



EMMAUS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CANBERRA

WH&S Policy 3-2
Off-Campus Education
(Camps and Excursions)

Updated
March 2017

Vision/Purpose

Emmaus exists to partner with parents, in providing a Christ-centred, Biblically-grounded and academically-rigorous education, which enables students to grow in wisdom and character, to the glory of God.

Values

1. Caring for Others

At Emmaus, we value, care for and respect each other because we are all made in the image of God. We partner with parents to care for and develop the whole person- body, soul and spirit. We foster a sense of belonging, celebrate one another's achievements and choose to be grateful for our school and each other. We are a community that learns in a fun, creative, encouraging and generous environment.

2. Striving for Mastery

At Emmaus, we encourage students to strive for excellence in all aspects of life: in study, work, and in relationships with God and with people. We believe God equips every person with gifts and abilities. We seek to instill in our students a strong desire to apply their utmost to what they do, an attribute that will long outlive their school years. Students are encouraged to master and apply academic and life skills in order to make the most of their opportunities in later life. Our goal is to equip students with the necessary skills and understanding to make wise and Godly choices, and to live resilient, fulfilled, and productive lives.

3. Equipping for Service

At Emmaus, our motivation for service is the love that Christ has shown us: his life of servant leadership is the example we seek to follow. Staff at Emmaus model integrity, accountability and the value of excellence in our work. We strive to equip students with both the desire and the skills to make a difference in the lives of others. We aim to grow students who are rich in Godly wisdom and noble character, and find their security in the love of Christ.

WH&S Policy WHS 3-2

Off-Campus Education

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| Prepared by | ECS WH&S Committee |
| Date prepared | August 2016 |
| Date approved by the WHS Committee: | March 2017 |
| Monitored by | Principal |
| Review by | ECS WH&S Committee |
| Date for review | March 2019 |
| Status | Final |
| Policy Pertains to: | Staff, volunteers, contractors |
| File Details: | J:\All School\Policies Master\ECS Policies\ECS WH&S Policies |

Version History

| Version | Date | Notes |
|---------|------------|---|
| 1.0 | Aug 2016 | Prepared by CEN HUB for ECS WH&S Committee |
| 1.1 | March 2017 | Updated by W.Morris |
| 1.2 | March 2017 | Updated sections on rationale and cost by E Hofsink |
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Relevant Legislation

Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (ACT)
Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (ACT)
Education Act 1990 (ACT)
Australian Education Act 2013
Australian Education Amendment Bill 2014
Disability Discrimination Act (Cth)1992
Disability Discrimination and other Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act (Cth) 2009
ACT Anti-Discrimination Act (1975)
ACT Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (2004)

Reference

Disability Standards for Education, 2005
National School Improvement Tool, DEEWR, 2012

1 INTRODUCTION

Off-campus education (camps and excursions) at ECS are seen an integral part of the school curriculum. They are an extension of the pastoral care component where students are engaged in challenging but rewarding experiences outside normal classroom lessons. It provides a unique opportunity where staff and students can build relationship, grow friendship and see each other in a different environment than that of the classroom. It extends the range of learning situations available to students; including circumstances that are challenging and unfamiliar to them, in order to develop initiative, perseverance and character.

It allow the school to access facilities not otherwise available. Examples might include:

- Local excursions, trips to specific facilities in other locations
- Trips to centres such as Sydney and Canberra to access sites of educational value
- Activity-based camps and hikes
- Sporting events, and the use of specialised sporting facilities

Aims for ECS Camping Program

- The main aims for our camps are to support students in their development of resilience, adaptability, social maturity, accepting responsibility, developing competence, developing knowledge, growing relationally and experiencing God's world. To expand on these aims a little bit more, here are a few thoughts that may provide some context:
- In a world that can be intimidating and overwhelming, having succeeded in adventure experiences and physical challenges builds a self-concept that involves an attitude of resilience and 'can do' attitude. Spending time away from home helps students become more independent.
- The world changes rapidly and part of coping with life is to respond successfully to changing circumstances. An education limited to classroom experiences cannot adequately prepare one for all that life presents. Learning takes place in and beyond the classroom.
- Camps make us part of a residential community where teamwork is essential. These temporary experiences challenge us to relate to others in a positive way, playing our part in a team 24 hours a day.
- Young people need to have opportunities to experience real consequences for their actions in a risk managed environment. If you pitch your tent badly, you have to live with it falling down!
- Our camp program requires students to grow in skills. Whether it be learning specific skills or acquiring the general ability to problem solve, these competencies are things that stay with people to be applied in future experiences.
- The various camp venues provide first-hand experience that relates directly to classroom based curriculum.
- God's creation is wonderful and diverse. Our camping program takes students to unique natural and urban environments that build a better understanding and appreciation of creation. Often, school camps present an economical way to gain experiences that families cannot easily provide independently.
- The unforgettable experiences on school camps are ideal ways to build a bond between teachers and students. It is often in these experiences that there are opportunities for mentoring, encouragement and speaking God's word into young lives.

- As we grow and refine our camping program, much effort will be invested in making our camp experiences affordable, enjoyable, challenging and safe for all our students.

2 STRUCTURE

Camps will be structured to be age appropriate. This will allow teachers to deliver camps that will benefit specific year groups specifically. The camp break down will be:

- Year 3 – 1 night nearby
- Year 4 – 1 night further from home, curriculum focused
- Year 5 – 2 nights, curriculum focused
- Year 6 – 2 nights, leadership, team work focused
- Year 7/8 – Separate camps for boys and girls with a three day duration
- Year 9 – combined bush walk for four days
- Year 10 – Retreat

All camps will be run as economically as possible to reduce the cost to parents.

Although some activities are allowed to be outsourced, staff are expected to engage with students in running the majority of activities themselves.

3 CHRISTIAN RATIONALE

Emmaus Christian School (ECS) is responsible for providing an educational environment and curriculum that fosters students' health and development: spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and socially.

Activities away from the school should encourage students to experience God's world, and their place in it, in a structured way that also promotes the development of individuality and creativity, while fostering responsibility. Shared experiences in an off-campus setting encourage students in creating a sense of community, as they work together in different contexts and rely on each other in various ways.

The off-campus education programme is an important component of the holistic education of each student, broadening their perspective and experience, and training them to be responsible Christian citizens in every sphere of their lives.

...train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 1 Timothy 4:7b-8

4 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document sets out the policies and procedures to provide for a safe environment for all off-campus school activities. It applies to all school activities conducted off-campus.

5 WHO MUST COMPLY

| <i>Responsibilities</i> | <i>Evidence of Compliance</i> |
|---|---|
| Principal | |
| Ensure awareness of policy & procedures for off-campus activity | Planning meeting minutes |
| Review & give approval for all off-campus activities | Proposal form |
| Director of Studies | |
| Ensure teachers trained in planning and running off-site activities | Planning meeting minutes; CPL calendar |
| Section Coordinators | |
| Review & approve the activity proposal before submitting to Principal | Proposal form |
| Organising Teachers | |
| Ensure planning, organising & running of off-campus activity according to this policy/ procedures | Proposal form |
| Follow the Activity Planning Checklist for planning | Planning checklist |
| Staff & volunteers | |
| Take part in Risk Assessment process for activity | Planning meeting minutes |
| Follow all WHS directives from the Organising Teacher | |
| Be aware of WHS hazards, risks & be alert to unexpected changes | Planning meeting minutes; Risk Assessment |

6 DEFINITIONS

Off-Campus Education:

- Use of environmental stimuli as an aid to learning
- Educational experiences in new, or unfamiliar circumstances outside the regular classroom
- Life experiences outside the classroom
- First hand learning about God’s creation
- Camps and excursions
- Off-campus school sport

Organising Teacher: The staff member running an on-campus, or off-campus, activity

7 POLICY

- (a) The Principal must approve all proposals for excursions.
- (b) All students at Emmaus Christian School are expected to take part in off-campus activities that are organised for their class or group unless special circumstances prevent involvement.

7.2 Student Welfare

- (a) The welfare and safety of students and staff guide the development of all learning activities of Emmaus Christian School.
- (b) Students with special needs or disabilities shall have support or modifications made to the programme as far as is practicable to allow full inclusion.
- (c) The Principal has discretion to exclude students at any stage who present a risk to safety; or whose behaviour has not met standards or conditions of their Behaviour Modification Plan. (Discipline Policy) Prior to the excursion, they will be informed of the grounds for potential exclusion, and be given specific targets for improvement.

7.3 Risk Assessment

Off-campus activities require accurate risk assessment to ensure that new environments are safe for students and staff and to minimise the effects of unexpected events.

This includes:

- Consultation with students, staff, parents and external providers regarding the nature of the excursion and the potential hazards
- Providing full details of the excursion to students and their parents
- Ensuring all students have suitable clothing and safety equipment for the excursion
- Developing a supervision strategy and ensuring there are supervisors with appropriate skills and experience (including first aid)
- Ensuring there are appropriate emergency response procedures in place.
- Conducting due diligence on all external providers involved in an excursion to ensure their competence and compliance with WHS regulations
- Requesting from parents up-to-date details of any medical conditions which may provide a heightened risk to a student on an excursion
- Ensuring the skills required for a particular activity are appropriate for a student's capacity
- Ensuring appropriate insurance coverage is in place

7.4 Staff Responsibilities

- (a) Excursions are organised with section coordinators with a focus on reinforcement of topic learning and KLA specific outcomes.
- (b) All staff will consider how to manage the risks in planning and carrying out any off-campus activity.
- (c) The potential educational benefits must be weighed against the risks involved, taking into account the age, competence and trustworthiness of the students.
- (d) Individual staff and the school are responsible for maintaining a safe and supportive environment in all activities, and taking steps to minimise and manage all risks to participants.
- (e) Staff will plan for contingencies and, wherever possible, allow for unexpected changes, adopting a risk management mindset throughout any activity.

7.5 Camp Cost

- (a) Parents will be invoiced a camp levy or levies at the start of each school year.
- (b) The school will endeavour to keep camp costs as low as possible.
- (c) The cost of camps can include parent volunteer cost but needs approval from the respective coordinator first.
- (d) Camps are seen as part of the curriculum and are therefore not voluntary for students.
- (e) The school will not exempt any student from camp unless it has been approved by the Principal. Camp fees in the case of students given an exemption will still be payable.

8 PROCEDURES

8.1 Planning

- (a) Have a clear educational rationale for conducting an off-campus activity; to be inserted on the Activity Proposal – On-Campus or Off-Campus form.
- (b) Develop reasonable aims for the activity.
- (c) Consider a number of possible activities, sites, etc, to achieve the aims. Issues to consider may include:
 - A suitable site for the students involved
 - Suitable accommodation
 - Foreseeable danger
 - Health and hygiene requirements
 - Special access for students with disabilities
 - Access in case of emergencies
- (d) Conduct a risk assessment in conjunction with site managers and other members of your team (both staff and volunteer parents) and outline emergency procedures and areas of responsibility. (Appendix: Identifying Hazards)
- (e) Ensure a team member holds a current First Aid Certificate; and that First-Aid Kits are checked and taken with the group; including Epi-pens and student medications.
- (f) Inform parents within an appropriate time frame.
- (g) Train staff, students and volunteers, so that:
 - Everyone is prepared for each activity
 - Expert help is consulted, if required
 - Everyone is aware of dangers
- (h) Obtain medical information for students if away overnight.

- (i) Front Office staff informed of outline of programme: names of students, teachers, other supervising adults, transport, emergency contact, times of departure and return.
- (j) Teachers must complete a Change of Routine form; and leave work for any classes at school that they would normally teach while they are away.
- (k) Where participation in an excursion is considered by a parent to be unsuitable for their child should be discussed personally with the teacher, Section Coordinator or Principal. Exemptions will be granted, by the Principal, only when there are significant medical or personal circumstances which would result in harm to the student if they attended.
- (l) The school mobile phone, and charger, is to be taken on all excursions and camps. The phone is to be signed in and out.

N.B. Be prepared to change or cancel plans if a situation changes

8.2 Special Areas of Risk to Check

- Verify the qualifications of all external providers
- Check that equipment is working and in good repair
- Verify that students and supervisors are competent with the equipment
- Reconnoitre and set up ahead of time
- Packs should only be carried by students from Year 7 and older. Make sure pack weight is not greater than one quarter of child's weight
- Check weather forecast to ensure safe conditions and suitable equipment/provisions. In the chance of extreme weather conditions, the Organising Teacher will consult with their Coordinator, Director of Studies or Principal about the continuance of the activity.

8.3 Supervision

- (a) By staff and parents
 - Ratio of competent adult supervisors to children between 1:15, and 1:6, depending on competence and maturity of students, and the type of activity.
 - Prior instruction increases the ratio – if students are specially trained, competent and experienced in aspects of the activity. (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh)
 - Staff and parent volunteers are to be included in the risk assessment process during planning for the activity.
 - Where students are divided into small groups, a teacher/ adult must accompany each group.
 - It is unsuitable for accompanying parents to bring their pre-school children with them on any school excursion.
- (b) Overnight excursions
 - Direct supervision must be exercised at all times, and until after students have retired and settled for the night.
 - Attendance checks must be taken on arrival and departure from any venue, at least once in the evening, and at 'lights out'.

- Any breach of discipline must be reported to the Organising Teacher. Serious breaches will be reported to the Principal upon return.
 - Supervision includes provision of suitable activities for both day and evening, including leisure activities.
- (c) By external providers
- ECS staff are still required to take reasonable action to ensure students' safety.
 - Students may not undertake an activity that a staff member reasonably believes may endanger them regardless of the opinion of the provider.

8.4 Shared Responsibility

- (a) With parents
- Inform parents via a note for off-campus activities that are within the normal school day and involve no risk significantly higher than normal school routine. (Appendix: Notes Informing Parents)
 - Obtain a signed permission note for activities that go outside normal school time or involve a level of risk significantly higher than normal school routine.
 - Ensure parents indicate any special needs. (including medical conditions)
 - Do not take students who have not returned the form.
 - If parents are transporting ECS students using their own vehicles, the School needs to retain a photocopy of their current driver's licence and vehicle registration. The parent must complete the Driver History form, which must be returned to the Office prior to the excursion.
- (b) With external providers
- External providers must:
- Know well the venue to be used for the activity
 - Know that the venue is safe
 - Know that the venue is staffed by adequately trained staff
- (c) With insurers
- Make sure insurance cover is adequate.

8.5 Evaluation

- (a) A debriefing should follow off-campus activities for staff to outline areas of risks not previously considered, which may be factored into future management plans.
- (b) Records are to be kept from each school trip, including: the planning proposal, names and contacts of students, staff and teacher in charge; contracts entered into with any third party organisations; risk assessments; and records of any incidents that may have occurred on an excursion.
- (c) All rationales, overviews, objectives, activity sheets, evaluation and organisation for excursions should be clearly set out in the teaching programme for future trips.

9 APPENDIX - IDENTIFYING HAZARDS IN OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

The following may assist with identifying hazards relating to activities at each stage of an excursion. Consider the potential injuries or illnesses that could occur. Hazards are the sources of these potential injuries or illnesses.

Travel – Consider aspects of travel that may present a hazard such as walking to and from the train, crossing the road, transport to the venue

Venue – Consider aspects of the excursion venue that may present a hazard such as location near water, cliffs, crowds, slippery floors

Excursion Programme Activity – Consider the activities of the excursion program that may present a hazard such as hazards of bushwalking, collecting leaves, observing animals, swimming, climbing

Equipment – Consider any equipment that may present a hazard such as sporting equipment, high risk equipment at the venue

Environment – Consider aspects of the environment that may present a hazard such as weather conditions, natural hazards such as bushfires, floods or storms, the nature of the terrain, plants and animals

People – Consider aspects of people that may present a hazard such as poor behaviour, the nature of participants such as maturity, age and skill, child protection issues, medical conditions or disabilities

Accommodation – Consider aspects of accommodation that may present a hazard such as insufficient supervision, standard of accommodation and amenities, meal menus and allergies, security and child protection issues

Other – Consider other hazards related to specific excursions.

10 APPENDIX - NOTES INFORMING PARENTS

Notes should tell the parents:

- Why the excursion is happening, including the educational goals
- What, where and when for
 - preparation and training
 - accommodation
 - activities (a program would be good)
 - emergency contact phone
- Who will be supervising the excursion
- What students should take (clothes, money, bedding, other items)
- Time of departure and return
- A mechanism for finding out if the excursion will be returning on time. Organise a message to be left on the answering machine by office staff.

10.1 Transport

- Inform parents if you are using private transport.
- If parents are using their vehicles to transport students the school needs a photocopy of their current license and vehicle registration and a driver information form to be completed.

10.2 Information you need to ask for

A note should ask for:

- Medical information
- Any special circumstances
- Any special dietary or other needs.

Remember to make sure the office has all these details of the activity.