

Camps and Excursions Policy - Y Community School

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Students at Y Community School are able to access educational experiences by attending camps and excursions that add value to their education and provide valuable opportunities for learning.
- When students access camps and excursions these have been well planned, and all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the safety of students and that the educational purpose and benefits are realised.

2. Scope:

This policy applies to staff and students employed at or attending the Y Community School.

Please note: *This policy does not apply* to Camps and excursions operated by other areas of operation withing the Y Whittlesea.

3. Definitions:

- **Staff:** Any person performing duties on behalf of the Y Community School be they an employee, volunteer, trainee or contractor.
- **'The Y' or 'Y' or 'Y Whittlesea':** refer to YMCA Whittlesea Inc and YMCA Whittlesea Youth and Community Services Ltd
- **Camp:** Any activity conducted outside the school, organised by the school in which students are under school supervision and in which students are away from home and at the activity for one or more nights.
- **Excursion:** Any activity organised by the school which takes students away from the school campus for a period of time. Note in this policy the work excursion is used to cover the provision for both camps and excursions except where camps are specifically referred to.
- **Parent:** The term parent is used to refer to parent(s), and legal guardians. In the case of students who are adults or who have been deemed to have independent status the parent refers to the student and they should sign documentation their own right. There may be instances where a disengaged young person resides with an adult carer who does not have legal status as their legal guardian. In this instance, where all reasonable attempts to contact a parent have been undertaken, and an Informal Carer Statutory Declaration has been completed, that carer may sign documents in the place of the parent.

4. Policy:

Excursions can form a valuable part of a student's learning experiences and this is especially so for students who have had poor experiences with education and in the applied learning context in which the school operates.

Staff are encouraged to organise educational activities for students which take them out of the school environment and into the community. In order to ensure these meet the educational purpose for which they are intended and that staff and students can attend these safely, each excursion requires a planning and approval process.

Note: Activities which occur within the facilities available at Y Leisure City which is adjacent to the school premisses are considered excursions and the planning processes outlined here apply to these.

4.1 Planning and approval process:

Excursions must be well planned and an application to run an excursion must be submitted using the tools in the school's student management software. In addition to the details regarding the excursion a detailed risk assessment must be submitted with the excursion application.

Application and approval to run an excursion and parental consent arrangements are all managed via the student management software.

The completed excursion application must be submitted for consideration and approval with sufficient time for consideration and approval by the relevant person, information to be provided to families and consent sought and preparation of students. This will be dependent on the type of excursion.

The approver for different types of excursions is shown below.

Type of excursion	Authorised Approver	Minimum timeframe for submission prior to date of excursion
Local excursion	Campus principal	2 weeks
Day excursions	Campus principal	2 weeks
Overnight Camps	Principal	5 weeks
Interstate Travel	Principal	1 full school term
International travel	Principal & CEO	On a case-by-case basis – generally at least 6 months
Outdoor adventure activities	Campus Principal	3 weeks

The areas to be addressed in the application to run an excursion are detailed below.

4.1.1 Educational Purpose:

Any excursion should provide for the educational needs of the students it is offered to. This includes the direct educational outcomes as defined in the Victorian Pathways Certificate or VCE Vocational Major or educational needs relation to emotional, social, vocational or wellbeing related learning.

Staff are required to outline the educational rationale for and excursion in the excursion application.

4.1.2 People – students, staff and supervision:

An excursion application should detail the students it is offered to, including the maximum number of places available and the minimum number of students required for the excursion to be viable to go ahead.

All excursions require a minimum of 2 staff unless the person responsible for approving the excursion is satisfied that student safety can be provided without this provision. At least one person must be qualified in first aid.

The following ratios are provided as a guide to the staffing ratios on running an excursion:

Type of excursion	Minimum Ratio	Minimum number of staff
Local excursion	Normal class : teacher ratio.	2
Day excursions	1:20	2
Overnight Camps	1:10	2
Interstate Travel	1:10	2
International travel	International travel will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, any international travel requires long planning timelines and extensive risk assessments. Staff ratios will be at least 1:10 and will be discussed in the planning stage with school leadership.	
Outdoor Adventure activities	Follow the guidance provided at https://www.outdoorsvictoria.org.au/resources/australian-adventure-activity-standard/	

Further supervision considerations:

In planning for any excursion staff need to consider the supervision requirements particular to the group of students attending the excursion and the types of activities being undertaken. This includes:

- The supervision and support needs of students with disabilities including social and emotional disability. This may require consideration as to the staff best placed to support these students and / or an increase in the number of staff required.
- The nature of the venues being visited, and the risks associated with any particular venue. E.g. is it a public place, will students be mixing with students from other schools, unknown adults etc. Specific risks should be identified in the excursion risk assessment and the approach to ensuring student safety documented there.

- The nature of the activity. Considerations include the expertise and skills of staff, the prior experiences vulnerabilities and possible emotional triggers for students and any preparation required. These will be recorded in the risk assessment.
For activities likely to cause emotional responses in students appropriate wellbeing support should be considered.
- For overnight camps how will the needs of both female and male students to access appropriate support be provided. This may require mixed gender staffing. Are additional resources required to provide for specific students?

4.1.3 Risk identification and risk management strategies:

All activities may pose some increased risk to student safety either through travel, exposure to other unknown adults or by the nature of the activity itself. In planning for an excursion, the risks must be considered and mitigated as far as can reasonable be achieved.

Staff must complete the Excursion Risk Management Plan with their application to run an excursion. This must be specific to the activities being proposed and include the risks to specific students who have an identified disability or other risk factor in attending the excursion.

Managing environmental risks including bushfire, extreme weather etc.

Staff are required to consider the environmental risks of the location to which they are travelling and any particular risks arising from this including but not limited to:

- Bushfires or grassfires.
- Water conditions for any activity involving close proximity to water courses, beaches etc.
- Accessibility and isolation, including vehicle access and telecommunications.
- The potential for adverse weather to pose risks – e.g. strong winds in a forest or extreme weather in an outdoor environment or impacting travel.

On the day of an excursion for any activity where there is an identified risk with environmental and / or weather conditions the teacher in charge must check the following:

- Using the site www.emergency.vic.gov.au identify any incidents or warnings for the area being attended and the travel route to that area.
- Using the site www.cfa.vic.gov.au check the Fire Danger Rating for the area being visited and areas being travelled through.
 - Where there is a fire danger rating of Catastrophic or Extreme the excursion or camp will be cancelled.
 - Where the fire danger rating is High the excursion will be reviewed in consultation with the Campus Principal and / or Principal and will only proceed if the excursion is not visiting areas with high levels of forest or grassland, is travelling to a township area and where multiple access routes are available. If the excursion proceeds the teacher in charge of the excursion will monitor the Vic Emergency app as will the school administration officer. Any escalation of risk will be brought to the attention of the Campus Principal or Principal who may make arrangements to cancel or alter the excursion.
- Using the resources available through the Bureau of Meteorology review the weather conditions.

For any activity using a facility in a bushfire prone area such as a camp or adventure park the facilities bushfire plan must be obtained as part of the planning process for the excursion and is a condition of approval for the excursion to go ahead. A copy of this will be kept at the school and another copy carried by the teacher in charge.

On arrival at a location the teacher in charge will assess the on the ground environmental conditions. Where relevant the conditions to be monitored will be recorded in the risk register during the planning stage. E.g. for a surf lesson the teacher in charge in consultation with the instructor will assess the surf conditions before determining whether to go ahead with the lesson.

4.1.4 Travel:

The details of travel arrangements must be provided and needs to include the departure time and arrangements, means of travel, return to school time and any pickup arrangements for students.

4.1.5 Resources

The details of any resources required to run the excursion and where relevant costs associated with these.

This should also include any special requirements for students.

4.2 Parental Consent:

Parental consent is required for all activities in which students leave the campus. Informed consent depends on sufficient detail being provided to parents to make a decision regarding their child's attendance. Some of the detail requested in this policy is required to meet the informed consent arrangements for parents. Permission forms are generated by the student management system and may only be distributed once approval has been granted for the excursion to proceed.

A closing date for consent to be provided will be determined in the application and approval process based on the types of excursion and planning considerations and must be no less than at least one full school day prior to the date the excursion commences. Consent of a parent must be obtained in writing.

In special circumstances the campus principal may approve a student to attend based on verbal permission from the parent or allow a late permission to be accepted. Only the campus principal or principal may approve this.

4.3 Outdoor adventure activities:

Specific guidance regarding Outdoor Education activities is provided at [Australian Adventure Activity Standard - Outdoors Victoria](#). Staff planning an activity of this type must read, understand and follow this guidance and ensure that all staff attending the excursion are aware of these guidelines and their responsibilities. In using any external facilitator, they must ensure that they obtain evidence of the relevant qualifications and experience of the facilitator and include this with the excursion application.

The following activities are defined as outdoor adventure activities:

- Abseiling and climbing (Includes indoor climbing)
- Angling
- Bushwalking
- Camping
- Canyoning
- Caving
- Challenge Courses
- Cycling and Mountain Biking
- Enclosed and Coastal Waters Paddlecraft
- Four Wheel Driving
- Horse Riding
- Inland Water Paddlecraft
- Snorkelling
- Snow Sports
- Surfing Sessions
- Trail Bike Touring

4.4 Running an excursion:

On the day of an excursion the staff member in charge must ensure they take with them an excursion pack which includes the consent, emergency contact details, student medication details and medical conditions information including any asthma or anaphylaxis plans for students on the excursion. To ensure safety in all circumstances this must be carried as a hard copy. They will also take an excursion first aid kit and any medication required by students attending the excursion.

Prior to departure the person in charge must confirm the attendance of students and check in with the office or on the software system to ensure there is a record of actual attendees accessible.

4.5 Post excursion debrief:

In any event where there is a significant issue in relation to student safety and wellbeing, student behaviour and management, interactions with the public, supervision or staff safety and wellbeing, a debrief will be convened by the campus principal or if necessary, the principal.

The purpose of this debrief will be to identify any necessary follow up, support needs of students and staff and identify any improvements to future excursions to prevent further issues.

5. Legislative and Industry Requirements:

- [Link](#) to Legislative Compliance Register

6. Consequences of breaching this policy:

All elements of this policy must be adhered to, and any breach will be dealt with in accordance with the [YMCA Whittlesea Disciplinary and Termination Policy](#).

7. Variations:

Y Whittlesea reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

8. Policy owner:

The Executive Manager Y Schools is responsible for keeping this policy current - including making amendments as required, and regular reviews as scheduled.

9. Document Control:

Review of this policy will be undertaken every 2 years, or prior as required by law, in consultation with appropriate Y People.

Policy available on Y-MAC>Communication>Manuals and Files>Policies and Procedures

This document is due for review on 1/03/2026.

Version:	Description of Amendment	Amended by	Approver and date	Release Date
1.1	Addition of details re environmental risks including bushfire, extreme weather, water conditions etc	Paul van Breugel	Executive Management Team 4/12/2023	4/12/2023
1.0	New policy	Paul van Breugel	Executive Management Team 19/6/2023	1/11/2023