

ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE CAMPS POLICY

Rationale

Objectives

Risk Management

- Venues
- Communications
- Service Providers
- Staff / Student Ratio's
- Nature of Activities / Perceived Risk
- Emergency Plans
- Weather

Conditions of Participation

- Parent Advice Form
- Student Medical Information
- Pre-camp Meetings
- Travel Arrangements
- Accommodation
- Swimming
- Equipment

Responsibilities / Accountability

- Duty of Care
- Illness / Injury
- First Aid
- Behaviour and Consequences
- Restricted Items

All camps at St. Patrick's College are designed to provide students with a safe, educational, worthwhile and memorable experience. Emphasis is placed on the fact that, while still learning, students are not required to adhere to a strict structure of bells and set time commitments. Students are encouraged to become more flexible, operating without routine and to take more responsibility for the running of their camp. All camps are designed to run in a very "stress-free" environment where students and staff are encouraged to take a step back from their normally fast-paced lives and simply enjoy not only new experiences and the acquisition of new skills but also the company of the people they are with.

The camps program provides a sequential learning experience in outdoor skills, culminating in their Grade 10 'camp of choice', the success of which requires student input and planning. Specific outdoor skills developed at all year levels include the areas of campsite safety, camp cooking, flora and fauna observation, weather interpretation and mapping. A general appreciation of Tasmania's outdoor environments is also developed.

The sequential learning experience of the camps program allows students to mix in a number of formats, thus cultivating a larger social base for each student. Challenging and new experiences tend to be less threatening when achieved in a socially 'safe' interactive environment. The following sequence of camp social groupings is the current program:

- Grade 7 – Core Groups – early in Term 1
- Grade 8 – House Groups – early in Term 1
- Grade 9 – Paired Home Groups – early in Term 1, The Rite Journey Abyss in early Term 4 then Gender Groups (plus activity groups) – in the last few weeks of the school year
- Grade 10 – Specific Activity Groups. – generally in a block of weeks late in last Term.

When students reach Grade 10 their camp choices become quite specific. Smaller groups enable students to gain an increased sense of team and to understand the importance of the whole group functioning together in order for the camp to be a success. To achieve this, the development of the individual is vitally important. The College camps program promotes the individual student to further realise their potential in developing strong personal skills. These traits often only become evident in students as they progress through the higher year levels. They include: leadership, initiative, cooperation, perseverance, skill acquisition, resourcefulness, self-realisation, self-confidence, independence and self-sacrifice, but this list is by no means exhaustive.

Additional to the camps program, some curricula areas, sports teams and co-curricular groups run camps throughout the year. These camps have various aims including: developing and honing skills, promoting team building, practicing performances, providing inspiration, immersion into a community and promoting self evaluation.

This policy, therefore, applies to every camp associated with St. Patrick's College. The whole camps program includes, but is not limited to:

- Curriculum based camps, eg: Senior Adventure Recreation, Grade 10 History
- Co-curricular based camps, eg: Music, Art, Drama
- Sport based camps, eg: Cricket, Rowing
- Grade camps
- Senior Retreats
- Student Executive
- Remar

For the purpose of this policy, "Camp" is defined as:

"Any overnight experience of at least one night's duration encompassing College term days and/or weekends and/or College holiday periods Organized in whole or part by current St. Patrick's College staff with the approval of the Principal."

The College Camps Program aims to broaden the learning experiences of every participant. Some key aspects of the overall program are to:

- Offer an opportunity for growth and the acceptance of responsibility through a range of challenging, enjoyable, safe and achievable experiences;
- Utilise the natural environment as an important resource for the development of values and behaviours that will contribute to continuing personal growth;
- Further strengthen the link between the values and challenges of the College Mission Statement and the camps program;
- Incorporate some core values such as resilience, achievement and responsibility;
- Provide students with a positive and memorable camp experience;
- Provide staff members with a positive and memorable camp experience.

Where possible, it is ideal to have every staff member of St. Patrick's College involved in the camps program each year. In Term 3 staff are asked to nominate a camp or camps they would like to be involved with for the following year. This enables the Principal to include a camp commitment in the co-curricular section of their teaching allocation sheet. Newly appointed staff will generally have been allocated a camp based on prior knowledge of their strengths, however, all new staff are welcome to discuss further options with the Camp Coordinator in early February.

The Camp Coordinator and Principal, where possible, match camp staffing needs with the choices of each staff member. The following preferences, as a 'best fit' model, however occur each year:

Grade 7 - Core teachers accompany their class;

Grade 8 - House Heads and House Tutors from the corresponding houses accompany students;

Grade 9 - Croagh Patrick Home Group teachers accompany their Home Group

Senior Retreats – Senior Religious Education teachers participate.

Remar – Year level Helm participates.

OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to:

- Enhance awareness within the College community of effective risk management regarding the Camps Program;

- Inform the College community of the importance of a College camp experience;
- Increase the awareness of all camp participants of their roles and responsibilities whilst participating in a College camp.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The College utilises an on-line risk management program called Enterprise Risk Manager (ERM). The program is administered and overseen by an external provider based in Sydney. ERM is a national risk management company who specialises in schools and large organisations. The St. Patrick's College documents are then assessed by the College OH&S Officer and discussed with the OH&S Manager. All College risk documents are stored on a data base system and can be accessed at any time. All aspects of every camp at St. Patrick's College are scrutinised through the completion of these documents.

The following list encompasses many of the topics covered by these documents:

Venues

- Bookings
- Current insurance / public liability documents
- Swimming facilities

Communications

Service Providers

Staff / Student Ratios

Emergency Plans

Weather

Nature of Activities / Perceived Risk

Risk can be divided into:

- Real, where participants could be injured: e.g. rock-fall, river crossing, walking across a road, and
- Perceived, which is an individual's subjective assessment of the real risk present at any one time. All activities have a level of risk but different people will have a different perception of what that level is depending upon their prior knowledge of that activity. Many outdoor education programs deliberately include activities where participants **perceive** an element of risk but where the **real** risk is minimal. **Real** risk is dramatically reduced when qualified and/or experienced adults are providing adequate supervision and instruction. The activity service providers contracted by St. Patrick's College for the camp program, together with qualified St. Patrick's College staff, provide this expertise.

At no time during the running of a camp program will students participate in activities of a higher real risk than those described to parents/guardians in their camp information document.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

1. Parent Advice Form

1.1. Parents / Guardians are required to complete a Parent Advice Form.

1.1.1. The Parent Advice Form provides Parents / Guardians with notification that their child is participating in the St. Patrick's College camps program. It gives basic information regarding the camp.

1.1.2. A more comprehensive camp information document must also be provided, outlining as many details as possible about the camp in which the students are participating.

- 1.2. Students will not be permitted to participate in the camp without a completed Parent Advice Form.

2. Student Medical Information

- 2.1. The Student Medical Information proforma is on the reverse of the Parent Advice Form.
 - 2.1.1. Parents / Guardians are required to complete, in full, the Student Medical Information.

3. Pre Camp Meetings

- 3.1. The Camps Coordinator or the camp leader of each program is required to call a staff meeting of all staff participating in their camp, so camp information may be distributed and discussed.
 - 3.1.1. All staff participating in a camp program are required to attend pre camp staff meetings so they are fully informed of all aspects of the intended camp.
- 3.2. The Camps Co-ordinator or the camp leader of each program is required to hold a meeting with all students participating in their camp so information may be distributed and discussed.
 - 3.2.1. Student camp information meetings must be advertised in advance of the intended time and date through the daily College bulletin.
 - 3.2.2. All students participating in a camp program are required to attend the advertised pre camp meetings so they are fully informed of all aspects of the intended camp.
- 3.3. Any staff or students unable to attend pre camp information meetings must endeavour to gain this information at another time prior to the camp dates.

4. Travel Arrangements

- 4.1. Student travel to and from camp or activity venues is by bus wherever possible.
 - 4.1.1. Camp programs with low student numbers may make use of a hired minibus.
 - 4.1.1.1. A hired minibus may only be driven by an adult who holds an appropriate drivers licence endorsement and the authority of the St. Patrick's College Principal.
- 4.2. Student and staff travel arrangements for interstate and overseas travel will be treated individually.
 - 4.2.1. Parents / Guardians will be provided with detailed information in these circumstances.
- 4.3. Staff must accompany and supervise students by the same mode of transport unless a special request has been made to the Camps Coordinator prior to the camp program dates.
- 4.4. Each camp venue will have access to a vehicle for emergency purposes.

5. Accommodation

- 5.1. Student accommodation varies within the camps program, but may include:
 - Bunk style shared facilities;
 - Dormitories;
 - Tents.
- 5.2. All staff will be accommodated in the same style as the students on any given camp. Special requests for differing accommodation must be made to the Camps Coordinator prior to the camp program dates.

6. Swimming

- 6.1. At all camp venues where ANY water-based activities are available, **no** student may enter the water until the **surf** bronze medallion qualified adult is in attendance.

- 6.2. Swimming is **not permitted** at any venue at any time during a camp when a **surf** bronze medallion qualified adult is not in attendance unless the activity is specifically in a swimming pool. In this instance, a bronze medallion qualified adult must be in attendance.

7. Equipment

- 7.1. A limited amount of camping equipment owned by the College is available for student and staff use.
- 7.1.1. All College owned equipment used by students or staff during a camp program must be thoroughly cleaned and in full working order before being returned to the Camps Coordinator within 2 school days of the camp ending.
- 7.2. All equipment needed by students for the camps program is available for hire, at minimal cost, through the outdoor stores in Launceston.

RESPONSIBILITIES / ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Duty of Care

All staff owe a 'duty of care' to their students. For the purpose of this policy, duty of care can be defined as:

'A duty to take reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions which could expose the student to a reasonably foreseeable risk of accident or injury.'

and put simply, it means a duty to take reasonable care to prevent or avoid harm being suffered.

The following 'duty of care' statements are relevant to all camps conducted by St. Patrick's College.

- 1.1. The provision of effective supervision of students is crucial to their safety and to the achievement of the educational goals of the excursion or program's goals.
- 1.2. Staff are deemed to be on duty for the whole period of an excursion and in the event of an emergency all excursion staff may be required to take responsibility for students at short notice.
- 1.2.1. While staff need to sleep and need time off to relax, technically they remain on duty even at such times. Only when staff finally leave the excursion or when the excursion concludes do they cease to be on duty.
- 1.2.2. Community confidence in the whole camps program depends on staff maintaining the highest level of professional conduct at all times. **The taking or consumption of alcohol or prohibited substances is totally inconsistent with such standards of conduct and is therefore banned.**
- 1.2.3. 'Duty of Care' responsibilities extend to all adult camp participants including parents, guardians and volunteers who have prior approval of the College Principal to attend the camp.
- 1.2.4. Such approval is dependent upon the suitability of the adult to attend the camp, given its specific nature.
- 1.2.5. A satisfactory police check must be obtained by the adult, and sighted by the College Principal, or their delegate, prior to participation in the Camp Program.

2. Illness / Injury

- 2.1. In the event of a student becoming ill whilst on camp, parents will be informed as soon as possible and, if necessary, arrangements made for the student to return home.
- 2.2. In the event of a student being injured whilst on camp, necessitating either further medical attention or returning home, parents will be informed as soon as possible and arrangements made for the student's transportation.
- 2.2.1. In the above 2 cases, when a student needs to be transported home, a member of the St. Patrick's College Leadership team will also be notified as soon as possible.

- 2.3. In the event of a staff member becoming ill or injured whilst attending a camp, deeming it necessary for their cessation of involvement in the camp, a member of the St. Patrick's College Leadership team will be notified as soon as possible and arrangements made for a replacement staff member, where necessary, to attend for the remainder of the camp.
- 2.3.1. The emergency contact person of the ill or injured staff member would also be contacted as soon as possible.

3. First Aid

- 3.1. Camp leaders allocated to each camp are equipped with both a large St. Patrick's College first aid kit and a smaller hiking pack containing basic first aid equipment.
- 3.1.1. The Camps Coordinator carries a comprehensive Remote Area First Aid Kit on all camps where they are personally involved.
- 3.1.2. A St. Patrick's College first aid kit is to be carried on each bus when students are travelling to and from a camp venue.
- 3.2. The Camps Coordinator, having completed a Leader's Wilderness First Aid qualification (or equivalent/higher) will be the first aid officer for each camp, except:
- If not present on the camp, a staff member with first aid training will take this role; or,
 - If an adult with a higher first aid qualification is attending the camp.
- 3.3. As part of teachers' duty of care they are obliged to attempt to assist children who are injured or sick. It is important that teachers be mindful that negligence can arise because of action being taken or not being taken. Teachers need to exercise the skill and care as a reasonable person would expect from them under the circumstances.

4. Behaviour and Consequences

- 4.1. When students attend school camps they are 'on display' to the communities they are travelling through and where the camp is being held. It is important therefore, that student behaviour whilst on camp is exemplary.
- 4.2. The majority of school rules are still enforced whilst students are participating in camps.
- 4.2.1. Failure to adhere to these rules may result in a student being sent home from camp – at a cost incurred by their parents. This will normally mean parents picking up their son/daughter from the camp.
- 4.2.2. When a student is sent home from a camp as a result of inappropriate behaviour, a member of the St. Patrick's College Leadership team, in consultation with camp staff, will coordinate any follow-up consequences deemed necessary.
- 4.2.3. Individual camps will, at times, have site-specific rules. In these situations, students will be informed of these differing rules at an appropriate time at or before the commencement of the camp.
- 4.3. The taking or consumption of alcohol, cigarettes or prohibited substances by students is not permitted whilst attending any St. Patrick's College camp, irrespective of age of the student.**

5. Restricted Items

- 5.1. Whilst there are no specific items that are banned from College camps, there are a number of items that students are encouraged to leave at home. This includes: mobile phones, personal audio/video devices, electric personal grooming appliances and electronic games.
- 5.1.1. Students who have music they wish to listen to whilst travelling to and from a camp on the bus are encouraged to bring this, but they are not to be used unless travelling.
- 5.1.2. The leader of any camp program will inform the students, in advance, of any specific items not to be taken on camp.

5.1.3. The College or College staff will take no responsibility for the loss or damage of restricted items.

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other St. Patrick's College policies including, but not limited to the:

- *St. Patrick's College Mission Statement;*
- *Pastoral Care Policy;*
- *Behaviour Management Policy;*
- *Teacher Professional Behaviour Policy;*
- *Anti Drug Policy.*

Approved by: Principal/Board Leadership Team

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