

THE SUMMIT · FREE FOR TEACHERS

SCHOOL CAMP PLANNING GUIDE

Your complete step-by-step countdown from first idea to first day of camp



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

Planning timelines · Venue checklist · Parent templates · Budgeting tips



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Planning a school camp is one of the most rewarding, and most admin-heavy, things a teacher can take on.

This guide walks you through every stage of the process, from your very first conversation about camp right through to departure morning and the debrief after.

Work through each phase in order, ticking off tasks as you go. You don't need to do everything at once. The countdown structure means you always know what to focus on right now.

At the back you'll find a Camp Coordinator Details sheet and a Camp Objectives page to fill in and keep on hand throughout your planning.

■ TEACHER TIP

The best camp planning starts with a clear "why." Before you dive into logistics, take five minutes to write down the three things you most want students to gain from this experience. Let that guide every decision you make.

12-18

MONTHS

9-12

MONTHS

6

MONTHS

3

MONTHS

GO

TIME



12–18 MONTHS BEFORE CAMP

START WITH THE BIG DECISIONS

It might feel early, but the schools that plan 12–18 months out consistently get better venue availability, better pricing, and far less last-minute stress. This phase is about setting your foundations, agreeing on what you want from the experience, and starting to understand what's out there.

START WITH THE BIG DECISIONS

- ☐ Decide which year level/s will attend
- ☐ Confirm approximate staff numbers
- ☐ Choose 2–3 alternative dates
- ☐ Set the key outcomes you want students to gain from the experience
- ☐ Estimate student numbers
- ☐ Identify your preferred camp dates
- ☐ Determine the main purpose of camp

CAMP OUTCOMES, CHOOSE YOUR FOCUS

- ☐ Teamwork
- ☐ Confidence
- ☐ Year-level connection
- ☐ Personal development
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Independence
- ☐ Transition and belonging
- ☐ Challenge
- ☐ Resilience
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Outdoor education
- ☐ Fun

BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS

- ☐ Establish an approximate budget per student
- ☐ Consider travel time to and from each venue
- ☐ Check your school, governing body or department camp and excursion approval requirements
- ☐ Confirm expected teacher-to-student supervision requirements
- ☐ Consider whether additional support staff may be required
- ☐ Begin researching suitable camp venues
- ☐ Consider likely transport requirements and costs
- ☐ Identify who needs to approve the camp internally
- ☐ Consider accessibility and inclusion needs when shortlisting venues
- ☐ Decide whether the camp will require fundraising, subsidies or payment plans

9-12 MONTHS BEFORE CAMP

This is your venue selection phase, and the venue is arguably the most important decision in the whole process. A great venue makes everything easier: the right activities, the right supervision model, the right support for your students. Take your time here and ask the questions that really matter.

COMPARE VENUES

- ☐ Request availability from preferred venues
- ☐ Compare exactly what is included in each package
- ☐ Confirm what teachers are expected to do during activities
- ☐ Review student accommodation options
- ☐ Review catering and meal arrangements
- ☐ Check whether the venue can support students with additional needs
- ☐ Request relevant safety and risk-management information
- ☐ Confirm first-aid coverage and emergency response arrangements
- ☐ Request camp packages and pricing
- ☐ Check whether activities are fully facilitated
- ☐ Review the range and suitability of activities
- ☐ Review teacher accommodation arrangements
- ☐ Check how dietary requirements and allergies are managed
- ☐ Check accessibility across accommodation, activities and facilities
- ☐ Check the venue's child-safe policies and staff screening requirements

COMPARE VENUES & SECURE YOUR BOOKING

SECURE YOUR BOOKING

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Review minimum student numbers | ☐ Review booking terms and conditions |
| ☐ Check cancellation and student-number reduction policies | ☐ Check whether there are any additional or optional charges |
| ☐ Confirm what documentation the venue provides to schools | ☐ Conduct a site visit if required |
| ☐ Confirm whether a parent information session will be required | ☐ Obtain internal school approval |
| ☐ Select your preferred camp venue | ☐ Confirm your booking |
| ☐ Obtain transport quotes | ☐ Book buses or other transport |

■ TEACHER TIP

Don't just compare prices, compare what's included. A venue that looks cheaper may cost more once you add activities, facilitation, and transport. Ask every venue: "What do teachers actually have to do during activities?"

BEGIN DETAILED PREPARATION

6 MONTHS BEFORE CAMP

With your booking locked in, it's time to shift into parent communication mode and start building the admin infrastructure that will carry you through to camp day. Getting information out to families early means fewer last-minute surprises for everyone.

BEGIN DETAILED PREPARATION

- ☐ Confirm estimated student numbers with the venue
- ☐ Finalise the preliminary camp budget
- ☐ Prepare a parent/carer information pack
- ☐ Establish school payment dates
- ☐ Start collecting parent/carer permissions
- ☐ Start collecting dietary and allergy information
- ☐ Identify students who may require alternative activity options
- ☐ Confirm whether additional staff, aides or support workers will attend
- ☐ Establish a process for late cancellations and student withdrawals
- ☐ Begin considering student rooming requirements
- ☐ Confirm approximate staff numbers
- ☐ Send initial camp information to parents/carers
- ☐ Schedule a parent information evening if required
- ☐ Establish a process for payment plans if required
- ☐ Start collecting medical information
- ☐ Identify students requiring additional support
- ☐ Begin planning student wellbeing and behavioural support
- ☐ Confirm the school's mobile phone/device policy for camp
- ☐ Begin planning staff sleeping arrangements
- ☐ Check how many teacher vehicles are required on site

A group of students in various colored tracksuits (red, orange, blue, green, white) are performing handstands against a large green wall. One student on the right is standing and watching. The scene is outdoors with trees in the background.

3 MONTHS BEFORE CAMP

FINALISE STUDENT & STAFF REQUIREMENTS

Three months out is when the detail work really begins. You're moving from broad strokes to specifics: who's in which room, who needs what support, and who's responsible for what. The more clearly you define this now, the smoother your camp week will be.

FINALISE STUDENT AND STAFF REQUIREMENTS

- | | |
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| ☐ Review current student numbers | ☐ Follow up outstanding parent/carer permissions |
| ☐ Follow up outstanding payments | ☐ Update student medical information |
| ☐ Update dietary and allergy information | ☐ Identify students with severe allergies or anaphylaxis |
| ☐ Confirm allergy and anaphylaxis management arrangements | ☐ Confirm medication requirements |
| ☐ Identify accessibility requirements | ☐ Confirm mobility and accessibility arrangements |
| ☐ Identify behavioural or wellbeing considerations | ☐ Finalise individual student support plans where required |

FINALISE STUDENT & STAFF REQUIREMENTS

FINALISE STUDENT AND STAFF REQUIREMENTS (CONTINUED)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Identify students who may require quiet spaces, sensory adjustments or additional support | ☐ Confirm photography/video permissions and school requirements |
| ☐ Confirm activity preferences | ☐ Confirm attending teachers and staff |
| ☐ Confirm whether staffing ratios meet school requirements | ☐ Identify attending staff with current first-aid qualifications |
| ☐ Confirm who will manage student wellbeing during camp | ☐ Begin student room allocations |
| ☐ Begin activity groups | ☐ Confirm transport arrangements |
| ☐ Review venue emergency procedures | ☐ Review school emergency procedures |
| ☐ Review teacher supervision responsibilities | ☐ Prepare a contingency plan for staff illness or absence |
| ☐ Confirm how parents/carers will be contacted if a student needs to go home | ☐ Confirm procedures for homesickness or students withdrawing from activities |
| ☐ Begin discussing camp behaviour expectations with students | ☐ Brief students on the purpose of camp and what you want them to gain |
| ☐ Confirm mobile phone/device expectations with students | |

4 WEEKS + 2 WEEKS BEFORE CAMP

FINALISE EVERYTHING, VERIFY THE DETAILS

This is your final admin sprint. Everything that was estimated or approximate needs to become confirmed and documented. By the end of this phase, you should be able to hand your camp folder to another teacher and they'd be able to run the whole thing.

4 WEEKS BEFORE, FINALISE EVERYTHING

- | | |
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| ☐ Confirm final student numbers | ☐ Confirm final staff numbers |
| ☐ Submit required student information to the venue | ☐ Submit required medical information |
| ☐ Submit final dietary and allergy requirements | ☐ Confirm students with additional support requirements with the venue |
| ☐ Confirm accessibility arrangements with the venue | ☐ Confirm all required medical and dietary information has been received from families |
| ☐ Submit accommodation requirements | ☐ Finalise student room allocations |
| ☐ Finalise staff sleeping arrangements | ☐ Finalise activity groups |
| ☐ Finalise bus groups | ☐ Confirm arrival time |
| ☐ Confirm departure time | ☐ Confirm medication arrangements |
| ☐ Confirm emergency contact arrangements with the venue | ☐ Distribute the student packing list (ask the camp provider for this) |
| ☐ Confirm what students should not bring (ask the camp provider for this) | ☐ Confirm school expectations around phones, valuables and food |
| ☐ Send final camp information to parents/carers | ☐ Send parents/carers the final itinerary if appropriate |
| ☐ Provide families with school emergency contact arrangements | ☐ Identify students with outstanding payments |
| ☐ Identify students with outstanding documentation | ☐ Brief attending staff on the final camp arrangements |
| ☐ Discuss preferred activities and program outcomes with the venue | |

FINALISE EVERYTHING, VERIFY THE DETAILS

Two weeks out is your final verification round, catching anything that's shifted since you locked things in.

2 WEEKS BEFORE, VERIFY THE IMPORTANT DETAILS

- | | |
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| ☐ Check for changes to student attendance | ☐ Check for new medical information |
| ☐ Check for new dietary or allergy information | ☐ Confirm emergency contact details |
| ☐ Confirm medication requirements | ☐ Confirm venue contact details |
| ☐ Confirm transport arrangements | ☐ Review the final activity program |
| ☐ Review supervision arrangements | ☐ Prepare student rolls |
| ☐ Prepare emergency contact lists | ☐ Prepare required medical information |
| ☐ Confirm student-specific support plans with attending staff | ☐ Conduct a staff briefing |
| ☐ Allocate staff responsibility for each student group | ☐ Allocate overnight supervision responsibilities |
| ☐ Confirm who is the lead decision-maker during camp | ☐ Confirm who is responsible for student medication |
| ☐ Confirm who is responsible for first aid | ☐ Confirm who will contact parents/carers in an emergency |
| ☐ Confirm who is responsible for student wellbeing | ☐ Share venue maps and emergency information with attending staff |
| ☐ Make sure all attending staff understand their individual responsibilities | ☐ Confirm the final camp timetable/program |



1 WEEK + DAY BEFORE CAMP

COMMUNICATE & COMPLETE FINAL CHECKS

One week out, your focus shifts to students and families. Make sure everyone knows what to expect: what to bring, what to leave at home, and what the week will look like. A well-briefed student arrives calmer and more ready to make the most of the experience.

1 WEEK BEFORE, COMMUNICATE AND PREPARE

- | | |
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| ☐ Send a final reminder to families | ☐ Reconfirm departure time with families |
| ☐ Reconfirm expected return time | ☐ Remind students what to pack |
| ☐ Review camp expectations with students | ☐ Review behaviour expectations |
| ☐ Explain accommodation and rooming expectations | ☐ Explain activity participation expectations |
| ☐ Explain what students should do if they feel unwell, unsafe, homesick or overwhelmed | ☐ Reconfirm mobile phone/device expectations |
| ☐ Check the expected weather conditions | ☐ Consider heat, cold, rain or other significant weather conditions |
| ☐ Send additional clothing or wet-weather reminders if required | ☐ Recheck medications |
| ☐ Recheck allergy and dietary requirements | ☐ Recheck room allocations |
| ☐ Recheck activity groups | ☐ Provide staff with final camp information |
| ☐ Confirm the staff emergency communication system | ☐ Confirm who holds emergency documentation |
| ☐ Confirm school emergency escalation procedures | ☐ Confirm school office staff know how to contact the camp group in an emergency |

COMMUNICATE & COMPLETE FINAL CHECKS

Tomorrow it all begins. Run through this final list tonight so you can sleep knowing everything is ready.

DAY BEFORE, COMPLETE THE FINAL CHECKS

- | | |
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| ☐ Print or download the final student roll | ☐ Print or download the final staff list |
| ☐ Print or download emergency contact information | ☐ Prepare student medications and medication records |
| ☐ Check medication labelling | ☐ Check all required student documentation is complete |
| ☐ Check staff contact details | ☐ Check transport confirmation |
| ☐ Check school first-aid kit | ☐ Pack required school equipment |
| ☐ Charge school phones, radios and other required devices | ☐ Prepare important documentation electronically and/or in hard copy |
| ☐ Confirm the school office has camp emergency contact information | ☐ Confirm any last-minute student absences |
| ☐ Confirm the venue has your latest expected arrival numbers | ☐ Notify the venue of any significant last-minute medical, dietary, accessibility or attendance changes |

DEPARTURE MORNING & AFTER CAMP

YOU'RE READY. NOW GO ENJOY IT.

This is what all the planning was for. Run your final checks, take a breath, and enjoy the experience alongside your students. The moments that happen this week are the ones they'll talk about for years.

DEPARTURE MORNING, FINAL HEAD COUNT

- | | |
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| ☐ Complete the student roll call | ☐ Record any last-minute student absences |
| ☐ Confirm all attending staff are present | ☐ Collect and check student medications |
| ☐ Complete medication handover to the designated staff member | ☐ Check emergency contact information |
| ☐ Confirm required medical documentation is with the designated staff member | ☐ Confirm designated staff have emergency contact details |
| ☐ Confirm all buses have student and staff lists | ☐ Confirm bus and activity group allocations |
| ☐ Check students have essential equipment | ☐ Complete a final head count before each bus departs |
| ☐ Brief students before departure | ☐ Notify the venue of final attendance numbers |
| ☐ Contact the venue if your expected arrival time changes | ☐ Depart and enjoy camp! |

YOU'RE READY. NOW GO ENJOY IT.

A short debrief while everything is fresh will save you hours when planning next year's camp. Even 20 minutes of reflection now is worth it.

AFTER CAMP, REVIEW AND REBOOK

- | | |
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| ☐ Record any incidents and outstanding follow-up actions | ☐ Follow up any student wellbeing concerns |
| ☐ Complete required school incident documentation | ☐ Return medications |
| ☐ Return lost or student belongings where possible | ☐ Reconcile final camp expenses |
| ☐ Check final invoices against the agreed package | ☐ Collect feedback from attending staff |
| ☐ Collect feedback from students | ☐ Consider parent/carer feedback where relevant |
| ☐ Identify the activities students responded to most positively | ☐ Note what worked particularly well |
| ☐ Record anything you would change next time | ☐ Review whether the original camp objectives were achieved |
| ☐ Review the venue's communication and organisation | ☐ Review accommodation |
| ☐ Review catering | ☐ Review activity delivery |
| ☐ Review overall value for money | ☐ Confirm whether the school would use the venue again |
| ☐ Record preferred dates for next year's camp | ☐ Request availability for next year if required |
| ☐ Rebook early if the camp was successful | |

■ TEACHER TIP

Planning early gives your school more choice around dates, accommodation and programs, and creates more time to manage approvals, parent communication and individual student needs. The best planning is about knowing why you're going, what students should gain, and choosing a venue that can help you achieve it.

CAMP COORDINATOR DETAILS

Print this page and keep it with your camp folder throughout the planning process.

School _____	Year Level _____
Camp Venue _____	Camp Dates _____
Number of Nights _____	Estimated Students _____
Final Students _____	Number of Staff _____
School Camp Coordinator _____	Lead Teacher Mobile _____
Venue Contact _____	Venue Contact Number _____
School Emergency Contact _____	Medical Lead _____
Student Wellbeing Lead _____	Transport Provider _____
Bus Departure Location _____	Departure Time _____
Expected Return Time _____	Camp Cost Per Student: \$ _____

OUR CAMP OBJECTIVES

What are the three most important things we want students to gain from this camp?

1

2

3

NEXT YEAR

Would we return to this venue? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

Preferred dates: Option 1 _____ Option 2 _____ Option 3 _____

Notes for next year's coordinator:

YOUR NEXT GREAT CAMP STARTS HERE

READY TO FIND YOUR PERFECT CAMP VENUE?

The Summit is a fully facilitated outdoor adventure camp in Trafalgar East, Victoria, trusted by hundreds of Victorian schools since 2008. Our team handles all activity delivery so your teachers can focus on what they do best: being present for their students.

BOOK A SITE TOUR OR REQUEST AVAILABILITY

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