“Bringing a new dimension to the idea of 'Communal Living' and 'The Understanding of Others'.”

PARENT/ CARER INFORMATION BOOKLET
RATIONALE:
At Milton State School (MSS), we strongly believe in the value of camp experiences, and have therefore agreed as a staff to support a school wide camping program. We believe in fostering camping skills from Prep through to Year 7, with the primary focus being on the development of student social skills through our “You Can Do It Program”. That is, adhering to the five (5) “Keys” to success -
• Emotional Resilience
• Confidence
• Organisation
• Getting Along and
• Persistence
MSS fosters the development of these keys in all that we do within our school community, in partnership with parents, students and staff. This extends to activities which take us out of the school environment, and specifically, one-day ‘excursions’ and multi-day ‘school camps’.
MSS believes that building relationships and friendships between students and teachers, coupled with the “camp environment”, provides a completely different opportunity for this to occur. Camps allow students to develop a degree of independence, away from parents, siblings and their normal home environment.
Academically, we look to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the children about aspects of the wider environment and student interests.
'School Camp' is an opportunity for students to experience the practical aspects of the unit of work which they are focussing on during that particular term.

MSS aims to ensure that camps (and day-excursions), have direct relation to the work being undertaken in the classroom.

“WHY DO WE NEED TO HAVE A ‘SCHOOL CAMP’ POLICY?”
Milton State School values the many educational benefits that a comprehensive camp program offers. Camps are only possible through the dedication and commitment of the teachers and staff at our school. Camps are undertaken completely at the discretion of the teachers, and the M.S.S. Leadership Team. The M.S.S Leadership Team includes (and is not restricted to) Principal, Deputy-Principal, Registrar, Administration Officer/s.

SELECTION CRITERIA:
Teachers’ paramount responsibility is for the care and safety of the students. Teachers therefore place enormous importance on planning effectively for each and every camp.

Consideration is taken into the following criteria:

♦ Specific needs/interests of the student group in that year;
♦ The unit of work being covered;
♦ The educational value of the camping experience (eg: year 6/7 may focus on leadership);
♦ Location- access, distance;
♦ Facilities- activities offered, accommodation, safety, catering, staffing and supervision;
♦ $ Cost;
♦ Appropriateness for age group;

Please note:
The location of camps may vary from year to year and will not be repeated simply based on the assumption that it is a ‘tradition’ or “…because we have always been to that camp for that year level”.

PARENT/CARER ATTENDANCE ON CAMPS:
In some instances, it is necessary to request that a number of parents/carers attend the camp to offer additional assistance with supervision and participation in activities. Often there are numerous parents who would like to attend, but as you can appreciate, this is not possible due to a range of factors, least of all the fact that the camping experience is all about developing independence in the students.
When teachers select the parents who attend the camp they may base their selection on some of the following criteria:

- First aid or medical experience/ knowledge;
- Qualifications or interests in specific activities which are offered at the camp;
- Ability to allow their own children to experience the camp and develop their individuality and confidence;
- The need for ‘one on one’ supervision for a child with special needs;
- Ability and willingness to follow directions from the teacher in charge and to manage a group of students;
- To be positive role models for all children and develop the ‘Keys to Success’;
- Gender mix to balance the parent supervisors/ teachers attending;
- Specific needs of the students and the demands of the camp- many camps can be physically challenging and require a level of fitness.
- The need for parents based on the level of supervision on the camp which is provided by the camp operators.

Ultimately, the camping experience is designed for the students to build a level of independence, and if a parent is to attend, it is not a given that their own child will be placed in their group for supervision.

It is important that teachers feel confident and comfortable with those who might be selected to assist on the camp.

The decision as to which parents/carers and how many attend rest with the class teachers in consultation with the school principal/ deputy principal.

PARENT/ CARER SELECTION PROCESS:
When the camp venue is decided, class teachers will send home an 'Expression of Interest' form, (see last page) to be completed by those parents interested in attending a school camp. Parents will also be required to sign an undertaking to respect the decision of the teachers in this selection process. Teachers will assess their suitability in terms of the above mentioned criteria. Where there are a number of parents with similar skills, abilities and interests etc who wish to attend, the parents will be selected randomly. In some circumstances, it may be that a parent/ carer may be required to hold a blue card.

We ask that parents/carers respect the decision of the teachers in this selection process.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT CAMP:
The camping experience is considered an integral aspect of our school curriculum. It provides children with one of the most memorable and valuable experiences. It is therefore an expectation that all students would be attending camp.

However, it is still at the discretion of parents/carers as to whether their child attends the camp. We can only stress the importance which camps have in helping children to develop independence, friendships and emotional resilience etc and your support of our program through allowing your child to attend shows your commitment to what we are trying to achieve in our curriculum program.

Should you feel strongly about their non-attendance at camp, it is necessary that you discuss this with your child’s teacher. You might also be contacted by one of the school leadership team to discuss your concerns further. Often, we can offer solutions where a problem relating to their non-attendance might arise.

Obviously, medical conditions etc are understandable reasons for a child to not attend. Where a student does not attend camp, an educational program of learning will be developed, and the student will be placed in another year level for supervision during the camp period.

Inappropriate student behaviour leading up to and during camp may be a deciding factor on whether they are allowed to attend or in fact may be asked to leave the camp, with parents/carers being asked to collect their child. The obligations of students and parents are clearly outlined on the appendices as attached.

CAMP PAYMENT:
As with all school activities, we work hard to ensure that costs are kept to a minimum. Often we are dealing with various organisations which pass on increases in costs through inflation etc to the school, so the reality is that camp costs will increase each year to keep in line with such inflation.

Our aim is to make payment for camps as easy as possible. Therefore we have designed a number of payment plans, including:

- Lump sum at any time up to 2 weeks prior to camp commencement;
- Installments, up to 2 weeks prior to camp commencement.

Payment plans can be negotiated with the school Business Services Manager.
Refund policy:
All camp payments are fully refundable should a student not attend the camp, provided a letter of explanation is forwarded to the school, which allows us to then record this for audit purposes.

Financial hardship:
If for some reason you are experiencing difficulty paying the camp costs through financial hardship, we encourage you to discuss this with the Principal so we can work out a solution. All discussions will remain strictly confidential.

TRANSPORTATION:
When travelling to/from 'day excursion' or 'school camp', seat-belted buses will be used to transport students to their destination. On some occasions, travel by train or barge may be necessary. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, it would be highly unlikely that any private vehicles (parents/teachers) would be used to transport students.

CATERING:
When selecting a venue, teachers take into consideration the nutritional value of the menu as a whole. On camp there are often opportunities to give students ‘treats’ which might not be a part of their everyday food consumption. However, where a menu looks to lack balance, then the camp venue may be reconsidered or consultation will take place with the camp operator to modify the menu to suit the school requirements. Students with specific food allergies or dietary requirements will be catered for, provided parents indicate this requirement on the appropriate form when camp information is sent home.

RISK ASSESSMENT:
For every camping experience, teachers undertake risk assessment procedures to ensure that the activities, supervision and location of the camp adhere to Education Queensland guidelines. Many camp operators also undertake their own risk management assessments and these are made available to schools to make them aware of what activities are offered and the inherent risks. All camp operators must carry a blue card certification and on most occasions, teachers will visit camps prior to booking to assess the risks and meet with the camp operator. The school will have emergency and critical incident procedures in place for camps, which will be based on the location and the specific requirements of each camp site. These will be outlined in the letter which goes home prior to the year level camp taking place.

DURATION OF CAMPS:
Each camping experience will depend upon the age/year level of the students. The duration of the camp will be determined by the year level teachers in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal, however the camps will not exceed the duration recommended below for each year level:

- Prep: day program at school
- Year 1: day program at school
- Year 2: up to one night (may be at school sleep over or at a campsite)
- Year 3: up to two nights
- Year 4: up to two nights
- Year 5: up to three nights
- Year 6: up to four nights
- Year 7: up to four nights
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

NAME: (please print) ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

CHILD’S NAME & CLASS: …………………………………………………………………………………………………

What skills, abilities and interests etc are you able to bring to camp? – for example:

♦ First aid or medical experience/ knowledge;
♦ Qualifications or interests in specific activities which are offered at the camp;
♦ Ability to allow their own children to experience the camp and develop their individuality and confidence;
♦ The need for ‘one on one’ supervision for a child with special needs;
♦ Ability and willingness to follow directions from the teacher in charge and to manage a group of students;
♦ To be positive role models for all children and develop the ‘Keys to Success’;
♦ Gender mix to balance the parent supervisors/ teachers attending;
♦ Specific needs of the students and the demands of the camp- many camps can be physically challenging and require a level of fitness.
♦ The need for parents based on the level of supervision on the camp which is provided by the camp operators.
♦ Holder of a Blue Card.

I understand and respect the decision made by the teachers, deputy principal and principal, about which parent/carers will attend the camp is final and respect this decision.

Name: (please print) …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Signed: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Date: ……………………………