

# **St Benedict's School**

## **Applecross – Policy Statement**

### **School Camps and Excursions**

Released: 2002  
Reviewed: 2005  
Reviewed: 2010  
Due for Review: 2015  
Reviewed: 2016

#### **RATIONALE**

The Church speaks of Catholic schools as aiming to foster the integration of faith and life and the integration of culture and faith. These aims underpin every activity of the Catholic school's life and curriculum (Mandate Letter, 11-17).

#### **DEFINITIONS:**

'School camps and excursions' are defined as activities generally conducted away from the school campus for educational and/or religious purposes. In special circumstances, a camp or excursion could take place at a school campus. 'Camps' would normally involve an overnight stay whereas 'excursions' would normally involve single-day trips.

'Educational programme' shall be defined by the School Education Act (1999) Clause 4 Definitions, 'educational programme'.

'Integral' to the educational programme shall mean a component that is compulsory for all students (eg a class/year level retreat).

'Incidental' to the educational programme shall mean a component that is optional for students (a voluntary overseas excursion).

#### **PURPOSE**

1. Build positive relationships with classmates and staff
2. Develop leadership skills
3. Develop independence and self-management skills
4. Have deeper learning experiences related to the curriculum and real world situations
5. Develop an appreciation of God's natural world
6. Know what social responsibility is (safety first, manners, inclusion, working with others they may not be familiar with)
7. Have an enjoyable and enriching experience where the memories will be fond and the lessons last with them for a lifetime

## **PRINCIPLES**

1. School camps and excursions are part of the educational program offered by the school.
2. Maximum emphasis is placed on the safety and well-being of all the participants. Child Protection procedures shall be known to all staff. Students will be advised of developmentally appropriate, personal safety strategies.
3. School camps and excursions are to be regarded as an extension of the school. The same code of conduct expected during school hours is expected of all students, staff and supervisors for the duration of the camp or excursion.
4. Pastoral care systems shall be in place to support the needs of all students.
5. A duty of care exists at all times, as a teacher/student relationship exists throughout the camp or excursion.
6. In planning school camps and excursions consideration of the needs of students and their families shall be taken.
7. Behaviour Management, Bullying and Harassment, Child Protection and other school policies and processes shall continue to be applicable. Appropriate modifications shall be made to the consequences for unacceptable behaviour and staff, students and families shall be advised of these prior to the camp or excursion.
8. The Principal shall consider the financial burden on families for sending students to camps or excursions. Provision shall be made by the school so that no student is prevented from attending camps or excursions, which are an integral part of the educational programme, on financial grounds.
9. Staff shall ensure that appropriate prayer/liturgical experiences form an integral part of the camp or excursion programme.

## **CAMP STRUCTURE/FORMAT**

1. Year 4 to have a sleepover at school with a curriculum focus (end of term 3)
2. Year 5 to have a two night 3 day camp to be held in the metro area with the focus being on leadership and preparing students for their roles in year 6. Out of this camp students will have a really good idea of what a leader is and what leadership role they feel they should pursue. (Early Term 4)
3. Year 6 to have a four night camp outside the metro area eg Midwest, Southwest, Great Southern or Goldfields. The camp will have a multi focus around leadership and teamwork, building confidence and deeper curriculum opportunities. (Term 1)

Phase in Period – 2017 - Year 4 overnighter, year 5 two night three day leadership in metro area, Year 6 week at Woodman Point –metro.  
- 2018 -Follow new format as above.

## PROCEDURES

1. The Principal shall approve all school camps and excursions.
2. Students shall not be allowed to attend a school camp or excursion unless written permission is granted by the parent. The permission note shall outline details such as the method of transport and the activities to be undertaken.
3. The school shall make provision so that no student is prevented from attending camps or excursions on financial hardship.
4. The class teacher and assistant principal will hold an information session for parents regarding the school camp around itinerary, expectations of behaviour and purpose of the camp.
5. Parents to assist on camp will be chosen on skillsets that may be of value on the camp. Full briefing of their role and expectations will be given well before the camp with the class teacher and the assistant principal. A volunteer's Working With Children Check will be required.
6. Regular photo updates of camps will be available on the school website.
7. School camps and excursions form part of a school's curriculum programme and therefore are to be attended by students. Where parents have any issues regarding the attendance of their child/children on school camps or excursions these issues shall be discussed with the Principal. Care shall be taken to protect the right of parents to decide whether or not to send their children to school camps.
8. Parents wanting to know how they can prepare their child for school camp should see Addendum 1 and this should be handed out at parent information sessions.
9. Where a student does not attend a school camp or excursion the school shall provide an alternative educational programme.
10. Planning for school camps and excursions shall be in accordance with the School Camps and Excursions - Guidelines for Catholic Schools and cover:
  - The medical requirements of participants.
  - The students to adult ratio.
  - The medical kit required and the first aid qualifications of staff in attendance.
  - The duty of care of staff, including a ban on intoxicating substances. A volunteer's Working With Children Check will be required.
  - Insurance cover
  - Transport arrangements, including drivers' licences
11. The student ratio for camps and excursions at St Benedict's School should be no less than 1:10. A ratio of 1:5 is desirable.
12. At the conclusion of the camp a detailed report shall be submitted by the camp supervisor to the Principal. The report shall cover:
  - The adequacy of the camp site
  - Recommendations for the future use of the camp site
  - The overall management of the camp
  - Any injuries that may have occurred
  - The achievement or otherwise of the objectives of the camp
  - Other information relating to specific incidents on the camp
  - Any other information that may assist in the planning of future camps.

13. Every effort will be made by the school to ensure a member of staff going on school camp has had adequate experience in that area.

14. When during the course of an excursion

- A student suffered an injury or
- Experienced ill health or
- Where an incident related to student discipline, safety, or any serious consequences occurred,

A report shall be submitted to the Principal by the teacher in charge of the excursion, within 5 days of return.

## Addendum 1

### **How to Prepare Your Child For School Camp**

**Talk to your child.** When the opportunity to attend school camp arises, ask your kids how they feel about it. Are they excited by the idea? Do they have any fears? During this conversation you may be able to discern any anxieties or unnecessary mental obstacles, and reassure them with your own positive school camp experiences from your own childhood. Be positive by saying things like, "This will be fun, you'll enjoy the challenges."

**Reduce the sense of unknown.** Ask the teacher if you can have a rough breakdown of the daily schedule at camp. This way you can help your child envisage all the fun activities and realise that there is a beginning, middle and end to their stay. Often kids can make rooming requests to be with their friends – ask the teacher if this is possible and explain you are helping your child manage a little anxiety.

**You could try sleepovers.** Ideally, your child is used to the occasional sleepover at a friend or family members' home. Remind them of their past successes. If your child refuses sleepovers or regularly calls you in tears at midnight needing to come home, you may need to work with them in the months before camp to reduce their anxiety. Macquarie University runs the Cool Kids program for children between 7 and 17 years of age, which may be worth exploring. They offer online, telephone and CD-based outreach support for families who aren't able to attend the Sydney campus.

**Practise 'independence' skills at home.** Does your child do their hair, remember to clean their teeth, know how to apply sunscreen and turn the shower taps on and off in the right order? There are lots of simple skills they can practise to feel more confident about being away from home.

**Prepare, make lists, and pack together.** When your child brings home the list of clothes and toiletries they need for camp, get them to help you find (or shop for), then label their things. It's exciting for them to help prepare and pack, but it will also help them be aware of all the things that need to come back home again!

**Keep communication with school staff.** Your child's teacher has probably taken hundreds of kids to camp over the years. They understand that children and parents are stepping outside their comfort zones for the first school camp. Don't be afraid to send a note to the teachers who will be supervising your child to raise any concerns you have. They'll appreciate the extra information as this makes their time at camp easier too.

**Keep positive.** Telling your child you believe they're ready for school camp and they'll have a great time helps your child believe it too.

School camp is a great opportunity for your child to push their boundaries, discover new friends, deepen their knowledge of school curriculum and experience outdoor adventures first hand.