget, the parent payments policy or entering into any contract or other such agreement with a third party, as these aspects of camps fall within the scope of school council powers and functions. If appropriate, principals can consult with school council on other aspects of camps.

### **Supervision**

Plenty Parklands Primary School follows the Department's guidelines in relation to supervision of students during camps and excursions, including correct adult:student ratios.

All camp and 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**

Parents/carers may be invited to assist in the delivery of the camp or excursion. School staff will notify parents/carers of any costs associated with attending, if applicable. School staff are in charge of camps and excursions and parent/carer volunteers are expected to follow teachers' instructions and the school values.

**Camps** - When deciding on which parents/carers will attend, the camp coordinator will follow the process as detailed in the process folder of the Staff Manual and complete all related forms as detailed in the Supporting Documents folder of the Staff Manual.

- The Principal has final approval of staffing profile.
- One adult to ten students (legal requirement) at no charge to the adults.
- All adults to have a Working With Children check.
- Minimum of 50% of the adults to be qualified teachers to fulfil ratio.
- Minimum of one senior teacher employed by the school, to be in charge.
- Aim for gender balance where possible.
- In line with other considerations, as School Council has to approve school camps and is legally responsible, priority will be given to one non Department school councillor who has not previously attended a camp.
- As part of pre service training, priority given to one pre service teacher to attend.
- Remaining free places given to parents –
  - priority to trained nurse, doctor or first aid personnel
  - priority to parents who are known to the school through their interaction with the school at parent/teacher/student interviews, school occasions and volunteer work. These occasions provide opportunities for parents to display the attributes we look for when seeking help with particular responsibilities such as a camp.
  - priority to parents who will take on a “de facto” staff role
  - where their attendance would not affect their own child’s ability to manage independent of their parent (in the child’s best interest as determined by the staff)
  - after all criteria have been looked at, the principal has final approval of the staffing profile
  - If a parent has decided that their child (who has a serious medical problem) can only go on the camp so long as the parent attends, then the parent is deemed as being out of the adult ratio and would be required to pay their own way. The school will negotiate to get transport and accommodation at a reduced rate, where possible.

Camp parent volunteers will be required to attend a pre camp meeting, which includes a camp information training session.

Parents/carers attending camp will be asked to sign the *School Camp Confidentiality Agreement* agreeing that they will not take phone calls from, or phone, text or send photos to other Plenty Parklands families whilst at camp.

***School Camp Confidentiality Agreement (to be signed by all volunteers prior to attendance at camp)***

- In line with my volunteer training undertaken at Plenty Parklands, I understand and agree to follow the school *values* while on camp.
- To support the aim of developing student independence and to ensure *a fair go for all*, I understand that this includes adhering to our practice of not sending photos to family members while I am on camp.
- I also agree that I will not take phone calls from, or phone, text, or send photos to other Plenty Parklands families while on camp.
- I agree to wait until after the camp before posting photos of my child on any form of social media. I understand that I do not have permission from the school or other families to post photos of other children.

Name .....

Signed .....

Date .....

**Excursions** – Invite parents/grandparents of students involved in excursions or special events to assist.

When deciding on which helpers will attend, the teacher in charge will take into account –

- Ensure a ratio of 1:20 adults to students for general excursions; 1:10 with water activities.
- All adults to have a Working With Children check.
- Any valuable skills the parents have to offer. eg. first aid
- The need to include both male and female parents

- The special needs of particular students.

### **Volunteer and external provider checks**

Plenty Parklands Primary School requires all parent or carer camp or excursions volunteers and all external providers working directly with our students to have a current Working with Children Check card.

### **Returning from camp and excursions**

A senior staff member will be in attendance at school when the children return from any camp or any out of school hours excursion. The camp/excursion coordinator will communicate with this person with regard to the anticipated return time. The school will make every effort to update the ETA on Compass.

### **Parent/carer consent**

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Plenty Parklands Primary School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Plenty Parklands Primary 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, Plenty Parklands Primary 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. Plenty Parklands Primary School will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through Compass. For local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local oval for sports lessons), Plenty Parklands Primary School will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

All requirements or expectations set for each camp and excursion must be adhered to by students and families, including exclusion or restriction of mobile phones and/or any electronic devices.

### **Parent Payments for camps and excursions**

Most camps and excursions provided by Plenty Parklands Primary School enhance and broaden the schooling experience of our students but are not a mandatory component of our curriculum. These activities are provided on a user pays basis in accordance with the Department's Parent Payments Policy.

The cost of all camps and excursions are to be paid by parents/carers unless alternative arrangements have been agreed to by Principal class or the Business Manager prior to the camp or excursion. All families will be given sufficient time to make payments. Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and payment finalisation dates. All deposits are non refundable/non transferable as the final cost is determined by the number of students attending.

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

Where a camp or excursion is provided as part of the standard curriculum requirements, parents may be invited to make a voluntary contribution but all students will be able to attend regardless of whether their parents contribute.

### **Financial Support for Parents**

Plenty Parklands Primary School does not have discretionary funds to supplement or pay for students to attend camps or excursions. Plenty Parklands Primary School will make efforts to ensure that students are not excluded for financial reasons. Families experiencing financial difficulty who wish their children to attend a camp or excursion will be required to discuss their individual situation with either the Principal class or Business Manager. They may be encouraged to approach a charitable organisation for support. Decisions relating to any alternative payment arrangements will be made by either the Assistant Principal or Business Manager on a case by case basis, however any payment plan must be fully paid prior to participation.

The Assistant Principal or 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 CSEF and the application form is available from the school office or on the school website.

### **Refunds**

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. Any consideration for part refund of remaining amount due to late withdrawal of students due to illness, holiday, etc., can only be considered after all invoices associated with the camp or excursion have been finalised. 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 *Medication Authority Form*. To meet the school's obligations relating to safety, a first aid kit and mobile phones 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.

In line with our Sunsmart school policy, students will be required to wear a school sunsmart hat and will be supervised to reapply sunscreen, sent from home, as appropriate.

### **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.

Children who have displayed behaviour in line with our values will be able to participate in school camps and excursions. 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 Engagement and Wellbeing Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct* or *Bullying Prevention Policy*. Consideration of a decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal class in consultation with the classroom teacher, welfare staff, parents of the child and the camp/excursion coordinator. 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 coordinator considers an individual student's behaviour does not meet required standards, the coordinator in consultation with the senior staff member will contact a member of the Principal class to determine if 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.

NOTE: Sometimes a student's disability may manifest in challenging behaviour. Examples of disabilities that can present with challenging behaviour includes Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Autism Spectrum Disorder. In these cases, excluding a student from a camp or excursion may raise disability discrimination law issues. Plenty Parklands will contact the Department for advice if we had to consider excluding a student for failing to comply with behavioural standards, if their disability presents with challenging behaviour.

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

### **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 camp or excursion coordinator, 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, Plenty Parklands Primary 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.

## COMMUNICATION

This policy will be communicated to our school community in the following way:

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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

- [Excursions](#)
- [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#)
- [Parent Payments Policy](#)

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

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

## EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in line with best practice, new regulations and Department guidelines.

## POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	May 2023
Consultation	Business Manager Leadership School Council
Approved	Principal and endorsed by School Council in June 2023
Next scheduled review date	May 2026