



Policy Number:	STUDENT 09
Policy Name:	Outdoor Education Policy
Contact Officer:	Deputy Principal – Learning & Teaching
Date Approved by Executive:	May 23, 2022
Date of Next Review:	May 2025
Related Policies:	Camps & Excursion Policy OH & S Policy

PREAMBLE

God is at the centre of our College...Mercy is the heartbeat of the Gospel. We encourage every student to grow in the fullness of life and realise their potential through the bread we break at school, the bread of relationships and the bread of conversation. Let us engage the heart and bring faith to life and life to faith (Thomas Groome).

LEGISLATION

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in *Ministerial Order No. 870*. This policy applies to St Joseph's College staff, including employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy.

CONTEXT

For the purpose of this policy, an excursion is any activity that students participate in outside of college grounds, under staff supervision, and outside of timetabled Outdoor Education class time; a camp is any activity that students participate in outside of College grounds, under staff supervision, that is a minimum of one night in duration.

1. RATIONALE

1.1 Outdoor Education provides students with the opportunity to significantly broaden their learning experiences, to participate in a variety of new outdoor learning environments, and to participate in experiences that are unable to be offered in a classroom environment.

1.2 These activities should develop skills, build confidence and provide opportunities to understand and appreciate more about God's creation. A key aim is to foster a closer relationship with the natural environment and to allow students to examine their personal spirituality and their connection to the land.

1.3 It is expected that students will develop more positive relationships with other students and staff. The development of leadership skills is fundamental to the Outdoor Education experience.

1.4 Outdoor Education addresses areas of fitness, health and wellbeing, highlighting how the environment can help with relaxation when removing oneself from the stresses of school/work. Also addressed are factors such as minimal impact, teamwork and problem solving.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 St Joseph's College fully supports Outdoor Education (OE) as part of the Years 9 to 12 curriculum and understands that camp attendance is an integral part of Outdoor Education programs.

2.2 To specify the requirements that students must meet to participate in camps and excursions, and to outline the role of the College in supporting our students.

2.3 To provide students with challenging, exciting and safe outdoor education activities and learning experiences that complement, enhance and extend the classroom program.

- i. Increase student's appreciation and care for the natural environment.
- ii. Advance student's skills in a range of contexts.
- iii. Provide opportunities for students to develop a lifelong involvement in recreational and vocational activities in the natural environment.
- iv. Increase student's awareness of, and respect for, the similarities and differences between cultures, groups and individuals.
- v. To provide all students with the opportunity to participate in a sequential camping program.
- vi. To provide shared class experiences and a sense of group cohesiveness and unity.
- vii. To foster leadership through building resourcefulness, independence, balanced judgement, cooperation, and tolerance. This will naturally complement the Student Leadership Program in the college.
- viii. To encourage opportunities for students to enjoy the natural environment away from the constant use of technology and social media. This includes the minimal use of phones and the absence of tablets, computers, video games, etc.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 St Joseph's College will provide a variety of challenging outdoor education experiences, in order to provide the best possible learning opportunities and experiences for students.

3.2 The college will communicate effectively and consult with parents/guardians during key planning stages including accommodation and transport arrangements according to the Camps & Excursion Policy.

3.3 The college will work with parents/guardians to remove barriers to participation for both staff and students.

3.4 All Outdoor Education Programs will be regularly evaluated and reviewed with a view to providing the best experiences possible for students.

3.5 The college will comply with all regulations and guidelines for safety and supervision including adherence to Child Safe Standards. Detailed risk management including risk

assessments must be completed at least one week prior to departure. There will be a zero tolerance for any unsafe practices or activities which present a serious potential for harm to staff and/or students.

3.6 The college will ensure all teachers are provided with relevant training for outdoor education activities and have the necessary qualifications to supervise and/or lead the activities proposed. Where skills and/or training are not held by college staff, the college will seek, employ or engage appropriately trained professionals to support college staff.

3.7 The program will be developed sequentially throughout the college. The college will ensure that parents are notified of all excursions or camps. Dates of camps will be communicated to students at the beginning of each Semester; parents can access camp dates via the calendar on the college website.

3.8 Information regarding any excursion or camp will be provided to parents including dates, location, staff attending, staff contact details, meal requirements, itinerary, clothing & equipment list and a permission form.

3.9 Only accredited sites and organisations will be used where the college contracts outdoor education experiences outside of college staff.

3.10 Camps are a compulsory part of the Outdoor Education units and all students and parents will be informed that a lack of willingness to participate in the camp experience will require the student to select an alternate subject.

3.11 In the lead up to any camp/excursion, college staff will deliver curriculum that fully prepares students for all activities undertaken. This includes tent setup, camp cooking and any recreational activity. Details of lead-up sessions will be conducted at the discretion of the classroom teacher and based on curriculum.

3.12 Parents attending as volunteers must have a Working with Children's Check and be willing to provide medical information and contact details as per staff members of the college. A First Aid qualification would be an advantage and highly desirable. Any additional qualifications relevant to the activity must be checked by the college before the activity to ensure authentic and current qualifications.

3.13 The college reserves the right to restrict attendance where students have been deemed to be an unacceptable risk. Parents/guardians will be notified if a student is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in an Outdoor Education experience due to poor behaviour at school. If the unsatisfactory behaviour continues, the student will then be excluded from the experience. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, Deputy Principal or House Leader in consultation with the classroom and/or organising teacher and Learning Area Leader and put in writing.

3.14 Parents will be requested to collect their child from the excursion if their child exhibits behaviour that is considered seriously dangerous or unacceptable. The teacher in charge, in consultation with the Principal and/or Deputy Principal will make this decision. Costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent.

3.15 All Outdoor Education experiences require approval as per Camps and Excursion Policy; information presented for approval will include:

- The educational aims and objectives of the experience.

- The names of all adults attending and their expertise and experience.
- Travel arrangements and costs.
- Venue details and an itinerary of events.
- Risk assessment and the procedures followed to ensure the safety of the students.
- Details of students excluded from camp.

4. STUDENT AND FAMILY CONTRIBUTION

4.1 As camps and excursions are Curriculum-based, the costs are covered by the St Joseph's College Global Fee; this includes (but is not limited to) the costs of hiring transport, equipment, and instructors.

4.2 Most meals and food requirements will be covered by the college. Parents/guardians will be advised of any meal's students are required to purchase by formal communication prior to departure; however, specific food items will not be stated as student choices are based on personal preference and allergy requirements.

4.3 Families may be expected to purchase equipment and items of clothing based on itemised clothing and equipment lists that students will receive prior to camps/excursions. The college will not subsidise the cost of personal clothing or equipment unless special circumstances exist and arrangements are made with the Business Manager.

4.4 Parents/guardians are required to either return a signed permission form or provide consent via Parent Access Module (allowing or denying student participation) to the college prior to a camp, this should include any changes in student medical information.

4.5 If a student seriously breaches behaviour expectations as per 3.14, the parents/guardians may be asked to collect their student from the excursion or camp at their own cost.

5. STUDENT PARTICIPATION

5.1 Attendance on excursions and camps is not compulsory. However, non-attendance may impact on a student's potential to complete a unit or subject to a satisfactory standard.

5.1.1 Non-attendance at an excursion or camp when enrolled in a 'competency-based' subject (such as VET) will most likely leave students unable to demonstrate competency in specific activities and will be marked accordingly.

5.2 Students must participate in camp lead-up sessions to develop skill and knowledge. Additionally, during the lead up sessions, students must demonstrate competence in planned activities to their classroom teacher as this links specifically to OH & S when on camp.

5.2.1 If a student is unable to demonstrate competence in a planned activity during lead-up sessions, their attendance at the upcoming camp will be reviewed by their classroom teacher.

5.2.2 If a student does not participate in any lead-up sessions, for any reason, they will be unable to attend the upcoming camp unless they are able to demonstrate competence in an activity to their classroom teacher using an alternative method.

5.3 If a student seriously breaches behaviour expectations while attending a camp or excursion, the classroom teacher will contact the college. Depending on the circumstances, the camp or excursion may be cancelled immediately, or the student sent home.

5.4 In the event of poor behaviour, as per 5.3, consequences will be determined with the assistance of the House Leaders and Deputy Principal - Students and then enforced.

5.5 Any parent/guardian grievances regarding student attendance of a camp, or policy interpretation should first be brought to attention of the classroom teacher and then the Deputy Principal - Students.

6. STAFF REQUIREMENTS

6.1 Staff must regularly undertake relevant professional learning to ensure that skills and qualifications are kept up to date; the college (including Learning Area Leader) will support staff in regards to professional learning opportunities.

6.2 Staff must complete relevant camp/excursion EMS 360 requirements prior to departure and have all camps or excursions approved by the appropriate leadership personnel. Additionally, any overnight camps must be approved by the Deputy Principal - Learning and Teaching.

6.3 Where applicable, staff will ensure that they have permission forms for all students prior to departure for camp or excursion. In any instance where a permission form is not returned, the staff member may gain verbal permission from the student's parent/guardian and ask the parent/guardian to give written permission via an email to the college Student Office.

6.4 Staff leading an Outdoor Education camp will ensure they have updated medical information for all students attending the camp either in hard copy or digital format.

6.4 Staff will notify all college teachers, First Aid, House Leaders, Student Office and Wellbeing of the students expected to participate in the camp or excursion. A minimum notice period of two weeks prior to departure is expected.

6.5 In the case of an emergency during an excursion or camp, staff will follow details outlined in the completed risk assessment and notify relevant emergency services (where appropriate) and the college. Staff will then continue to follow risk assessment details to manage the situation at the camp or excursion. Parents will be notified by the college under the direction of College Executive.

7. REFERENCES

- Supervision of Students on Camps, Excursions, Outdoor Activities and Tours - CEOM
- <http://cevn.cecv.catholic.edu.au/assets/0/72/84/116153/1acb9859-e0e1-4398-84af-4f9e83c4f330.pdf>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/guidance/supervision>
- <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/excursions/policy>
- Overnight Excursion/Camp Request Form (yellow)
- Offsite Activity Form