

MOUNT RIDLEY P-12 COLLEGE

CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you require assistance with understanding this policy, please do not hesitate to contact the College and someone will organise a multicultural aide or the relevant person to assist you.

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Mount Ridley P-12 College will use when planning and conducting camps, excursions and adventure activities for students

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Mount Ridley P-12 College. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Mount Ridley P-12 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. Mount Ridley P-12 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 (such as work experience) as these activities are not considered as school excursions.

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:

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

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 and allow students to make connections between their learning and the wider community.

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.

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. Mount Ridley P-12 College'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 excursion location. In the event the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts a Catastrophic fire danger rating (FDR) day, excursions 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.

Mount Ridley P-12 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 Assistant Principals responsible for Curriculum will monitor the schedule of events for the school year, endeavouring to maintain costs at a reasonable and affordable level and ensuring that events are spread as evenly throughout the year as possible to help families budget.

The Accounts Manager, Director of Information Systems and Operations, and the designated Event Organiser, must ensure that the relevant College Excursion, Camp or Incursion Planning Process is adhered to.

At the Early Years level, only one excursion per term is to be organised.

A senior teacher must be designated as the Camp Organiser and they are responsible for ensuring that the College Camp Planning Process and Departmental Guidelines are adhered to.

Excursions, incursions and special events will be advertised to students and parents at least 4 weeks prior to the event date.

Camp notices are to be sent out at least eight weeks in advance and payment plans may be provided for parents.

Department of Education (DE) school approved camps and excursions must be entered into the [Student Activity Locator \(SAL\)](#) database at least three weeks prior to the activity.

The Event Organiser will ensure that they take their own mobile phone, or alternatively a limited number are available through College Operations as well as First Aid backpacks for all camps and excursions, as per the College Excursion Planning Process. Mobile phones are available to be booked through the Accounts Manager and the number must be provided in the administration section of the Compass event.

MYKI cards are available for staff and volunteers attending College Events.

Transport arrangements comply with the Policy Advisory Library (PAL) <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/transport> and [VicRoads](#), (click on link. If any staff member is driving their own car with/without students please ensure they complete the 'Application to use a private vehicle form') <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/private-vehicle-use>

A list of students, teachers and helpers attending the excursion, must be included in the Compass event and made up to date on the morning of the event.

The Compass Event Handbook, containing the list of students, teachers and helpers attending the excursion, along with their contact and medical information must be carried by the Event Organiser at all times.

The Compass Event roll must be marked at the beginning of the event, ensuring that staff back at the college have accurate information regarding student attendance for the day.

Supervision

Mount Ridley P-12 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.

Department ratios must be adhered to in relation to supervision. The event organiser must check the ratios on the [Department website \(Staff and Supervision school policy\)](#), as they differ depending on the activity being undertaken (type of camp, excursion, adventure activity etc).

There must be a gender balance of supervising adults on the camp.

A minimum 70% of adults on the camp must be qualified teachers and there must be a minimum of one senior staff member (Student Manager, Leading Teacher, Learning Specialist, Principal, or class member).

Mount Ridley College guarantees that all camps have a staff member with relevant training allocated to first Aid. It is College preference that where possible there are at least two

teachers on camp with Level 2 First Aid qualifications, and the more senior of these teachers is to be designated the First Aid Officer for the duration of the camp.

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.

As part of pre-service training, priority may be given to trainee teachers to attend.

Parents who are trained nurses or doctors or who are known well to the College may be given priority to attend camps.

Where there are more parent volunteers than places, names will be drawn out of a hat.

All volunteers attending College events must have a current Working with Children Clearance check. A record of parents with a current Working with Children Check is kept on file in the Main administration Office.

The College will pay the cost for volunteers attending events and this cost is to be included in the overall costing of the event.

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 must have a current WWCC and is deemed as being out of the adult ratio and would be required to pay their own way. The College will negotiate to obtain transport and accommodation at a reduced rate if possible.

Volunteer and external provider checks

Mount Ridley P-12 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 Clearance card.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Mount Ridley P-12 College will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Mount Ridley P-12 College uses Compass to inform parents about camps and excursions and to seek their consent. Prior to any child attending an excursion, parents/guardians must have provided consent to the school via Compass or a submitted signed Compass form, and must have paid the costs involved. Verbal or hand written permission will not be accepted.

Any Compass printed content forms are to be handed in to the Early Years or Main Administration Offices. It is the Account Manager's responsibility to check these forms and enter the consent into Compass. All forms need to be retained for 75 years.

While all camps are documented on Compass, parents are provided with a documentation pack including consent forms, medical forms, behaviour management contracts, emergency information, student equipment and itineraries. 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 event. Camp documents are to be signed and returned to the Main Administration office where they are passed on to the event organiser. It is their responsibility to check all the documentation, mark the student as consent provided on Compass and pass the relevant information regarding food allergies on to the camp site. All forms need to be taken on the camp and afterwards returned to the Accounts Manager where they will be retained for 75 years.

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, Mount Ridley P-12 College 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. Mount Ridley P-12 College 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), Mount Ridley P-12 College will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

Parent Payments for camps and excursions

Most camps and excursions provided by Mount Ridley P-12 College 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.

Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and finalisations / dates, and families will be given sufficient time to make payments.

Students who have not finalised payment by the required date for camps and excursions provided on a user pays basis will not be able to attend unless the College 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 Help for Families

Mount Ridley P-12 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 with the Accounts Manager or Organising Teacher. The Accounts Manager/Organising Teacher 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](#).

Refunds

If a camp or excursion is cancelled or altered by the College, 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. In line with departmental guidelines, the College 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 College 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. Where the College 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 Engagement Policy*, *Student Code of Conduct* or *Bullying Prevention Policy*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the College Principal or Assistant Principal, or Director of Student Management 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.

Students attending College camps must provide a signed Behaviour Agreement Contract. This document is signed by both the student and their parent/carer and demonstrates that they understand the College's behavioural expectations while on camp and the consequences of not following these expectations.

If on a camp or excursion the Teacher in Charge considers an individual student's behaviour does not meet required standards, then the College 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.

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 be permitted to bring electronic devices (such as iPads, iPods, mobile phones) but these may only be used during times set by the Teacher in Charge. 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.

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, Mount Ridley P-12 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.

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 college's website
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- 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

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

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| Policy last reviewed | June 2023 |
| Consultation | College Council, College Operations |
| Approved by | Principal |
| Next scheduled review date | June 2026 |