CAMPS AND EXCURSIONS

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact Gisborne Secondary College on 03 5428 3691 or gisborne.sc@education.vic.gov.au.

PURPOSE

To explain to our school community the processes and procedures Gisborne Secondary College uses when planning and conducting camps, excursions and adventure activities for students.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all camps and excursions organised by Gisborne Secondary College. This policy also applies to adventure activities organised by Gisborne Secondary College, regardless of whether or not they take place on or off school grounds.

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. Gisborne Secondary College follows 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;

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 in the department's Policy and Advisory Library: Excursions - including camps and adventure activities

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.

For all camps and excursions, including adventure activities, our school follows the department's Excursions Policy.

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. Gisborne Secondary College's risk assessment will include consideration of arrangements for supervision of students and consideration of the risk of bushfire or other natural disaster activity in the excursion location. In the event the Bureau of Meteorology forecasts a Catastrophic fire danger rating day, excursions or camp activities in affected locations will be cancelled or rescheduled. Planning will also cover arrangements for cancelling, recalling or altering the camp or excursion for any other reason.

Gisborne Secondary College 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 will ensure that there is an alternative educational program available and appropriate supervision for those students not attending the camp or excursion.

Supervision

Gisborne Secondary College follows the department's guidelines in relation to supervision of students during excursions and camps.

All excursion staff (including parent/carer 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/carer volunteers

Parents and carers 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

Gisborne Secondary College 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.

Additionally, all volunteers will be provided with Gisborne Secondary College's specific Volunteers Induction and Pack

Parent/carer consent

For all camps and excursions, other than local excursions, Gisborne Secondary College will provide parents/carers with a specific consent form outlining the details of the proposed activity. Gisborne Secondary College uses Compass to inform parents/carers 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, Gisborne Secondary College 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. Gisborne Secondary College will also provide advance notice to parents/carers of an upcoming local excursion through Compass.

Parent Payments for camps and excursions

Most camps and excursions provided by Gisborne Secondary College enhance and broaden the schooling experience of our students but are not a mandatory component of our curriculum. These activities are provided on a user-pays basis in accordance with the department's Parent Payments Policy.

Consent forms will have clearly stated payment amounts and finalisations dates, and families will be given sufficient time to make payments.

Students who have not finalised payment by the required date for camps and excursions provided on a user pays basis will not be able to attend unless the principal determines exceptional circumstances apply.

Where a camp or excursion is provided as part of the standard curriculum requirements, parents/carers may be invited to make a voluntary contribution, but all students will be able to attend regardless of whether their parents/carers contribute.

Financial Help for Families

Gisborne Secondary College makes 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 Finance Manager. The Finance 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.

Refunds

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 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.

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* or *Bullying Prevention Policy*. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the principal or assistant principal, in consultation with the organising teacher. Both the parent/carer and the student will be informed of this decision prior to the camp or excursion.

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* and *Bullying Prevention Policy*.

Electronic Devices

Students are permitted to bring electronic devices (such as iPads, iPods, mobile phones) but these may only be used during times set by the teacher in charge. Students are responsible for the care of any personal electronic device brought to a camp or excursions and the school will not be responsible for lost or damaged devices.

Accident and Ambulance Cover

Any costs associated with student injury rest with parents/carers unless the department is liable in negligence (liability is not automatic).

Unless otherwise indicated, Gisborne Secondary College and the department do 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

COMMUNICATION

This policy is communicated to our school community in the following way:

- Included in staff induction processes and staff training
- Available publicly on our school's website
- Discussed at staff briefings/meetings as required
- Discussed at parent information nights/sessions
- Reminders in our school newsletter
- Hard copy available from school administration upon request

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following department polices and guidelines:

- Excursions Policy
- Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund
- Parent Payments Policy

The following school policies are also relevant to this Camps and Excursions Policy:

- Duty of Care Policy
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Medication Administration Policy
- Statement of Values and School Philosophy
- Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy
- Volunteer Policy

POLICY REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Policy last reviewed	September 2026
Consultation	School Council, 9th September 2026
Approved by	Principal, September 2026
Next scheduled review date	September 2030