

# Lowther Hall

ANGLICAN GRAMMAR SCHOOL

*All about the girl*

## Camps, Excursions and Offsite Activities Policy

Date of last review:

Review cycle:

Review and approval responsibility:

Category:

VRQA required:

Locations:

2021

3 yearly

Executive

Risk Management

Yes

O:Drive, LowtherLink



## 1 DEFINITIONS

### Briefing

Short gathering of teachers or supervisors to convey important information.

### Camp

Activity involving an overnight stay.

### DFAT

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

### Direct supervision

The teacher or adult responsible for the students can see and hear all children at all times (for example, in a classroom, in a small outdoor area with mirrors giving sight around corners).

### Excursion

A trip which begins at 17 Leslie Road and has components that take place away from the site.

### General supervision

The teacher or adult responsible for the students can easily move to have children within their sight or hearing and can monitor groups and activities from a distance (for example in a large play area, at the side of a sports field, in an auditorium, at a campsite).

### High-risk activities

Activities where there is a high likelihood of injury or accident AND/OR the consequences of an injury or accident would be significant (irrespective of the likelihood of it occurring).

### Indirect supervision

The teacher or adult responsible for the students does not have sight of the students but can be contacted immediately in order to render advice or assistance (for example via mobile phone).

### Meeting

Extended gathering of teachers or supervisors to convey information and ensure all parties understand their duties and responsibilities.

### Offsite activities

School related activities taking place away from 17 Leslie Road.

### Volunteer

Unpaid adult engaged by the School to deliver or assist in the delivery of a program or activity.

## 2. CONTEXT

### 2.1 Lowther Hall Context

Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School (the School) is a vibrant learning community that is committed to educating the whole person for the whole of life. The School's vision is that every girl will leave Lowther Hall with the knowledge, skills and personal qualities needed to make a positive and rewarding contribution to the world beyond school and that she will, during her school journey, develop the 12 Qualities of the Lowther Hall Girl (Appendix 1).

Camps, excursions and other offsite activities complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at Lowther Hall. They are key vehicles for the development of the Qualities of the Lowther Hall Girl and for equipping students for life beyond school.

### 2.2 Legal and regulatory basis for compliance

The School recognises that all camps, excursions and offsite activities must comply with various legal and regulatory obligations to which the School is subject. Specifically, these include:

- Common Law Duty of Care
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Regulations 2017

- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority Minimum Standards: mandated registration requirements
- Child Safe Standards legislation, specifically:
  - Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (Vic)
  - Ministerial Order 870 January 2016 (Vic)
  - Crimes Act 1958 (amended) (Vic)
  - Betrayal of Trust Report 2014 (Vic)
  - Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)
  - Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 (Vic).
- Equal Opportunity legislation, specifically:
  - Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
  - Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)
  - Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwlth).

### **3. PURPOSE**

The camps, excursions and offsite activities policy sets out the principles and framework governing the School's approach to these activities and within which they are conducted. The policy should be read and understood by all those planning, leading and participating in such activities. The policy seeks to ensure compliance with the legal and regulatory obligations relevant to camps, excursions and offsite excursions conducted by Lowther Hall.

### **4. SCOPE**

This policy is relevant to the School Council, Principal and to school staff, students and parents involved in planning and participating in camps, excursions and offsite activities which are attended by students.

It does not apply to offsite activities organised by the School for staff (without students), old grammarians, parents, Lowther Hall community members or the public.

It does not apply to offsite activities organised by parents.

### **5. POLICY STATEMENTS**

5.1 Camps, excursions and offsite activities are premised on the following principles:

- a) Camps, excursions and offsite activities arranged by the School have will have an educational purpose and/or seek to foster the Qualities of the Lowther Hall Girl or other School priorities.
- b) The School is committed to ensuring the camps, excursions and offsite activities are inclusive; the School ensures such experiences will increase a sense of belonging for all students, including those from differing economic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. The School recognises that it is unlawful for a school to discriminate against a student on the grounds of disability by denying the student access, or by limiting the student's access to a school activity, camp or excursion. The school has a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments where necessary in order to ensure that all students are able to participate fully in all school programs.
- c) The School endeavours to maintain a reasonable balance in the camps, excursions and offsite activities it offers to students, bearing in mind the potential impact of such experiences on the taught curriculum, on parents' financial outlay and on the additional contributions made by staff.
- d) All camps, excursions and offsite activities will be age-appropriate.

5.2 Broad duty of care underpinning all camps, excursions and offsite activities

- 5.2.1 The School recognises that it has a duty of care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. In discharging this duty, the Principal, teachers and other school staff are held to a high standard of care regarding their students. In order to fulfil this duty, the Principal and teachers will take all reasonable steps to reduce the risk of harm to students wherever and whenever the student is in the care of the School, including

during camps, excursions and offsite activities.

5.2.2 The duty of care expected of teachers on camps, excursions and offsite activities exceeds that of the comparatively safe, predictable and familiar school environment.

5.2.3 The duty of care for students is non-delegable, meaning that it cannot be assigned to another party such as an external provider. The School may, however, ask adults other than teachers to supervise students in specific circumstances. In making such a request, the School recognises that it retains its duty of care (which is non-delegable) and so will ensure that the adults concerned have proper training and support and are always able to contact a teacher if assistance or advice is needed. The School will ensure that appropriate procedures are in place so that the adults know what is expected of them and how to respond in particular situations.

### 5.3 Specific duty of care pertaining to Child Safe Standards

5.3.1 The School recognises that the legal and regulatory requirements underpinning the Child Safe Standards must continue to be met in full throughout all camps, excursions and offsite activities. Specifically:

- a) the School's duty of care, including the school's duty to meet the Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order 870, will not be delegated.
- b) parent volunteers participating in camps, excursions and offsite activities must hold a current Working With Children Check.
- c) for activities involving host families, host family adults must hold current Working With Children Checks. In the case of overseas families, an equivalent check will be sought. Where that is not available, the School will require a written recommendation from the principal of the host school stating that the host family is known to the School and is in good standing.
- d) All adults involved in camps, excursions and offsite activities, whether employed by the School or a volunteer, must read and sign the School's *Code of Conduct (staff and volunteers)*. This does not apply to third party providers.

### 5.4 Risk Assessment

The School recognises that camps, excursions and offsite activities pose a higher risk than activities taking place within the regular routine and familiar environment of the school day. In order to promote the safety of students, excursions and offsite activities require completion of a detailed risk assessment, including contingency planning for emergencies.

Specific risk assessment processes for camps, excursions and offsite activities will include:

- Completion of Risk Management documentation
- Visit to or detailed research of site
- Check of bushfire risk in the activity location and obtaining of copies of the Emergency Management Plan for bushfire preparedness. Staff involved in the activity reading the Emergency Management Plan for bushfire first aid.
- A risk management briefing (excursions and offsite activities) or meeting (camps) attended by all staff and volunteers involved in the activity. Where a staff member or volunteer is unable to attend, it is the responsibility of the teacher in charge to brief them about risk management procedures.
- For camps and high-risk activities, staff must sign that they have attended a meeting to discuss the ways in which risks will be managed. It is the responsibility of the teacher in charge to ensure that this takes place.

### 5.5 Planning

All camps, excursions and offsite activities require detailed and timely planning. As with the need for detailed risk assessments, the School will undertake planning to promote the care and safety of students and to prepare for the possibility of litigation in which the existence of careful planning is likely to be scrutinised should something go wrong.

Planning documentation should supplement risk management documentation and may include:

- Bus seating
- Cabin allocation
- Group allocation
- Activity rotations and plans of the day
- Timings

## 5.6 Approval

All camps, excursions and off-site activities must go through the appropriate approval process and be signed off by the Head of School. In addition:

- a) high risk activities and overseas trips require the approval of the School Board. High-risk activities should only be approved where there is a clear educational benefit for students. High-risk activities should always be voluntary. The nature of such activities requires even greater attention to be paid to the School's duty of care, the risk assessment, supervision and staff training.
- b) trips and excursions involving overnight stays require the approval of the Principal.
- c) the Principal is responsible for overseeing and approving the annual calendar so that the school's overall camps, excursions and incursions program is balanced and that the impact on the curriculum, teaching and learning is not excessive.
- d) a certain amount of information and planning is required before the activity can be approved. For example, a written proposal and broad risk assessment must be completed before approval can be given.

## 5.7 Responsible personnel

In planning camps, excursions and offsite activities, the following must be identified:

- a) the teacher-in-charge – although it will often be the case that a team of adults is involved in the preparation and supervision of the activity, it is essential that one teacher be named as the teacher-in-charge with direct responsibility for all aspects of the event, including the safety of students. During an overnight or extended activity and when the teacher-in-charge is rostered off duty, the role of teacher-in-charge may be delegated to another named teacher. The teacher-in-charge should carry a school or personal mobile phone and charger at all times.
- b) the school contact person – the named school contact person located back at the school is on call for the duration of the activity or event, except as specifically delegated when the contact person is rostered off-duty. Arrangements must be made so that the teacher-in-charge is able to communicate with the school contact person, or as delegated, at all times during the event.
- c) The individual responsible for student first aid and distribution of medicine.

## 5.8 Communication about camps, excursions and offsite activities

The plans for camps, excursions and offsite activities should state clearly the way in which parent communication will take place, both before and during the activity:

- a) parent communication relating to the activity or excursion should be channelled through the teacher-in-charge so that parents have a single point of contact.
- b) the School should ensure parents have clear information as to the itinerary for the event and the range of activities being proposed. The plans should also include contingency arrangements.
- c) specifically, the school should set out its expectations governing the ways in which students may communicate (likely to be via their mobile phones) with their parents during the activity or event.

- d) for longer trips and excursions, arrangements should be made for real-time communication about the expected return to school so that parents are able to make plans for meeting and picking up their children.

## 5.9 Consent

- 5.9.1 The School will obtain the written informed consent of parents in advance of any activity, camp, excursion or trip and has clear procedures to manage that process. The procedures seek to ensure that parental permission is obtained from the person or persons empowered to provide consent, specifically in cases where the custody and/or care of the student is shared between one or more parent and/or guardians.
- 5.9.2 In the case of overnight trips, the student should not be permitted to take part unless written consent has been received. For other offsite activities and excursions, verbal consent may be given if written consent is unable to be obtained.
- 5.9.3 The signed consent form is a legal document. It must be accompanied by sufficient information to indicate that the parent is aware of the nature of the activity and that he or she gives informed consent for the student to participate.

Consent givers will be provided with information including, but not limited to:

- a) the educational purpose of the activity or trip, its link to the curriculum and the ways in which it enhances student learning.
  - b) the location(s), activities, itinerary being planned, including 'free time' arrangements (if any), contingency plans (when applicable)
  - c) transport details
  - d) sleeping arrangements (where applicable)
  - e) safety information, the management of risks and information relating to any high risk activities
  - f) the names of the teacher-in-charge and the school contact person, the number of adults and the supervision arrangements
  - g) behavioural expectations
  - h) clothing requirements, dress code, the wearing of school uniform
  - i) any part of the trip involving indirect or delegated supervision, or any activities in which students will be self-reliant
  - j) the expected total cost for the trip [and the details of any financial assistance available]
  - k) arrangements being made in response to emergencies, including medical care
  - l) recommendations and requirements regarding insurance, visas, passports, vaccinations (as applicable)
  - m) the program of preparation for students
  - n) arrangements and programs planned for those students unable to attend. The school cannot delegate its duty of care. Therefore, consent forms should not include clauses that ask parents to remove their right to sue for negligence, or which require parents to agree that the school cannot be held responsible for an accident or injury in any way.
- 5.9.4 Normally, separate consent forms are required for each excursion or camp. If there is a series of activities, or similar activities taking place on a regular basis, one consent form at the beginning of the period can cover these, although, where possible, individual dates should be listed.

## 5.10 Medical information

5.10.1 The teacher-in-charge must have access to up-to-date student medical information and an individual health care plan where appropriate for each student. This information will usually be held and managed by the staff member responsible for first aid.

5.10.2 In giving consent to participate in the camp, excursion, or offsite activity parents are required to confirm that:

- a) the medical information held by the School is up-to-date.
- b) medications and instructions for use are provided.
- c) dietary requirements (medical rather than food preferences) are specified.

- d) permission is given for the teacher-in-charge to take action in a medical emergency. The information for parents must set out the range of actions and decisions available to the teacher-in-charge and how the cost of those will be met.

## 5.11 Supervision

- 5.11.1 The School's policy with regard to supervision for activities, camps and excursions is covered within the School's Supervision Policy. That being said, supervision should be explicitly addressed in the planning and in the risk assessment for the activity.
- 5.11.2 Under their duty of care, teachers bear greater responsibility for the supervision of students than do support staff members, parents, other volunteers or older students.
- 5.11.3 The School's duty of care requires it to ensure that students are appropriately supervised during the activity, camp or excursions:

- a) In setting supervision ratios, the School will take into account the age and maturity of the students, the nature of the activity (e.g. overseas, overnight trips, high risk activities, etc.) and the size of the group. The risk management documentation should specify the circumstances under which it is acceptable (if ever) for the activity, camp or excursion to be supervised by:

- i. one teacher only
- ii. adults other than teachers, with no teachers present.

Where this is not specifically articulated, it is to be assumed that it is not acceptable.

- b) an appropriate gender balance of supervising staff should be maintained in broad proportion to the gender balance of the students participating in the activity. Where it is planned that an overnight camp will not have mixed gender supervision, specific parental permission should be obtained.
- c) the School will specify the circumstances under which a parent, support staff member, volunteer [or older student] may accompany the excursion, stating clearly whether or not the parent, support staff member, volunteer [or older student] is included in the supervision ratio or not. The risk management documentation will state clearly that accompanying parents, support staff members, volunteers or older students are to be under the direction of the teacher-in-charge.
- d) For each offsite activity, excursion or camp, the teacher in charge will plan and document which type of supervision is required for each specific activity, whether that be:
  - direct supervision
  - general supervision
  - indirect supervision
  - activities in which students are self-reliant
- e) Planning for different types of supervision will depend on the age of students, their maturity, the nature of the activity, location preparedness, etc.
- f) the School will set clear guidelines for when the child (or other family member) of a supervising teacher, parent or member of the support staff is a participant in the activity. Such an arrangement should not be considered an automatic right for the parent concerned; The Principal is responsible for such a decision.

### 5.11.4 Supervision by adults other than teachers

The School may ask adults other than teachers to supervise students in specific circumstances. In making such a request, the School recognises that it retains its duty of care (which is non-delegable) and so will ensure that the adults concerned have proper training and support and are always able to contact a teacher if assistance or



advice is needed. The School will ensure that appropriate procedures are in place so that the adults know what is expected of them and how to respond in particular situations.

#### 5.12 Travel arrangements

Planning for the offsite activity, excursion or camp must include details of all travel arrangements. Contingency travel arrangements should be made for extreme weather and emergencies. Information for parents should set out clearly:

- a) the circumstances under which it may be necessary for a student to return early due to illness or poor behaviour, and information as to who will cover this additional cost.
- b) the School's insurance position and the extent to which students need to be covered by their own or their parents' insurance.
- c) the circumstances under which the use of private vehicles with staff or parent driving will be permitted.
- d) how and when DFAT guidance will be sought with respect to safety and more general travel advice.
- e) whether or not student participants will be subsidising staff travel costs and to what extent.

#### 5.13 Staff training

The School has a duty of care to ensure that members of staff involved in the activity, camp or excursion have the appropriate level of training. Training needs will be identified in the planning for the activity and in the risk assessment. Particular attention must be paid to:

- first aid training, including training in the management of anaphylaxis
- training for high risk activities
- training for the use of safety equipment.

Such training should be documented.

#### 5.14 Behavioural expectations

Students and their parents must be fully briefed as to behavioural expectations whilst travelling, as well as during the offsite activity, excursion or camp.

The procedures for dealing with incidents of serious misbehaviour, for example arrangements for the student to be excluded from the activity, should be included in the information given to parents during the consent-seeking process.

#### 5.15 Records and documentation

The School will create and retain records and documentation that support the activity, camp or excursion. Written records and documents must include:

- a) the planning process
- b) the risk assessment
- c) a written record of the approval by the School Council, Principal or Head of School
- d) an account of the preparation of students for the activity
- e) the training provided for members of staff where relevant.

During the activity, the teacher-in-charge is responsible for creating and retaining records, including:

- a) records of communication with parents, including a record of any telephone calls
- b) staff and/or student illness and/or injury
- c) records of all first aid interventions
- d) student misbehaviour.



- 5.16 The consumption of alcohol by staff during camps and excursions is, at best, unwise, and could lead to allegations of negligence and consequential loss of WorkCover rights. Members of staff during camps and excursions have a 24/7 responsibility for the care and safety of students; in light of this view, the consumption of alcohol by staff is not permitted during camps and excursions for staff included in the ratio of student supervision.

The School will make and communicate explicit decisions regarding the consumption of alcohol by staff when rostered off and when on overseas trips.

## **6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 6.1 The School Council is responsible for:

- a) reviewing the School calendar which outlines camps and significant trips and excursions.
- b) approving the introduction of new high-risk activities into the calendar.
- c) approving new overseas trips.
- d) ensuring the School's activities are non-discriminatory and inclusive.

- 6.2 The Principal is responsible (usually via Heads of School) for:

- a) the preparation of the annual calendar which outlines camps and significant trips and excursions.
- b) Ensuring that there is information about the ways in which each activities complies with this policy.
- c) ensuring the School calendar takes into account the potential impact of such experiences on the taught curriculum, on parents' financial outlay and on the additional contributions made by staff.
- d) the approval (or otherwise) of each activity following a review of the detailed planning and risk assessment.
- e) the School's supervision policy, including the setting of supervision ratios for different types of activities, camps and excursions.
- f) the School's policy in relation to the participation in the activity by family members of the supervising staff.
- g) the School's Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs (staff) policy.

- 6.3 The teacher-in-charge is responsible for all aspects of the activity, including:

- a) planning the activity, camp or excursion.
- b) the risk assessment: preparing it, communicating it, ensuring it is followed, adjusting it if necessary.
- c) student safety.
- d) management of student mobile phones, including ensuring they are not with students overnight.
- e) overseeing bushfire preparedness.
- f) emergency and contingency plans.
- g) identifying, managing and recording staff training needs.
- h) communications with parents and with the named school contact during the activity.
- i) making decisions when an emergency arises, including those relating to the medical treatment of injured and ill students.
- j) directing supervising staff, including non-teaching staff members and volunteers.
- k) liaising with third party providers.
- l) directing any accompanying family members.
- m) making and retaining records of the activity, including, specifically, records of phone calls to parents and records of first aid interventions, accidents or other incidents.

- 6.4 Supervising staff are responsible for:

- a) their individual duty of care to students.
- b) following the direction of the teacher-in-charge.

- c) following procedures set out in documentation and agreed at meetings or briefings.
- d) supervising students as directed.
- e) being aware of emergency and contingency plans and their roles within those.
- f) Informing the teacher in charge in the event that they need to adjust, or have adjusted, processes outlined in the risk management documentation.

6.5 The staff member in charge of first aid is responsible for:

- n) holding student medical records and individual health plans.
- o) distributing medicine.
- p) supporting other staff to manage the medical needs of students.
- q) keeping the teacher in charge informed of any changing medical or first aid situations.

## **7. LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

- Alcohol, Smoking and Drugs Policy (Staff)
- Anaphylaxis Management Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Duty of Care
- Emergency Management Policy
- First Aid and Distribution of Medicines Policy
- Keeping Children Safe and Mandatory Reporting Policy
- Record Management Policy
- Student Wellbeing Policy
- Supervision Policy.
- Teaching and Learning Policy

## **8. COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY**

8.1 The School publishes its Camps, Excursions and Offsite Activities Policy on:

- The Policy Drive
- LowtherLink
- BoardPro

8.2 The Camps, Excursions and Offsite Activities Policy is communicated to:

- New staff via the staff induction process
- New Board and Board sub-committee members via the Board Induction process
- Staff via a 3 yearly update process
- Board members via a 3 yearly update process
- Staff organising camps and high-risk activities prior to the particular camp or activity.

# APPENDIX 1

## Qualities of the Lowther Hall Girl

- She has a clear set of values which she can articulately communicate and apply to her life
- She is committed to the pursuit of excellence
- She is curious and knows how to learn
- She is resilient and able to accept and learn from failure
- She is prepared to take a considered risk
- She understands herself, her strengths and weaknesses
- She is confident and independent
- She has a sense of belonging
- She cares for others and for herself
- She can work with others and take the lead
- She understands the world and her capacity to shape it
- She is optimistic and has a sense of hope for the future