



SOPHIA  
MUNDI

The Inner City Steiner School P-12 IB11-12

# Outdoor Education Primary School Student Handbook



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# 1. Rationale

In order to understand the Outdoor Education Program at Sophia Mundi it is necessary to go beyond the sense of terms like ‘camping’ and ‘bushwalking’. The staff who have designed the programme and crafted it in details of curriculum have a far more profound view of what is done and how this can be developed and adapted to meet the needs of young people and the world they live in.

Our school is located in the inner city suburbs surrounded by factories, warehouses, breweries, single-fronted terraced houses, busy highways, train lines, and shops. Each day the students who arrive at school have experienced something of this complex business – even if through the window of a car. It is around us, our city. We take it for granted.

While it is important to both celebrate and enjoy the city, so much of life today is tempered by technology. Each year always brings a new invention: mobile phones, MP3 players, DVD’s, and the children take them in their stride; the progressive world of technological advancement.

But what pedagogical questions emerge from this contemporary situation?

- ◆ How can young people live with nature?
- ◆ How do they see / regard / experience the natural world?
- ◆ How dependent have they become on conventional technology?
- ◆ What does that mean for their future; how they make decisions?
- ◆ What can we bring them, as educators, to
  - *show* them what there is to see
  - to *help* them experience truly and fully all aspects of life, and to
  - *become* competent and capable at finding and providing what they need.

The Outdoor Education Program works on the principle that students will be making decisions for the future. If they don’t have a connection to the bush and a sense of place, then it won't be cared for.

“mindscape shapes landscape”

By carrying their home on their back making their way individually and collectively...

“landscape shapes mindscape”

Self-responsibility, relying on yourself, builds self esteem. It helps the students define *needs* from *wants* ... and so to connect fully with each and every day, and with different places on the earth to give students a sense of Australia.

## 2. Overview

The camps for the junior School Period cover

- ◆ A wide range of locations: coastal environments, bushland, box-ironbark forests, granite landscapes, rivers, lakes, seas.
- ◆ A range of activities: day walks, swimming in the ocean, horse riding, canoeing, bike riding, visiting caves, skiing.
- ◆ A range of seasons and of duration.

All form part of the fabric for the year relating to curriculum – lessons like Geomorphology and general geographic, geological, astronomical, botanical knowledge.

One of the National Goals for Schooling in Australia is that school-leavers should:

“have an understanding of, and concern for, stewardship of the natural environment, and the knowledge and skills to contribute to ecologically sustainable development.”

This goal is fundamental to what we try to cover with this programme.

The Outdoor Education programme has been designed to sequentially offer the students a steadily progressive and curriculum based challenge. Each camp draws on the learning from the previous trip, enabling the children to achieve extraordinary levels of life skills, knowledge and wisdom.



**Barmah Lakes- Murray River Conversation**

### 3. Classes and Destinations

Class 3	Practise afternoon Balnarring	2 afternoons 3 days
Class 4	Walkerville Upper Yarra Reservoir	4 days 4 days
Class 5	Melville Caves Grampians	5 days 5 days
Class 6	Astronomy /Otways Central Victoria	5 days 5 days

### 4. Camp descriptions

#### Class 3 – Curriculum Overview

The Class 3 children are often both new to camping and may have not been away from home and parents overnight before. The aim of Outdoor Education during this year level is to offer the children a positive experience of the Australian bush and to teach them some essential outdoor skills for future camps.

#### Developmental Stage

The transition from play to work is undertaken. The child's growth accelerates. The age of dream is passing.

#### Practise afternoons

These afternoons generally occur a few weeks before the first camp and is designed as a stepping-stone in preparation for the camp. During the afternoons the children learn many of the routines and practices of the outdoor education camps, ensuring their first actual camp is a little less daunting. The Children will learn how to erect their tents, help with the cooking and preparation and have time to get to know the outdoor education staff. The first afternoon will conclude with a talk with parents to give information about the program, including gear and what is expected of parents if they volunteer to come on camp.

## **Balnarring Beach**

Located only about 1 hour away from the school this location is ideal for the Children's first camp away from the familiarity of home and classroom. It is a very welcoming campsite with close proximity to the beach and the local creek. Dolphins, koalas and training racehorses are common, and the Children may find themselves exploring rock shelves at low tide, swimming, walking and playing around the campsite. They will learn basic camping skills and begin to learn the daily rhythm of the school's Outdoor Education Programme.

## **Curriculum**

Place responsiveness. How can these Children respond, interact and experience Balnarring Beach? This notion of place responsiveness is the core principle of the Outdoor Education Programme and is covered in depth in the Rationale. As extensive as VELs is as a curriculum framework, it fails to fully comprehend the understanding and description of how we would like Children to meet and respond to the places and the world with emotional engagement. While there is a VELs and a Skills Development element below, they cover only the secondary goals of the Programme.

## **Class 4 – Curriculum Overview**

The children take a further step in the Outdoor Education journey and spend two camps in the Australian bush during the year. Both camps are four days in length and this extended time encourages the children to open themselves more fully to places.

## **Developmental Stage**

Transition: the child becomes more inward and independent. The heartbeat slows to a 4:1 ratio with the breathing, which is the same as an adult.

## **Walkerville**

Walkerville offers both coast and forest for exploration and has a deep sense of wildness mixed with comfortable camping facilities. It is a beautiful and varied stretch of coast that includes basalt reef platforms, limestone heritage, rainforests and the vast, white expanse of Waratah Beach. The Foreshore Reserve accommodates a simple way of being in beautiful places so that the landscape speaks for itself. Much of the Children's time is absorbed in experiencing the change to the beach front as the tide hides and reveals the maze of basalt reefs, home to many wondrous sea creatures and plants, or suddenly having access to small limestone islands just off the coast. It is a contained and gentle place for children to look a little further out into the world.



## Upper Yarra

During Class 4 the children study the Yarra River in their Local Geography Main Lesson, and this camp draws upon this school-based knowledge by physically taking them along the River, finding its source, and observing it meander from the mountains to the bay and beyond. This camp also enables the Children to understand a natural system that is essentially in their own backyard. A vital catchment for Melbourne's water supply, the Yarra Ranges National Park is home to forests of Mountain Ash, rainforest and fern gullies. The campsite was the original site of the workers' village when the reservoir was built and is the closest you can legally get to the source of the Yarra.



## Class 5 – Curriculum Overview

The two camps this year are further away from Melbourne than in the past, requiring more travelling time and longer trip length, creating an exhilarating voyage for the Children. A strong focus on exploration united with a push for individual and group responsibility is encouraged.

### Developmental Stage

The child's self-consciousness becomes stronger. At this age the child is in harmony with himself or herself and in his or her surroundings.

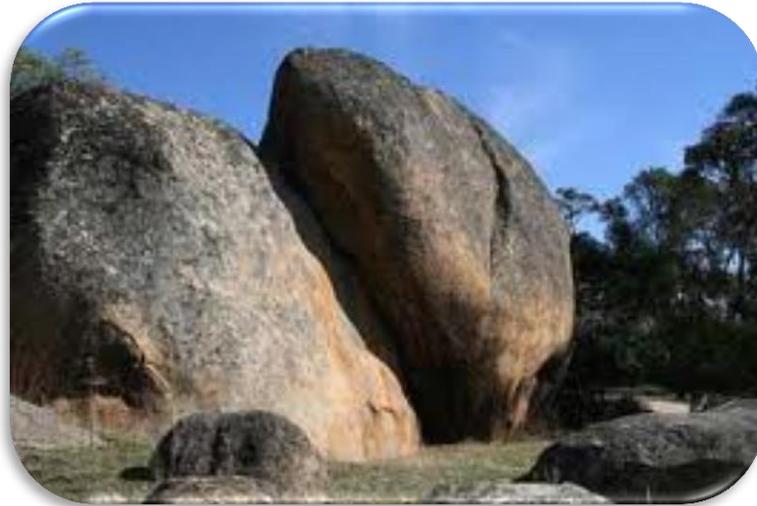
### Melville's Caves

The Melville Caves are located northwest of Bendigo in the Box-Ironbark forests of Central Victoria and are rich in granite outcrops, slabs, shelters and caves. Known as the 'forgotten forest', such woodlands have been logged throughout Central Victoria for mining and hardwood production – nearly resulting in a complete loss of old growth habitat. The area still contains some remnants of this former forest. Aboriginal people consider the area to be very significant, and past inhabitation can still be seen and felt at various sites in the park. During this camp the Children

gain an experience of Aboriginal and Colonial Australia, as well as gaining some awareness of wind and weather and their relationship with landscape.

### **Buandik**

Nestled into the most western ridge of the Grampians, Buandik has a real sense of remoteness mixed with spectacular scenery and exploratory sandstone mountains. The Children take day walks exploring different sections of the Victoria Range and have picnic lunches away from the main camp and therefore create mini journeys each time. These initial journeys are an important step in the Child's Outdoor Education as it prepares them for more major expeditions during the High School camps. Buandik offers a real sense of adventure with pockets of Child sized spaces and views of an immense landscape, fantastic for the Child who is beginning to open their eyes and look out into the world. Being immersed in this mystical looking landscape Children tune into the Aboriginal spirit of the place, which is physically evident in cave paintings and ceremonial circles. The camping site provides a secluded space full of surprises for Class 5. Children have a real drive for exploration at this age and the world is becoming a place full of challenges and opportunities for observation and discovery.



### **Class 6 – Curriculum Overview**

The progression in the child's understanding of Outdoor Education is at a stage where they undertake extra responsibility and thus ownership of their experiences as the children begin to organise and cook some of their own food, Both camps aim to continue to broaden the Child's experience of a variety of landscapes and environments and to further the Child's experience and abilities in camping, specifically cooking and self-management. They both also function in tandem with important Main Lessons that the students study during the year.

### **Central Victoria**

This camp focuses heavily on the Geology Main Lesson that occurs within the classroom and is a more obvious approach to rock than the previous two trips where granite and sandstone were so

prominent. This camp sees the children observing many different forms of rock and enables them to understand how these rocks were formed. Through Geology, the Children study the relationship of the mineral kingdom to the whole of the earth's physical landscape. They look under the earth in more detail and investigate its composition, formation, landforms and its treasures. This main lesson completes the introduction of the animal, plant and mineral kingdoms through the artistic feeling realm, which the Children began in Class 4. These areas are retraced in more scientific terms in Class 9 (Geomorphology). During the week the Children visit a range of geological sites in Central Victoria, which will give them the opportunity to experience and observe firsthand the three types of rocks (igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary), extinct volcanoes and the results of ancient volcanic action. They delve for treasures – gold and crystals; and sleep in the crater of a dormant volcano. The Child is encouraged to experience both a picture of the land underneath the surface and the life of Australia's Gold Rush.



### **Hattah Lakes**

This desert-based trip exposes the children to the essence of Australia, the spiritual wide-open inland. A true contrast to Melbourne's Abbotsford; the Hattah Lakes have a both mystical and comfortable atmosphere that engages the Children's own inner spirit. The lakes are fed by a flooding Murray River (a rare occurrence these days) and provide an oasis like environment in the midst of Mallee and desert. Towering River Redgums line the lakes and shelter various kangaroo species, birdlife and goannas from a hot desert sun. Once again the Children experience little day journeys to explore the area, but always ensuring a return to camp each afternoon to breathe in the place. The Child gains an experience in a small way what the early explorers and native indigenous Australians may have faced and also gain a real experience of Astronomy to support the Astronomy main lesson.

## 5. Equipment

**Please bring: Lunch, water and snacks for the first day. As we are leaving early please pack a substantial morning tea.**

- 1x Daypack
- 1x Shoes/boots suitable for bushwalking (Dry Pair)
- 1x Shoes/Boots/Sandals for exploring rock shelves (Wet Pair)
- **NO THONGS**
- 1x Rainjacket – japura, oilskin or rainbird are good.
- 2x Woollen/Polarfleece Jumpers (**not cotton!**)
- 1x Beanie
- 3x T-shirt (**no singlets!**)
- 2x Tracksuit pants (**no jeans!**)
- 2x Shorts
- 3x Socks
- 4x Underwear
- 1x Swimmers/bathers
- 1 x board shorts & rash shirt
- 1x Towel
- 1x Pyjamas
- 1x Sleeping bag with liner
- 1x Sleeping mat
- 1x Tent with Poles & Pegs
- Bowl/Plate/Utensils
- Mug/Cup
- Tea towel
- Water Bottles – 1-2 litre capacity
- Torch – with spare batteries
- Toiletries – toothbrush, paste, hairbrush, etc.
- Sunscreen
- Sunhat – **WIDE BRIMMED**
- Homemade Biscuits/Slice (with Ingredients)
- Lunch and Snack for first day
- Pencils

### OPTIONAL

- Special Friend to Sleep With
- Thermals
- Sunglasses
- Scarf
- Book to read
- Blanket

### Please Note:

- **No electronic devices such as ipods, MP3 players, games or mobile phones**
- **No lollies, chocolates, etc**
- **No bats, balls**
- **No toys other than sleeping friend**
- **No massive bags please**

## 6. Other Information

### How to support your child

- **Check** the newsletter for camp dates, these are locked in the year prior and entered on the school calendar. The newsletter updates what is coming up for the next term and beyond. Mark them on your calendar.
- **Ask** your child about notices if you do not receive them. These are generally given out three to four weeks prior to the camp including information about why, where, when and what we are doing as well as equipment lists, medical and consent forms. Make sure you sign and send them in promptly.
- **Attend** parent information nights. This is where the Outdoor Education staff explain the detail of the program and answer any questions you may have.

### Attendance

Attendance at all school camps is compulsory and is deemed to be an **essential** part of the school curriculum. Children need to participate fully in the outdoor education curriculum and are expected to attend every day of a school camp. The social ramifications and missed learning opportunities of arriving late or departing early from an outdoor education camp are could seriously affect both a non-attending student and the rest of their class.

The only exception to this policy is if a child is too sick to attend. A signed doctor's certificate will need to be provided to the school prior to, or during the camp. Non-attending children are expected to be present at school.

Costs for camps are planned as if all students are in attendance and as such no reimbursements are available for non-attending children.

### Standard of Behaviour

Children and their parents will be made aware that acceptable standards of behaviour are expected during outdoor education camps and that disciplinary measures applying to children on camp will be consistent with the school's student code of conduct

### Contact information

- School Office: (03) 9419 9229
- Outdoor Education Mobile Phone: 0429 901 006

There may be a delay in response time of 24 hours, as the Outdoor Education Mobile Phone is not on constantly. On the last day of camps, staff will contact the school office to update the expected return time. If this time is reasonably consistent with the planned arrival time then parents will not be contacted. If for any reason we are running late, the class phone tree will be enacted to communicate the revised arrival time.

Please contact the school prior to camp if needed and we can assist or give more information



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