



GEELONG HIGH SCHOOL

Camps & Excursions Policy

PURPOSE

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

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Geelong High School. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Geelong High School, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds, and to school sleep-overs (e.g. GPEP sleep out for Youth Homelessness).

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. Geelong High School 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 or intercampus travel.

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 website under Adventure Activities, at the following link: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/safety/pages/adventure.aspx>

Note: workplace learning activities (such as work experience) and intercampus travel are not considered school excursions.

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. Students are exposed to the "real world".

Besides being exposed to and acquiring new academic and practical skills, knowledge and understanding, camps and excursions also provide the opportunity for students to acquire a range of social skills such as making friends and building relationships, collaboration, teamwork, tolerance and co-operation.

Camps and excursions also enable the development of independence skills such as decision-making, leadership, prioritising, perseverance, effort and taking responsibility. Exposure to environments outside a student's comfort zone also encourage students to be resourceful, think critically and creatively and problem-solve.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school will follow the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Excursions and Activities](#). For camps and excursions requiring school council approval, our school will also follow the Department's School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors](#).

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. Geelong High School'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 effected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason.

Geelong High 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.

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

Note: In most instances the organising Teacher is also the TIC. On some (rare) occasions, when the Organising Teacher does not attend the camp or excursion, the TIC is the teacher attending and leading the organisation and running of the camp/excursion.

Supervision

Geelong High School 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.

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/TIC 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

Geelong High School 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 Check card.

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Geelong High School will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Geelong High 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, such as the annual Swimming, Athletics and Cross-country, and Eastern Park sporting/PE events, Geelong High 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. Geelong High School will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through an on-line Compass email. As mentioned above, for local excursions that occur on a recurring basis (for example weekly outings to the local Eastern Park ovals for PE/sports lessons), Geelong High School will notify parents once only prior to the commencement of the recurring event.

Cost of camps and excursions, refunds and support

At Geelong High School, we have a range of camps, excursions and activities that are considered either essential learning items for students in relation to them achieving improved curriculum outcomes, and as such are deemed as compulsory to attend; or optional items requiring attendance only if parents/carers choose to pay the cost for participation.

Whilst we expect that all parents/carers will pay for the costs of their child attending any camp, excursion or activity, whether it be essential or optional; for any camp, excursion or activity that has been deemed as an essential learning item, the school will not prevent the student from attending if payment has not been made. Students cannot be excluded from attending camps, excursion or activities that are deemed as essential learning items.

However, for those camps, excursions or activities that have been deemed as optional, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed to by the Principal prior to the event, if the cost has not been paid by parents/carers, the student cannot attend. 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 not be allowed to attend unless the Principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.

Geelong High School 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. 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 the CSEF and the application form are available at [Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund](#).

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.

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 mobile phone will be taken by teachers on all camps and excursions. Students with asthma or severe allergies must ensure they have appropriate medication (such as asthma medication & pump or epipen) with them on the camp or excursion.

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.

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* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal or Assistant Principal, in consultation with the Teacher In Charge. Both the parent/carer and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp or excursion.

