Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

Excursions, Camps and Travel Policy

MACS Schools

Purpose

This policy seeks to ensure excursions, camps and travel by Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) schools are planned, implemented and undertaken safely and in accordance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards and other relevant legislation and policies.

Scope

The policy applies to:

- MACS schools
- the procurement process for third-party providers as per the Secondary School Procurement and Payment Policy and the Engaging Workers through Labour Hire Providers Policy.

This policy does not apply to:

- work placement, work experience or intercampus travel for students
- staff travel where students are not involved
- International Student Exchange programs, which require schools be a Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) approved Student Exchange Organisation (SEO).

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- Duty of Care Guidelines
- Supervision Policy
- Excursions Procedures for MACS Schools
- Camps Procedures for MACS Schools
- International Travel Procedures for MACS Schools

Principles

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS) recognises that excursions, camps and travel can provide important learning and growth for the full flourishing of young people.

As a governing authority, MACS is required to ensure schools uphold a duty of care to students in all school environments.

MACS is committed to providing a safe environment for all students with zero tolerance for child abuse in all settings.

Policy

In the planning, implementation and undertaking of excursions, camps and travel, MACS staff must:

- ensure offsite activities have educational, cultural and/or personal development purpose and value
- use a systematic and transparent approach for planning and implementing all activities
- provide an inclusive experience that is free from discrimination and meets all Victorian Child Safe Standards and requirements of Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises

- ensure proper duty of care and compliance responsibilities are upheld
- utilise rigorous risk management procedures that:
  - are systematic, structured and timely
  - account for human and cultural factors
  - promote a positive risk-aware culture, and
  - utilise post trip review processes for future planning and events.

The principal, or their delegate, is required to complete a rigorous risk assessment and mitigation process in accordance with the Risk Management Policy, matrix and school's risk register and to ensure all risk management procedures are followed.

Purposeful planning is required in each step in the preparation of such activities to identify and mitigate risks posed to students.

Following the completion of the risk assessment process and relevant record of the activity, all excursions, camps and travel will follow a consistent approval and registration process:

1. The principal, or principal's delegate, approves excursions and camps, including interstate trips.
2. A regional general manager will approve international travel, in accordance with procedures.

During excursions, camps and travel, the care, safety and welfare of students is assigned to MACS staff. All excursions, camps and travel must be led by a teacher with Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration. Additional staff may include non-teaching school staff or volunteers who are approved by the school principal. All non-teaching staff and volunteers must be screened in line with the Working with Children Check Policy and Recruitment policy. Only VIT registered teachers may make decisions about the health, safety and wellbeing of students.

All Child Safe Standards are to be addressed and embedded into the processes and procedures of all excursions, camps and travel in accordance with MO 1359.

Details of the excursions, camps and travel, including expectations and code of conduct, are to be communicated to staff, students and families.

Informed consent for all known activities and events must be sought and recorded using a transparent and approved system. Records are to be stored in accordance with the Public Records Office of Victoria recordkeeping requirements.

All excursions, camps and travel must be undertaken in accordance with the Victorian Department of Education Excursions – Supervision staff to student ratios, detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Staff to student ratios

Type of Trip	Description
Local excursions	Regular class teacher-student ratios with an additional accompanying staff member (as required)
Day excursions	1:20 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
Overnight base camps	1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
Overnight study camps	1:15 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
Interstate travel	1:10 staff-student ratio with a minimum of 2 staff
International travel	The following table indicates how staff numbers should be calculated, noting these ratios are the minimum required.
	Number of students: Number of staff
	1 to 10: 3
	11 to 20: 3
	21 to 30: 4
Adventure activities. This includes adventure camping/outdoor education style camping activities	Adventure activities have individual staff-student ratios. Specific requirements for each activity can be found in the Department of Education guidance.

Roles, responsibilities and reporting

Delegation reference number	Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
	Organising teacher	Risk management, selection of third-party providers and venues, consent, student safety, review and record keeping – as set out in related procedures documents	Report offsite student activity in Student Activity Locator
	Principal	Attestation of adherence to procedures for international travel	Attestation and required documents to Regional General Manager
	Regional general manager	Preliminary and final approval for international travel by students	

Delegations and authorities

Role	Description of power/function	Limitations/conditions	Reporting requirement (if applicable)
Principal or delegate	Approval for excursions and camps conducted by a MACS school	Consideration of risk management, selection of third-party providers and venues, consent, student safety, review and record keeping	Maintain all relevant records Report offsite student activity in Student Activity Locator
Regional general manager	Preliminary and final approval for international travel in accordance with travel procedures	May be revoked at any time in line with DFAT warnings	

Procedures

Procedures for excursions, camps and travel are documented separately. These include the following sections.

1. **Risk management** – The principal ensures that a systematic risk assessment, risk mitigation and review process is undertaken for all excursions, camps and travel events.
2. **Third party providers and venue selection** – The principal ensures a thorough investigation of third-party providers and venue selection is undertaken, including evidence of relevant public liability insurance**.**
3. **Consent** – The principal ensures informed consent is sought and received for every aspect of the excursion, camp or travel event.
4. **Student safety** – The principal ensures that the care, safety and welfare of each child is prioritised at every level of preparation, implementation and undertaking of excursions, camps and travel. This includes meeting all requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards.
5. **Review and record keeping** – The principal ensures that every excursion, camp and travel event is reviewed, and findings are recorded and stored as required by *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic.).

Definitions

Adventure activities

An adventure activity is an activity that involves greater than normal risk which may include:

- physical activities beyond the scope of the regular physical education curriculum
- travel into a relatively undeveloped area of the country in which vehicle contact is difficult and/or uncertain
- confrontation with natural environmental challenges requiring greater reliance upon personal resources than would normally be required in normal day-to-day life
- less than normal contact by person or by telephone, with medical and other public services available in normal day-to-day life
- exposure to the natural elements with less than the normal physical protection provided in day-to-day life
- theme parks, fun parks, and trampoline centres
- the use and operation of amusement rides, attractions, or fireworks via the engagement of a third-party operator at non-public (i.e. enrolled students only) events on non-school sites (e.g. hiring a jumping castle to be operated at a local park).

Approved

Authorised in writing, as evidenced by signature of a nominated delegate.

Base camps

Base camps are camps undertaken at accredited residential campsite or camping under shelters such as tents.

Bullying

Bullying is repeated unreasonable behaviour directed towards a person that creates a risk to health and safety. It occurs when an individual or group deliberately upsets or hurts another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. Forms of bullying include physical, verbal, gesture, extortion, exclusion, visual, and sexual bullying and can be direct or indirect.

Camps

Camps are excursions involving at least one night's accommodation within Australia (including school sleepovers on school grounds).

Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV)

The overarching, strategic planning and policy-making body for the Catholic school system in Victoria, including MACS schools.

Certificate of currency

A certificate of currency (also known as a certificate of insurance) is issued by an insurance company to confirm that insurance has been obtained for a business for a specific time. It summarises the most important provisions of the insurance policy (such as effective date of the policy, the type of insurance purchased and the amount of money which is applicable to liability). It confirms that the business (or individual) has obtained sufficient insurance to enter the premises or perform work/service.

Child abuse

Child abuse includes:

(a) any act committed against a Child involving:
    (i) a sexual offence
    (ii) an offence under section 49B(2) of the Crimes Act 1958 (grooming)
(b) the infliction, on a Child, of:
    (i) physical violence
    (ii) serious emotional or psychological harm
(c) serious neglect of a Child.

Child connected work

Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises defines child connected work:

(a) Work authorised by the school governing authority and performed by an adult in a school environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present; or
(b) For the purposes of a school boarding premises, work authorised by the provider of school boarding services in a school boarding premises environment while children are present or reasonably expected to be present.

Child related work

Child related work is work that:

(a) Involves an adult working with children under 18 years old (can be paid or unpaid work)
(b) Usually involves direct contact with a child or children, including physical, face-to-face, written, oral or electronic contact
(c) The contact with the child or children is a usual part of the person's duties and is not occasional direct contact which is incidental to their work.

Child safety

Child safety encompasses matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, managing the risk of child abuse, providing support to a child at risk of child abuse, and responding to suspicions, incidents, disclosures or allegations of child abuse (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Delegate

A role, position or group (such as a committee) that has authority to act or make decisions in the manner and to the extent prescribed in a policy, framework or delegation instrument.

Delegation

The powers, authority, duties and functions delegated to a role, position or group (such as a committee) by the MACS board and contained in a delegation instrument.

Department of Education (DE)

Victorian government department that leads the delivery of education and development services to children, young people and adults.

Discrimination

Occurs when a person is treated unfavourably compared to another person/s. It can be either **direct** (i.e. a person is treated unfavourably because they have an attribute protected by law such as age, race or religion) or **indirect** (i.e. when a condition, requirement or practice has the effect of disadvantaging people with a particular attribute protected by law and that condition, practice or requirement is not reasonable).

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.) (ETR)

Legislation that provides definition and sets minimum standards required for school registration and governance in Victoria.

Excursions

Activities organised by the school where the students:

- are taken out of the school grounds (e.g. day excursion or school approved event)
- undertake adventure activities, regardless of whether or not they occur outside the school grounds.

Framework

A board-approved overarching governance structure to enable compliance by MACS and its subsidiaries and MACS schools/MACSEYE services with a range of regulatory requirements, and to ensure good governance in the operations of MACS and its subsidiaries and MACS schools/MACSEYE services.

Guidelines

Recommendations and guidance to support the implementation of a policy or procedure. Guidelines are not mandatory and may be developed and approved by a MACS director or a principal/director in a MACS school/MACSEYE service for operation in a particular school or service.

Hazard

A source or a situation (including dangerous occurrences and systems failures) with a potential for harm in terms of human injury or ill health, damage to property, damage to the environment or a combination of these.

Incident

An incident is an actual or alleged event or situation that:

- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to a student's health, safety or wellbeing either directly or indirectly while under the care or supervision of the school, including international students

- impacts a student and is brought to the attention of the school, regardless of when or where it occurred, provided it is impacting on the student or other students within the school environment
- causes harm or creates a risk of causing harm to an employee's health, safety or wellbeing either directly or indirectly in the work setting
- affects or risks affecting the continuity of school operations, including matters of security (including cyber security), property damage and emergencies
- requires police notification or involves matters of serious conduct
- is a WorkSafe notifiable incident.

Critical incidents requiring planning include, but are not limited to:

- child abuse
- medical emergency
- mental stress
- data or privacy breach
- missing student/person.

International Student Program

Non-reciprocal program where international students are enrolled in a Victorian school to undertake full time study as international students at a Victorian school for a single term or a number of years. There are various visa categories applicable, with most students holding a subclass 500 Student – School Visa.

Local excursion

These are excursions with walking distance of the school and do not involve adventure activities. Workplace learning and intercampus travel are not considered school excursions.

Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese Schools Ltd (MACS)

MACS is a reference to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, and / or its subsidiaries.

MACS board or board

The board of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (MACS), being also the board of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS) and the board of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Early Years Education Ltd (MACSEYE) in an ex officio capacity (as the context requires).

MACS executive

A member of the executive leadership team of MACS.

MACS office

Staff employed in MACS offices at James Goold House, Catholic Leadership Centre and MACS regional offices.

MACS school or school

A school which operates with the consent of the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne and is owned, operated and governed by MACS, directly or through MACSS (as the context requires). References to schools or MACS schools also includes boarding premises of schools operated by MACS and specialist schools operated by MACSS.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (MACSS)

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of MACS established to conduct and operate specialist schools.

Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic.) to protect children from harm relating to physical and sexual abuse. The principal, registered

teachers and early childhood teachers, school counsellors, religious clergy, medical practitioners and nurses at a school/service are mandatory reporters under this Act (PROTECT: Identifying and responding to all forms of abuse in Victorian schools).

Organising teacher

Refers to a staff member assigned tasks to complete the pre-planning and organisation of any excursion, camp or travel. This person may or may not be the designated **Teacher in Charge.**

Policy

A high-level, principles-based directive that must be complied with across MACS and MACSS.

Principal

Individual appointed as principal by MACS in MACS schools.

Procedure

A step-by-step or detailed instruction for the implementation of MACS policy that is mandatory across MACS and MACS schools.

Process

A process is a method of implementation of a MACS framework, policy or procedure.

Reportable conduct

Reportable conduct for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme is:

- a sexual offence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child, whether or not a criminal proceeding in relation to the offence has been commenced or concluded
- sexual misconduct, committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- physical violence committed against, with or in the presence of, a child
- any behaviour that causes significant emotional or psychological harm to a child
- significant neglect of a child as defined in the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005* (Vic.).

Risk

The effect of uncertainty on objectives.

Risk management

The coordinated activities to direct and control an organisation about risk.

School environment

Means any of the following physical, online or virtual places used during or outside school hours:

- a campus of the school
- online or virtual school environments made available or authorised by MACS or a MACS school for use by a child or student (including email, intranet systems, software, applications, collaboration tools and online services)
- other locations provided by the school or through a third-party provider for a child or student to use including, but not limited to, locations used for camps, approved homestay accommodation, delivery of education and training, sporting events, excursions, competitions and other events) (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

School staff

Means an individual working in a school environment who is:

- directly engaged or employed by a school governing authority
- a contracted service provider engaged by MACS (whether or not a body corporate and whether or not any other person is an intermediary) engaged to perform child-related work for a MACS school
- a minister of religion, a religious leader or an employee or officer of a religious body associated with MACS (Ministerial Order No. 1359).

Short term study tour programs

Non-reciprocal program where students undertake a mix of structured classroom learning, interaction with local students and excursions. This usually involves a visitor visa and a fee structure.

Sister school partnership

Reciprocal visits negotiated between sister schools where visits include a school experience combined with a cultural tour. This usually involves a visitor visa and costs are recovered between sister schools on a cost recovery basis only.

Student

Student means a person who is enrolled at or attends a MACS school.

Study camps

Study camps tend to involve senior secondary students. There is a focus on study skills, team building, communication, time management and wellbeing.

Study Tour

A study tour is a short-term, teacher or adult accompanied group travel program, sometimes called a cultural visit, language immersion, school mission.

Student exchange

Programs where individual students or groups of students travel unaccompanied to or from a sister-school. Schools must operate student exchanges within the *VRQA's requirements for registration as an exchange organisation.*

Teacher in charge

Refers to a teacher who has been designated by the principal to provide supervision, leadership and oversight while attending any excursion, camp or travel. This person may or may not be the approved organising teacher.

Volunteer

A person who performs work without remuneration or reward for a MACS school or MACSEYE service in the school/service environment.

Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

Camps Checklist – Template for Schools
Camps Procedures for MACS Schools
Excursions Checklist – Template for Schools
Excursions Procedures for MACS Schools
International Travel Checklist – Template for Schools
International Travel Procedures for MACS Schools

Related MACS policies

Administration of Medication Policy
Anaphylaxis Policy
Anti-Slavery Policy
Bullying Prevention Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy
Child Safety and Wellbeing Recordkeeping Policy
Child Safety Code of Conduct
Code of Conduct (student)
Duty of Care Policy
Emergency Management Planning Policy
Engaging Families in Child Safety Policy

Engaging Workers through Labour Hire Providers Policy
First Aid Policy
Medical Management Policy (Schools)
Occupational Health and Safety Policy
Pastoral Care Policy
Pastoral Care of Students relating to Gender Policy
Privacy Policy and Procedures (Schools)
Recruitment Policy
Risk Management Policy (School)
Secondary School Procurement and Payment Policy
Student Behaviour Policy
Supervision Policy
Working with Children Check Policy

Resources

CECV Guidelines for the Engagement of Contractors in Catholic Schools
CECV Guidelines for the Engagement of Volunteers in Catholic Schools
Department of Education Excursions Policy and Resources
MACS School Events and Activity Risk Assessment template and samples

Legislation and standards

Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic.)
Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic.)
Crimes Act 1958 (Vic.)
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic.)
Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.)
Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic.)
Health Records Act 2001 (Vic.)
Ministerial Order 1359: Implementing the Child Safe Standards – Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools and School Boarding Premises
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic.)
Public Records Act 1973 (Vic.)
Victorian Data Sharing Act 2017 (Vic.)
VRQA Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration
Worker Screening Act 2020 (Vic.)
Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)

Policy information

Responsible director	Director of Learning and Regional Services
Policy owner	General Manager, Student Wellbeing
Approving authority	Executive Director
Assigned board committee	Child Safety and Risk Management
Approval date	21 November 2023
Risk rating	High
Preliminary review by	November 2025 (two year after approval)
Major review by	November 2027 (four years after approval)
Publication details	CEVN

POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned Framework	Care, Safety and Welfare of Students
Related documents	Refer to the list of supporting and related documents above
Superseded documents	
New policy	New