



OUTDOOR EDUCATION & CAMP POLICY

RATIONALE

The Epping Views Primary School Outdoor Education Policy aims to provide all children with the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive Prep to Year 6 program, gradually extending the time away from home and the type of activities offered.

BROAD GUIDELINES

- To develop the social and emotional skills of being away from home.
- To develop children's independence, self-awareness and responsibility.
- To develop the children's ability to work co-operatively.
- To broaden children's concept and experience of different environments.
- To develop an awareness of and pride in natural environment.
- To develop an awareness that the environment is a place for living and recreation.
- To develop skills and competence in various activities associated with outdoor education.
- To provide direct experience for the implementation of relevant academic programs such as pre and post camp activities.

IMPLEMENTATION

NON-SCHOOL BASED OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

1. The Outdoor Education Program Coordinator will:
 - be aware of and implement the Department of Education regulations.
 - ensure the camps attended by Epping Views PS are accredited school camp venues.
 - collate information regarding the locations, facilities and price rate of camp sites.
 - supervise the planning and organisation of camps and their activities to ensure they follow the aims of the program.
 - support and assist particular Camp Organisers with all aspects of camping.
2. The Camp Organiser (Leader) will:
 - be responsible for all aspects of the camp including planning, safety, organisation and evaluation.
 - be supported and assisted by the Outdoor Education Program Coordinator and attending staff.
 - be responsible for and shall make all on-site decisions until such time as the Principal/Assistant Principal takes charge on site.
 - be made aware of all possible/probable responsibilities that he/she may be confronted with prior to accepting the responsibility.

3. Campsites, Bus Companies used on camps:

- Campsites that Epping Views PS attends will be accredited campsites. Accreditation is a scheme developed by the Department of Education and the Camping Association of Victoria (CAV) which provides safety benchmarks for venues used by school groups.
- Campsites that have gained accreditation will have met 24 requirements. These cover the areas of:
 - Health, hygiene and safety
 - Buildings and facilities
 - Activity equipment and the conduct of activities
 - Campsites administration
 - Emergency procedures
 - Camper supervision
 - Quality assurance and consumer protection for campers
- It is a recommendation by the accreditation group that individual camps seek police checks of any staff they employ.
- Epping Views PS will give preference to campsites that have police checks carried out on all staff.
- Epping Views PS will also give preference to bus companies that agree to police checks of the bus drivers and any ancillary staff that may be used at our camp.
- When we have decided on the campsite and the bus company being used, we should then acquire written confirmation from them of the necessary police checks that have been carried out.
- When bus drivers are required to remain with an overnight excursion, their evening meals and accommodation must be taken at a venue separate from that of the children. If necessary, the cost of this will be incorporated into the overall cost to families for the overnight excursion.
- If these requirements are unable to be fulfilled, the issue will then be taken to School Council for its consideration.

4. Staffing of Camp:

- Camps are to be staffed according to Departmental guidelines and be approved by School Council.
- Where possible teachers of the grades involved should be given preference to attend camps. It is desirable but not necessarily expected that teachers in the grade that are undertaking the camping activities attend that camp.
- Gender balance of staff should also be taken into consideration. Where possible the ratio of women/men supervising on camp should reflect the ratio of girls/boys.
- The camp leader in consultation with camp staff and camp co-ordinator should determine staff attending camp.

5. Parents on School Camps

The Department of Education stipulates that quite high parent-teacher to student ratios must be observed on school camps. In order to meet these ratios it is necessary to involve parents as part of the organising/supervising team.

Parents nominating as part of the organising/supervising team on school camps should understand the high level of responsibility determined by this role.

Parents should also understand that the role is a demanding one requiring high level supervision “round the clock”.

Parent helpers on school camps are obliged to meet with the teachers prior to camp departure. This meeting is for the purpose of providing familiarity of staff and students.

Parent assistance shall be sought at the relevant Information Evening as well as the school newsletter. Parents should apply in writing to the Principal if they wish to assist as a parent-helper.

- School Council will be responsible for approving all parent/helper personnel as recommended by camp coordinators
- Recommendations need to be submitted to Council prior to camp dates.
- The approval will be minuted prior to the departure of the intended camp.
- Gender balance should be taken into consideration.
- School Council will not necessarily approve of all names nominated for assistance on school camps.
- Numbers of applications, as well as experience, shall be a determining factor in selecting such personnel.
- Persons nominating should be of good character.
- Persons selected as parent/helpers will be required to provide information to the school so that working with children checks can be applied for. The school will cover all costs.
- The teacher in charge of the camp will submit a list of preferred parents for approval by School Council. This decision shall be final and binding.

6. Camp Information Nights are to be held prior to the camp permission notes being held out.

7. Children’s placement at camp is on a first-in-first-placed basis.

- As children bring in their deposits and permission forms, the person responsible for camp monies, will place children’s names on a list.
- When there are sufficient children to fill a bus, a second list will be created.
- Children on the second bus will attend camp depending on sufficient numbers of children to fill the second bus, adequate staffing and facilities at the venue to cater for the extra children.
- Maximum number of children able to attend the camp will be placed on original notice to parents.

8. Due consideration should be given to students with disabilities or impairments. Camp sites should be visited or contacted prior to camp to ensure access and facilities are suitable to their needs.

Consultation with the parents should be undertaken at a PSG before the camp to ascertain the level of independence and what assistance needs to be provided. Then an informed decision can be made as to how many Integration Aides, teachers or parents may be needed (in addition to the required ratio), as required by the duty of care as outlined in the Schools of the Future Operating Manual?

9. Whilst on camp, the following emergency procedures will be followed:
- a) A private car, comprehensively insured, will be available at each camp for the purpose of immediate use should an emergency arise.
 - b) Fully detailed lists of children's names with medical information and details of contact information should be kept with the camping staff at all times. Copies of this information should also remain at school.
 - c) A staff member will be designated as the person responsible for administering any medicines. If there are a large number of medicines to be administered a second person may need to be organised. Children with considerable medical issues should not be taken unless suitable arrangements can be made, eg. taken to a local GP for his/her daily medication at the parent's expense.
 - d) It is the parents' responsibility to let teachers know any information regarding the administering of medication. All medicines should be clearly marked with name of the child and the appropriate dosage needed.
 - e) At the earliest convenient time for each camp, the campsite emergency procedures (taking into account the advice of the management), should be defined in written form including a diagram indicating evacuation points. Accompanying this should be detailed contacts and locations of services which may be required urgently, eg. hospital, doctor, fire and state emergency. A copy of this information should also remain at school.
 - f) A first aid day pack needs to be taken on all walks and excursions including children's medications which may be needed during this time.

10. Quality reliable information.

Where possible mobile phones should be provided to staff on camp at a ratio of 1 per 25 children. Other mobile phones brought personally by staff can be included in this equation.

11. Camps do not need to be centred around a SOSE, Science or Technology focus.

12. Children not attending camp are required to attend school and negotiations will be made as to where they are placed. Where possible these children should be involved in camp related activities.

SCHOOL BASED OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

1. The organiser, usually the coordinator of the grade area, will be responsible for planning, safety, organisation and evaluation. The organiser will be supported and assisted by the Outdoor Education Program Coordinator and attending staff.
 2. Sleep-ins are to be staffed according to Departmental guidelines and approved by the School Council. Attempts will be made to have gender balance where possible
 3. The following emergency procedures will be followed during sleep-ins at school.
 - a) Fully detailed lists of children's names with medical histories and contact information should be with sleep-in staff at all times.
 - b) It is the parent's responsibility to let teachers know any information regarding the administering of medication.
 - c) Revise emergency procedures. Detail contacts and locations of services which may be required urgently, eg. hospital, doctor, fire, security and police.
 - d) A first aid pack must be available at all times.
 - e) Children must be signed in and out by staff members.
- In 2009 the following were offered (to be revised for 2010):
 - Prep Breakfast at school
 - Grade 1-2 Breakfast at school
 - Year 3/4/5/6 Camp of two nights duration (three days)

In the future it is possible that the following may be offered each year:

- Breakfast at school
- BBQ dinners
- Sleep-over at school
- Camp of two nights duration
- Camps of three or four night duration

EVALUATION

- Informal and formal discussions between attending staff.
- Appropriate camping literature to be filed in the library.
- Ascertaining of pupils opinions from oral discussion, pupil diaries, etc.
- Completion of camping evaluation form by staff involved.
- School based evaluation, eg. program budgets.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's four-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

February 2009