



PLACEMENT & ATTENDANCE POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand this policy, please contact Tony Bellette at tony.bellette@education.vic.gov.au.

Camp schools, including Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre (Blackwood) have been established to provide students with the opportunity to further extend their learning experiences through a residential setting by extending their learning, comprehension and application of skills through a variety of challenging lessons in a natural outdoor setting. While engaged in programs at Blackwood students are engaged in an experiential curriculum focused on teamwork & resilience designed to challenge and extend their comfort zones within an unfamiliar but supportive environment.

Students attend Blackwood residential programs where the duration of their stay will be anywhere between 2 – 5 days, as well as on occasions for day programs to engage in and grow through our educational programs encompassing our teamwork & resilience curriculum. While at Blackwood students are encouraged to learn through the following lessons:-

Alphabet Dig	Archery	Bouldering	Bush Cooking
Bush Huts	Bushwalking	Campfire	Climbing
Environmental Ed	Fire Lighting	Flying Fox	Frisbee Golf
Gold Panning	High Ropes	Imagination Trail	Mountain Bike Riding
Night Walks	Observatory	Orienteering	Team Games
Yabbing			

The purpose of this policy is to:

- specify the criteria for students to attend Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre
- provide clarity on the placement criteria and ensure a smooth transition for students attending the school
- explain to school staff and parents/carers the key practices and procedures Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre has in place to record, support and monitor student attendance

BLACKWOOD SPECIAL SCHOOLS OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

1015 Greendale - Trentham Road,
Blackwood, Victoria 3458, Australia

Campus of Frankston Special Development School
Member of Residential Outdoor Schools Association (ROSA)

Post: Post Office, Blackwood, Victoria 3458, Australia

Phone: 03 5368 6768

Email: blackwood.specialschools.oec@education.vic.gov.au

Website: blackwoodsssoec.vic.edu.au



PLACEMENT

1. BACKGROUND

Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre is not a designated neighbourhood school, and programs are available for students state-wide subject to the enrolment criteria set out in this policy.

2. Placement criteria

The following criteria have been determined based on:

- the identified education needs of students in the community
- Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre's capacity, and the need to ensure as many students as possible can experience and benefit from the unique curriculum offered at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre

Students seeking to attend must:

- Currently be enrolled in a Victorian Government Special School
- Be aged between 5 – 18 years

3. Application & Approval Process

Application to attend Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre is available and open to all Victorian Government Special Schools and completed by the Base School through an online Program Request process with the approval of the Base School Principal:-

- further information about the application process see:
<https://www.blackwoodssoec.vic.edu.au/program-request>

The Program Request process is:-

- Applications Open annually at the beginning of Term 2
- As part of the application process, Base Schools can nominate three academic weeks as their preferred booking dates as well as a preferred accommodation site at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre
 - Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre has three (3) accommodation sites
 - School – a 15 student bed & 6 staff bed self-catered bunk house
 - Residence – a 18 student & 6 staff bed self-catered bunk house
 - Tent Shelter – 10 Tent self-catered accommodation site with bathroom facilities

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- Once an application is submitted it is received by:-
 - Base School Principal;
 - Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre; and
 - The person making the submission on behalf of the Base School
- Towards the end of August Blackwood Staff begin to allocate Programs for the following academic year
- Programs are allocated on the following basis:-
 - One Base School per accommodation site per academic week (or half week)
 - If first preferred dates are not available, preference 2 & 3 are considered
 - If accommodation requested is not available, then allocation is made on available accommodation
 - If no preference dates are available, then other dates are allocated based on availability
- Towards the end of Term 3, Program Allocations for the following academic year are made public on our website and promoted to all Schools across the Victorian Government Special Schools Sector
 - <https://www.blackwoodssoec.vic.edu.au/availability>
- Once Program Allocations are made public, Base Schools are invited to review the allocations and directly contact Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre if changes are required to their allocated dates
- If more Program Requests are required, Base Schools are encouraged to check availability and make a Program Request
- At the beginning of Term 4, Schools who have been allocated Programs for the following academic year are sent a Program Acceptance Document detailing their allocated programs throughout the year
- Once the document is signed by the Principal & Business Manager and returned to Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre a deposit per allocated Program invoice is sent to the Base School
- A student's attendance at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre is a decision made by the student's Base School
- 10 weeks prior to the implementation of a Program, a Blackwood Program Co-ordinator will contact the Base School and support them through the Program planning, preparation and implementation process
- It is during this process that Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre discovers which students will be attending
- All student details – name, medical & consent forms, management plans, dietary requirements – are obtained via the Base School and submitted directly to Blackwood

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4. Appeals Process

Parents/carers can appeal against the decision not to accept a student at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre directly with their Base School.

If parents/carers are not satisfied that their appeal has been adequately considered by their Base School, they may escalate the appeal to the Regional Director within their Base School's region.

5. Register and Records

Once placement is confirmed, the relevant information will be recorded at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre:

- Student Name – recorded via Blackwood's attendance register
- Students date of birth & address – recorded via the student's medical consent form
- Name & contact details of parent/s / guardian/s – recorded via the student's medical consent form
- Date of arrival & date of departure – recorded via Blackwood's attendance register
- Student's Victorian Student Number – available from Base School is required

ATTENDANCE

1. Scope

This policy applies to all students for the duration of their attendance at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre.

Students who choose to attend Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre are making a commitment to participating in all scheduled sessions, arriving at each activity on time and prepared to take part. Our students are encouraged to approach a Blackwood or Base School staff member and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance while on-site, for example:-

- Perceived risk in relation to a lesson
- Homesickness
- Loneliness
- Disability
- Phobia
- Communication
- Skill level / access to prior knowledge or prior learning

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2. Recording attendance

Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre will record attendance:-

- Upon arrival

Throughout the duration of a program implemented at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre head counts are completed regularly:-

- Prior to the commencement of a lesson
- During a lesson
- At the completion of a lesson
- During an emergency situation – scenario OR real

Attendance is recorded via Blackwood’s attendance register while students are onsite at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre:

- Blackwood’s attendance register is an excel spreadsheet
- Each Base School has their own excel spreadsheet which records the attendance of all their students throughout each academic year
- Upon arrival, all students are greeted by a Blackwood Staff Member through the Welcome Lesson, who confirms with visiting staff who has arrived at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre
 - Students & visiting staff recorded in the Blackwood attendance register
- At the start and end of each day each visiting school is visited by the Campus Principal who discusses any overnight issues with the staff and confirms everyone’s attendance and suitability for the day ahead
- At the start and end of each lesson the Blackwood staff verbally confirm with the visiting staff that everyone is present and accounted for via a head count

3. Recording absences and managing non-attendance

If a student does not arrive at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre at the commencement of their program: -

- A conversation is had with the visiting staff as to the non-arrival of the expectant student

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If a student is not present when attendance is recorded during their stay at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre:

- A conversation is had with the visiting staff as to the non-engagement of a student
- As long as Base School Staff supervision is maintained, that student may be excused from engagement because of the discussion between Blackwood & Base School Staff
- If a student is missing, then the Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre Emergency Management Plan will be followed

COMMUNICATION

The Blackwood Placement and Attendance policy will be made available to the school community on the school's website.

Policy Review and Approval

Policy last reviewed	July 24
Approved by	Principal
Next scheduled review date	July 27

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