

# MOOROOLBARK GRAMMAR

## Camps and Excursions Policy



### Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office.

**Phone:** 03 9727 3032

**Email:** [admissions@mooroolbarkgrammar.vic.edu.au](mailto:admissions@mooroolbarkgrammar.vic.edu.au)

### PURPOSE

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

### SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps, excursions and school sleepovers organised by Mooroolbark Grammar. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Mooroolbark Grammar, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds. The policy should be read together with our other child safety and wellbeing policies, procedures, and codes of conduct. (Refer to the related school policies section at the end of this policy)

### 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.* Adventure activities are included in this definition (regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds or not). An *adventure activity* is an activity that involves greater than normal risk which may include travel into a relatively undeveloped area of the country, confrontation with environmental challenges, remoteness with limited access to telephone and services normally available in everyday life and/or exposure to natural elements with less than the normal physical protection afforded in everyday life.

Activities may include among others: abseiling, bushwalking, canoeing/kayaking, rope courses, orienteering, horse riding, overnight camping, surfing, rafting and cycling. Activities such as bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting and flying ultra-light aircraft are deemed unsuitable.

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Flying foxes may be used at school camps provided:

- safety precautions are taken in its construction and maintenance.
- it can be locked or have the carriage removed when not in use.
- all students are carefully briefed on its use and associated dangers.
- staff supervise all use.
- a safety harness is always used.

### CHILD SAFETY

Mooroolbark Grammar is a child safe organisation which welcomes all children, young people and their families. We are committed to providing environments where our students are safe and feel safe, where their participation is valued, their views respected, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Our child safe policies, strategies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children and students. The school adheres to the [Ministerial Order 1359](#) which sets out how the Victorian Child Safe Standards apply in school environments and will ensure that any arrangements for camps and excursions are developed inclusively to meet the needs of all students.

### POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The principal is responsible for the conduct of all excursions and camps and must ensure an *Excursion Checklist* is completed prior to the activity. The educational purpose of the excursion or camp and its contribution to the curriculum must be clarified and explained. Camps enable students to develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world. An assurance that the proposed activity meets the outcomes of our curriculum and will follow school procedures regarding Child Safety, OH&S and other related policies to the activity.

### Planning

Mooroolbark Grammar will:

- ensure that excursions and camps are planned and approved appropriately.
- ensure that adventure activities are conducted safely.
- ensure camps and adventure activities are planned and approved in accordance with advice from the Governing Board
- ensure that the school obtains informed consent from parents/guardians for their child to participate in an excursion or camp.
- reinforce, complement and extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

Part of the planning process includes conducting risk assessments, to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to minimise the risks associated with each proposed camp or excursion. Mooroolbark Grammar'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 affected locations will be cancelled or

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rescheduled. Planning must cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason (for example, due to forecast of severe weather conditions).

The planning and approvals process is undertaken, in accordance with school policy and Governing Board requirements, which takes into account the following considerations:

- venue selection.
- safety, emergency and risk management.
- informed consent from parents.
- medical information.
- appropriate staffing and supervision.
- student preparation and behaviour.
- requirements for any adventure activities.

### Supervision

Mooroolbark Grammar follows the school's guidelines in relation to supervision of students during excursions and camps (See Yard Duty and Supervision Policy).

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. The duty of care of the school staff to students **cannot** be delegated to a third party.

### 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

Mooroolbark Grammar requires all parent or carers, camp or excursion volunteers and all external providers working directly with our students to have a current Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) card. Before attending an excursion or camp, all volunteers and parent/carer helpers must present a valid WWCC card and proof of ID that is recorded at the school's office. (For more information see the schools *Visitors Policy* and *Volunteers Policy*).

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### 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 *Administration of Medication* policy and the student's signed *Medication Authority Form*. To meet the school's obligations relating to safety, a first aid kit and teacher mobile phone will be taken 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.

### Consent forms and medical information

Mooroolbark Grammar will ensure the excursion meets the requirements to provide appropriate care adhering to school guidelines and implementation plans for those students with identified health and wellbeing needs such as Anaphylaxis and Asthma.

- The school will give parents/guardians, (who are to sign consent forms), sufficient information about the excursion or camp to enable them to make an informed decision. This includes the nature of the proposed activity and degree of supervision.
- Consent forms will be kept at the school with a designated contact person and the teacher-in-charge of the excursion or camp will take a copy of each consent form on the excursion.
- A confidential medical information form will be completed by parents/guardians before each excursion or camp. The teacher-in-charge will take the medical information forms on the excursion or camp and ensure these forms are available to other excursion staff in emergency situations with copies also kept at school (the school will use a school recommended medical form)

**Note:** Mooroolbark Grammar will take reasonable steps to support the inclusion of all students. Students will not be denied attendance at any camp or excursion because of disability or medical condition.

### Venue selection and assessment

Venues will be assessed and selected on the basis of their safety and suitability for the activities proposed. Where possible, venues will be selected based on the recent and first-hand knowledge (for example, through an inspection of the site by at least one member of the planning and supervising staff).

Criteria for assessing venues such as campsites or overnight accommodation venues include:

- health and hygiene of buildings and facilities
- Child Safety policies of the venue

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- activity equipment and the conduct of activities
- certification and qualifications of venue staff
- participant supervision provided
- risks posed by other users of the site
- emergency and risk management plans of venues
- fire precautions
- first aid facilities
- quality assurance and consumer protection
- relevant accreditations and references from other schools.

### 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 will have clearly stated payment amounts and payment finalisation dates. Students who have not finalised payment by the required date will be followed up by the principal to determine whether exceptional circumstances apply.

Mooroolbark Grammar 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, Principal and/or the Organising Teacher.

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.

### 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* and *Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the principal in consultation with the Organising Teacher and/or the Governing Board. Both the parent/carer and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp or excursion.

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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.

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 and Harassment 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 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 external organisation is liable in negligence (liability is not automatic).

Unless otherwise indicated, Mooroolbark Grammar does 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.

### Emergency management

Approved excursions and camps will have an emergency response plan and all excursion staff will be familiar with emergency procedures for each excursion and camp.

When staying at a residential campsite the local emergency procedure must be explained as soon as practicable after arrival and a trial evacuation exercise should be carried out immediately to ensure that procedures are appropriate, and staff and students are familiar with them.

Parents/guardians will be advised of the telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) for the designated school contact person in the event of an emergency. During the excursion or camp, if parents have reason to believe an emergency may have occurred (such as a media report) they will be informed that in the first instance they should call the contact person and not personnel on the excursion as this will keep the telephone lines free at the excursion site.

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Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion will be made by the principal. When required, schools must follow the school's Emergency Management Plan (EMP) and adhere to local procedures (i.e. bushfires) for all off-site activities for all excursions and camps.

In the event of an emergency, accident or injury, staff on the excursion or camp will take emergency action, then immediately notify the principal who should make arrangements as outlined by the Governing Board and/or local emergency services as applicable.

### Additional information

- Staff and students will have appropriate clothing and personal equipment.
- Technical equipment will be in good condition and suitable for the activities undertaken.
- When undertaking excursions and camps planning, the principal, teachers and others involved in the activity (including camps and adventure activities), must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.
- For joint school activities, a nominated coordinating principal (or teacher) will ensure all planning and approval requirements are met.
- Continuous instruction will be provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion or camp.

### COMMUNICATION

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

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website and communications platform
- Included in staff handbook/manual
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Included in transition and enrolment packs
- Discussed at parent information sessions
- Discussed at student forums
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

### FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

#### Related School Policies

- Administration of Medication Policy
- Medical Conditions - Anaphylaxis and Asthma Policies
- Duty of Care Policy

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- Child Safe Policy
- Child Safety Responding and Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- Digital Learning Policy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- First Aid and Care for Ill Students Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Yard Duty and Supervision Policy

### Appendices

#### Appendix A - Camps and Excursions Supervision Ratios

#### POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier as required following any changes in regulations or requirements.

Policy last reviewed	October 2024
Approved by	Principal October 2024
Approved by	School Governing Board October 2024
Next scheduled review date	October 2026



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### APPENDIX A. Camps & Excursions Supervision Ratios

Excursion/Camp ratios			
Type of excursions	Minimum staff	Staff - student ratio	
Local excursions	2	Regular class teacher-student ratios with additional accompanying staff member (as required) with a minimum of 2 staff	
Day excursions	2	1:20 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff	
Adventure activities	2	1: 10 minimum, for specific activities the requirements may be much more.	
Overnight excursions:			
Base camps in residential premises or under canvas	2	1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff	
Study camps in residential premises. <b>Example:</b> Leadership camp.	2	1:15 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff	
Interstate travel	2	1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff	
Overseas travel	2	The following indicates how staff numbers should be calculated, noting these ratios are the minimum required	
		Number of students	Number of staff
		1 to 10	2
		11 to 20	3
		21 to 30	4

The excursion must:

- be under the direct control of a teacher employed by the school at all times, with at least one other excursion staff member present (Note: excursion staff can include a range of adults including parent volunteers and specialist instructors)
- have enough teachers employed by the school to maintain appropriate control of the excursion and of each activity and to provide for the safety and wellbeing of participating students and staff
- have teachers comprising at least half of the excursion staff.

#### How to apply the ratios

A minimum of 2 staff must accompany students on all excursions.

For example:

- if a day excursion includes 16 students, there would need to be a minimum of 2 staff members accompanying the group
- if planning a day excursion for 60 students, there would need to be a minimum of 3 staff members accompanying the group. This meets both the 1:20 staff-student ratio and the requirement that a minimum of two staff accompany students on all excursions.

The need for further staff should be identified through appropriate risk management planning.

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### *Mixed gender groups*

For overnight stays for mixed gender groups the excursion must include staff of at least one person of each sex. In primary schools this requirement may be waived, where staff of each sex are not available.

### **Exceptions to minimum supervision requirements**

#### *Excursions in the local area*

For small group excursions in the local area, a teacher must be responsible for the excursion. However, with the approval of the principal, a small group can be supervised by one or more excursion staff employed by the school who are not teachers (for example, education support class officers such as integration aides and teacher assistants).

#### *Unsupervised excursions for secondary-aged students*

For unsupervised excursions, the excursion must:

- be approved by the principal only:
  - in a small number of instances
  - for secondary-aged students
  - for activities involving small groups of students
- and the teacher responsible for the activity must maintain a formal record of:
  - a description of the activity, including locations
  - the names and ages of students involved
  - the time of leaving and returning to school.

The teacher responsible for the activity must ensure that students have appropriate methods of communication in the event of an emergency.

#### *Transport to and from excursions*

Schools can consider having less than the minimum supervision ratios when transporting students to and from the excursion venue.

Consideration should be given to:

- distance travelled
- type of transportation
- the age, number and individual needs of the students.
- The decision to alter the supervision ratios for transportation to and from the venue should be documented in the risk assessment and controls enacted accordingly.

### **Excursion staff**

Excursion staff must be approved by the principal and may include:

- teachers employed by the school
- other adults on a volunteer or paid basis such as:
  - parents or carers
  - education support class officers
  - community members
  - trainee teachers
  - campsite staff
  - specialist instructors for excursion activities.

**Important:** school students cannot be used as excursion staff.

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Excursion staff who will provide supervision of students and who are not registered teachers must have a Working with Children clearance.

The names of volunteer workers must be recorded for the purposes of volunteer workers insurance.

Where approved excursion staff who are not teachers employed by the school are in attendance they can be included in the staff-student ratio:

- for the duration of a specific activity for which they have a designated supervisory responsibility; or
- for the overall staff-student ratio for the program, where they are on duty and available on the same basis as other staff (usually a 24-hour basis).

**Important:** the specific roles and responsibilities of each staff member (teachers, instructors, campsite staff, volunteers, etc) must be clarified and understood by all staff and students prior to the commencement of the excursion.

### Specialist staff

Schools must:

- ensure that where specialist instructors are employed, they:
  - have the necessary skills or qualifications for the activity
  - have appropriate experience for the age and skill level of the students
- hold appropriate public liability insurance
- while specialist instructors have the technical knowledge and expertise to instruct the students, the school teachers have overall responsibility for the safety and welfare of the students, even where the teachers do not directly provide the actual instruction.

### Staffing definitions

**Staff** – any adult approved by the principal or Governing Board who provides supervisory, instructional or educational elements of the activity or excursion.

**Teacher** – a staff member registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching who provides a supervisory role on a program.

The following roles can be filled by school staff, a teacher or an external provider, or a volunteer:

- **Designated Instructor** – the appointed staff member on a program who provides the lead technical expertise and supervision for the activity.
- **Instructor** – a staff member who provides professional, technical expertise and supervision for the activity.
- **Assistant Instructor** – a staff member who provides assistance to the instructor(s) in the provision of technical expertise and supervision for the activity. An assistant instructor role may be filled by a volunteer.