Rationale

Excursions are seen as an integral part of the curriculum as they enable students to explore, extend and enrich their learning and their social skills development, in a non-school setting. Excursions complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at Maryborough Education Centre (MEC).

Goals

- To reinforce, complement and extend the learning opportunities beyond the classroom
- To provide a safe, secure learning experience for students in a venue external to the school
- To further develop skills such as cooperation, tolerance, communication, individual and group interaction
- To provide a program that delivers skills and knowledge that may lead to a lifelong involvement in worthwhile leisure pursuits
- To extend understandings of the student’s physical and cultural environment.

Guidelines

Prior to the commencement of a proposed adventure activity or school camp the teacher in charge must familiarise themselves with Department of Education and Training (DET) Safety Guidelines for Outdoors website


- and must complete the required checklist found in the MEC Staff Handbook
- School Council will ensure that all school camps are maintained at a reasonable and affordable cost, and comply with DET requirements
- All excursions, transport arrangements, emergency procedures and staffing need to comply with DET guidelines.
- School Council will be responsible for approval of all overnight camps and adventure activities including interstate and international visits
- The principal is responsible for the approval of all single-day excursions other than those that must be approved by school council as mentioned above
- Students will not be excluded from camps simply for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty have the opportunity to discuss their individual situation with the assistant principal or principal
- Payment in identified circumstances is at the principal's discretion
- Staff wishing to organise an excursion must complete the appropriate excursion approval form and lodge this with the relevant assistant principal. Where appropriate this will then be forwarded to the principal and school council
- Satisfactory arrangements will be made to provide continuous instruction for the students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying an excursion
- Students and their parents/carers need to be made aware that acceptable standards of behaviour will be expected during a camp or an excursion
- Emergency management processes of the school will extend to and incorporate all camps and excursions
The principal or their nominee will approve the attendance of all participants at the camp or excursion.
All non-school employees or students must meet the requirements of the volunteer policy.

Duty of care

All school staff attending the camp or excursion owe a duty of care to the students. This means that they must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent any reasonably foreseeable harm to students. This duty is non-delegable, which means that it cannot be delegated to external camp or education providers, parents or volunteers. The designated teacher in charge has ultimate responsibility for all students in their care.

External education providers and para-professionals must have appropriate certification (e.g. Working with Children’s Registration) and ensure that supervision guidelines are followed.

Prior to the camp or excursion parent/carers should be made aware that DET does not provide student accident cover and that they need to make their own arrangements for cover.

Emergency notifications and communications

In the event of an emergency, to ensure information is provided to emergency services, MEC will notify the:
- DET of any approved school camp or excursion at least three weeks beforehand using the Student Activity Locator online form. A user guide has been developed to help schools complete the online form, see: Student Activity Locator – User Guide
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of overseas travel plans so that DFAT can help staff and students remain safe and secure while overseas.

Parents or carers will be advised of the telephone numbers (both during and outside school hours) for the designated school contact person in the event of an emergency.

Arrangements for communicating with parents in the event of an emergency, cancellation or recall of the excursion will be made.

Consent forms will remain at the school with the designated school contact person and copies of each form will be taken on the excursion by the teacher in charge.

In the event of an emergency, accident or injury:
- staff on the excursion will:
  o take emergency action as documented in the excursion and camp’s emergency and risk management plan
  o immediately notify the school principal
- the principal will make arrangements for the Department’s Security Services Unit to be telephoned on 9589 6266.

Fire danger or ban

The Principal may need to cancel excursions and camps at short notice on days of extreme fire danger or total fire ban. On such days, the Security Services Unit liaises with fire authorities to obtain up to date information for communication to schools that may be affected by wildfire, including schools with students attending camps in areas affected by wildfire. If an excursion is not cancelled, special fire safety precautions will be required.
When required, MEC will follow the Department’s emergency management (bushfires) procedures for off-site activities.

Risk Management

An assessment of excursion risks will be undertaken in accordance with Department guidelines - Planning – Managing Risk.

For excursions requiring school council approval, an excursion risk assessment plan will be completed which includes consideration of risks across the entire excursion (including transportation, activities undertaken and excursion venues). Venue managers and activity providers should be consulted in the preparation of the school’s risk management plan and where appropriate, the risk management plans of venues or activity providers should be used to inform the school risk assessment process.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school’s 3-year review cycle.

Signed:

Paul Rumpff
School Council President

Date: ………………………………………..