

# **EXCURSIONS, INCURSIONS, CAMPS, RETREATS AND EDUCATIONAL TOURS POLICY**



**St. Francis Xavier College  
Berwick, Beaconsfield & Officer  
College Board  
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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*St. Francis Xavier College is a Catholic community that is educative and supportive. We have a clear purpose: the development of a person of competence, conscience and compassion formed in the Christian tradition; one who is guided by a sense of hope and self-belief and who will be of service in the world. We recognise God's presence in our lives by celebrating and pursuing personal excellence and by living courageously with optimism and respect for all.*

At St Francis Xavier College, excursions, incursions, retreats, camps and educational tours are regarded as a valued part of the teaching and learning program. Non-compulsory activities must be viewed as a privilege, rather than a right.

### **Rationale**

These activities provide students with educational benefits which cannot be gained from the normal classroom experience.

- **Learning through Experience**
- **Adventure & Challenge**
- **Character Development**
- **Social Skills**
- **Community Building**
- **Access to Outside Experts**
- **Spiritual growth**

### **Guidelines**

These guidelines have been developed to ensure the safety and well-being of all students and staff involved in excursions, incursions, retreats, camps and educational tours, and to ensure that the educational benefits are maximised.

#### **1. Excursions**

##### **General Guidelines**

Excursions need to have a clear educational purpose. Ideally, they should be directly related to course work being undertaken at school and should be part of planned units of work. This assumes both preparation and follow-up in class time.

Heads of Department should be aware of all excursions within their Learning Areas and be part of the planning process.

The cost of excursions should be included in the annual subject budget submission.

Appropriate gender balance and student/teacher supervision ratios should be maintained for student safety. Staff should be assigned specific tasks and be familiar with procedures to be followed in the event of a critical incident. On some occasions it is acceptable for parents and/or support staff to accompany the excursion under the supervision of St. Francis Xavier College teachers.

It is important that any excursion site is well researched in advance. A risk assessment is required. The teacher in charge of the excursion is responsible for completing a risk assessment. The risk assessment must follow College guidelines and be submitted to the Organisation Co-ordinator on the approved College proforma.

The teacher in charge of the excursion must check the bushfire risk in the activity location and obtain copies of the **Emergency Management Plan** for **bushfire preparedness** for any venue in an area considered by the relevant authorities to be at risk of bushfire. Staff involved in the activity should read the Emergency Management Plan for bushfire preparedness for the venue and a copy should be given to the Organisation Co-ordinator.

Excursions should be organised at times which have minimum disruptive impact on other classes. Teachers on excursion are expected to set alternative work for their other classes.

Students need to be fully briefed on all behaviour expectations while traveling, and at the excursion site.

Wherever possible excursions should be shared with other Learning Areas in order to minimize disruption, rationalize costs and provide students with a broad range of integrated experiences.

Consideration needs to be given to the maturity and aptitude of the participating students when deciding the appropriateness of the excursion. Ratings of films must be checked and teachers should preview films. Parental consent must be obtained before students view any film rated higher than PG.

## **Procedures**

Prior to any proposed excursion an 'Application to Organise an Excursion' form must be completed, signed by the appropriate Learning Area Leader and forwarded to the Organisation Co-ordinator. **This proforma has a checklist of all the things that need to be completed in preparation for the excursion. Where the excursion involves students from more than one campus a copy of the pro-forma should be submitted to the Campus Management Team on each campus.** The application will be considered at the next Campus Management Team Meeting. Normally, applications for excursions must be submitted by the fourth week of the Semester. Approval will be conditional upon a satisfactory risk assessment being completed.

If approval is given, an appropriate permission form, detailing all relevant information should be sent to parents/guardians. **No student can be taken on an excursion without a permission form signed by the parents/guardians.**

In the first instance, a letter should set out the following:

- Purpose of the excursion
- The desired learning outcomes for students
- Itinerary
- Clothing requirements
- Transport arrangements
- Hygiene and health requirements (if applicable)
- Recommended spending money (if applicable)

All excursion letters sent to parents should be approved by the Principal.

All bus bookings should be made in advance through the College Office.

It is important that the Excursion Co-ordinator has the emergency information on students in their care. This information should include an emergency telephone number as well as medical information.

Potential emergency situations need to be considered and appropriate plans developed to deal with these. Such emergency situations might relate to serious illness, theft and loss, violence or harassment. The Excursion Co-ordinator must have a copy of the College Emergency Management Procedures for Excursions and Camps.

A list of students going on the excursion needs to be given to the College First Aid Officer, one week prior to the excursion. The College First Aid Officer will provide relevant medical history for all Students involved in the excursion and specific advice on how to care for Students with medical conditions.

A list of students attending the excursion is to be left at Reception and a copy is to be posted on the staff notice board a week before the excursion, as well as details of the whereabouts of the group for the time away from school.

Teachers of students who will miss their classes should be informed at least one week before via the daily Bulletin or Staff Exchange.

The Excursion Co-ordinator must provide the Organisation Co-ordinator with a contact telephone number for the venue if possible as well as a mobile telephone contact number. A College mobile telephone is available for use on excursions.

### **On Excursion**

- The duty of care expected of teachers on excursion exceeds that which exists in the familiar, comparatively safe and predictable school environment.
- A roll should be taken on and off transport
- Groups should travel with a First Aid kit
- A College mobile phone should accompany the group if the Excursion Co-ordinator does not have a personal mobile telephone.
- All College regulations apply for the duration of the excursion.
- Staff must never be alone with a student of the opposite sex.
- If any incident occurs the Emergency Management Procedures for Excursions must be followed. A copy of these procedures should be taken by the teacher in charge of any excursion. If contacted by the media for comment all requests are to be directed to the Principal
- The teacher in charge of the excursion must ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for supervision of any students who are part of the group involved in the excursion but who remain at school for any reason.
- Consumption of alcohol by any staff or student is strictly forbidden on any excursion, camp, retreat or educational tour.

### **2. Retreats and camps**

The procedures relating to excursions also apply to the planning and execution of Retreats, Reflection days and camps.

However, all overnight activities require approval of the Principal in the first instance.

A College medical form must be completed by any student participating in an overnight activity. Any student who suffers asthma must also complete an asthma management form. Students who have food allergies must complete a dietary requirements form and a food allergy action plan. **The medical form should have the asthma management form and dietary requirements form attached to it when it is distributed to students. Completed medical**

**forms must be submitted to the College First Aid Officer at least two weeks prior to the overnight activity. The First Aid Officer will provide specific advice on how to care for students medical conditions.**

Separate rooms/tents must be provided for male and female staff and students involved in overnight activities.

No staff member or student should enter the room/tent allocated to members of the opposite sex.

### **3. Outward Bound Experience**

Outward Bound is a compulsory outdoor experience for all Year 9 students and an integral part of the Christian Leadership program. Parents may apply for exemption for their child on medical grounds where a certificate or letter is provided by a Doctor or other appropriate medical professional. The College Principal determines if exemption will be granted. The College Principal reserves the right to exempt Students on other grounds or to postpone their participation until Year 10. Students who do not participate in the Outward Bound Expedition and have not been granted exemption will not be allowed to participate in the next phase of the Christian Leadership program which is the College Presentation Ball in Year 11.

Outward Bound has a designated Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator is responsible for the sound preparation of the staff and students, the safe execution of the activity and the achievement of the educational aims of the activity.

During the 9 day expedition the Co-ordinator will report to the College Principal and Deputy Principal – Head of Campus regularly. The Co-ordinator should also be contactable 24 hours per day.

Because each group is led by a qualified Outward Bound Instructor St. Francis Xavier staff involved are not required to have specific skills in Outdoor Education or Adventure activities. However, it is essential that they understand and support the aims of the program.

Staffing on the Outward Bound expedition must meet the staff/student ratios as set in the 'Safety in Outdoor Adventure Activities' Manual.

Where there are both female and male students attending, there should be at least one male and one female staff member with each group of students.

A Parent Information evening will be held to inform parents of the purpose, expectations and educational benefits of Outward Bound.

Any injury to students or staff, accident or incident involving police or other emergency services, must be immediately reported to the College Principal and Deputy Principal - Head of Campus. The Outward Bound Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that a log detailing Staff or Student illness, injury, misbehavior or other incidents is kept throughout the 9 day expedition. Records of any telephone calls to parents must also be included. A brief summary of the conversation must be made. Details of injuries must be entered into the Accident Register.

Prior to departure an Outward Bound medical form must be completed by all students and staff attending expedition.

#### **4. Educational Tours**

St Francis Xavier College sponsors a number of trips for students to venues both interstate and overseas. Such trips are encouraged, as they provide our students with a range of learning experiences and activities which cannot be gained at home.

Unlike camps or excursions, which are organised during school time, Educational Tours, including interstate and overseas tours present a whole range of issues and requirements that need to be addressed by the school to ensure appropriate duty of care of students is maintained, government regulations are complied with and ambassadorial responsibilities are taken into account. Educational Tours are a year to year proposition. St Francis Xavier College is under no obligation to offer Educational Tours each year.

#### **General Guidelines:**

- The Educational Tour must be approved by the Principal and the Board of Management.
- CECV guidelines must be followed for interstate and overseas tours.
- The Educational Tour must be affordable (within the reach of most families).
- The Educational Tour is held only outside normal school time (holidays).
- The Educational Tour is regarded as an additional (extra) opportunity available for students. It is understood that it cannot be made available to all students.
- St. Francis Xavier College will cancel any Educational Tour if there are insufficient supervising staff.
- The number of places available on any Educational Tour may be restricted.
- Applications will be dealt with on a 'first come' basis up to the limit. Applications above the cut-off limit will go onto the stand-by list.
- Applicants must satisfy the selection criteria.
- Applicants must meet all deadlines.
- No correspondence will be entered into if an applicant is not accepted.
- All applicable Occupational Health & Safety guidelines must be satisfied before final approval for an Educational Tour is granted.
- A parent information evening must be held well in advance of the planned Educational Tour.
- The Co-ordinating teacher must work closely with the Principal and College Organisation Co-ordinator during the planning and preparation of an Educational Tour to ensure that all College and CECV guidelines are met.

#### **Basis for Discretion**

The Principal retains the right to modify or cancel any camp, excursion or educational tour where:

- the educational value/benefit is not clearly demonstrated
- the health and safety procedures have not been adequately addressed
- the cost to the school outweighs the educational benefits for students
- the student-teacher ratios do not comply with safety requirements

#### **Specific Guidelines**

The specific guidelines for the organisation and conduct of an Educational Tour encompass those for Excursions and Camps. However, due to the diverse nature of Educational Tours

additional guidelines and requirements may be necessary on a case by case basis. This will be determined by the Principal.

## 5. Incursions

Incursions need to be directly related to course work being undertaken at school and should be part of planned units of work. This assumes both preparation and follow-up in class time.

Incursions should be organised at times which have minimum disruptive impact on other classes – preferably in the scheduled class time for that subject.

An appropriate number and gender balance of staff should supervise the Incursion. They should be assigned specific tasks.

The incursion activity should be well researched. A risk assessment may be required. This will be determined by the Campus Management Team.

Students need to be fully briefed on behaviour expectations during the Incursion.

Wherever possible Incursions should be shared with other Learning Areas in order to minimize disruption, rationalize costs and provide students with a broad range of integrated experiences.

Consideration needs to be given to the maturity and aptitude of the participating students when deciding the appropriateness of the incursion. Ratings of films must be checked, and teachers should preview films. Parental consent must be obtained before students view any film rated higher than PG.

Learning Area Leaders should be aware of all incursions with their Learning Areas, and be part of the planning process.

The cost of incursions should be included in the annual subject budget submission.

### Procedures

Prior to any proposed Incursion an 'Application to Organise an Incursion' form must be completed signed by the appropriate Learning Area Leader and forwarded to the Organisation Co-ordinator. **This proforma has a checklist of all the things that need to be completed in preparation for the Incursion.** The application will be considered at the next Campus Management Team Meeting. Normally, applications for Incursions must be submitted by the second week of the Semester.

If approval is given it is advisable that a letter detailing all relevant information be sent to parents/guardians.

The letter should include:

- Purpose of the Incursion
- The desired learning outcomes for students
- Programme for the Incursion
- Clothing requirements (If special clothing required)
- Hygiene and health requirements (if applicable)

All letters to parents concerning the incursion should be approved by the Principal

A list of students attending the incursion is to be left at Reception, and, if students will miss other classes, a copy posted on the staff notice board a week before the Incursion.

Where students will miss other classes the teachers concerned should be informed at least one week before via the Daily Bulletin or Staff Exchange.

### **Selection of Staff for Camps, Retreats and Educational Tours (including interstate and overseas tours)**

It is expected that all Camps, Retreats and Educational Tours will be organised and co-ordinated by College staff members who applied for the initial approval of the tour, or have been appointed by the Principal to conduct the trip. The Principal must seek from the body of the staff appropriate personnel to take part in the tour. These positions will usually be advertised in the Staff Exchange.

In selecting staff for Camps, Retreats and Educational Tours the Principal should make every attempt to ensure:

- Gender balance of female and male staff.
- Staff participating have demonstrated appropriate experience, skills and ability.
- Have demonstrated commitment to the College
- Are willing to be actively involved in the preparation, conduct and review of the tour

In certain circumstances the Principal may delegate the responsibility for selecting staff for Camps, Retreats and Educational Tours, however, **staffing must always be approved by the Principal.**

Staff wishing to participate in interstate and overseas tours must:

- Apply in writing to the Principal of the College, outlining:
  - reasons for wishing to participate,
  - teaching experience,
  - previous experience of such tours
  - years at the College,
  - skills which would be used on and after the trip, or gained as a result of participating in the trip.
- Be committed to the educational aims of the tour.
- Be prepared to actively participate in the organisation of the tour
- Be prepared to actively participate in day to day management and supervision of students during the tour.
- Be prepared to assist in the review of the tour upon return.

### **Attendance at Mass**

All students and staff involved in any Excursion, Camp or Educational Tour which runs over a Sunday should attend Mass if possible. If this is not possible a Liturgy of the Word should be held. The College Director of Faith & Liturgy can assist in the preparation of a liturgy prior to the activity.



## **CECV Student Activity Locator**

The CECV Student Activity Locator (SAL) is a database where schools can record offsite activities. The purpose of the SAL is to facilitate prompt communications with school off-site activities affected by emergencies or bushfire weather warnings. By centrally recording offsite activities in the SAL, Emergency Services can quickly be notified of student locations in the event of an emergency or critical incident such as a bushfire, flood, storm, hostage situation or chemical spill.

At St. Francis Xavier College all overnight activities are entered into the SAL. The Principal will decide which day activities will be entered into the SAL database.

### **School Fees**

Families need to have all school fees up to date before students can attend non-compulsory extra curriculum activities, for example: Central Australia, Japan trip, Presentation Ball, Instrumental Lessons or have made appropriate arrangements with the Business Manager or the College Principal.

(College Education Fee Policy)