

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

ADVENTURE LEARNING PROGRAMS

During the students' time on program their education continues, learning some different lessons to those in the classroom. The focus whilst on program is on learning more about yourself, the people around you and the environment. Today more than in previous times we need to learn about the effect our actions have and their consequences on other people and the surrounding area. Experiential learning is used, ie learning through doing. The concepts of personal and social responsibility are reinforced. Students will be living in a small community (their group), they will be sharing a tent with one or two other people and be responsible for every aspect of their day. This may include:

- Daily organisation of themselves equipment, food etc.
- Preparing & cooking of their food
- Planning and implementation of bushwalking/ canoeing routes
- Being exposed to new adventure activities eg rock climbing, abseiling, caving etc
- Helping each other physically and mentally
- Being observant, pro- active and helpful

Three main philosophies underpin all our programs:

1. "Challenge by Choice" – Every student chooses their own level of challenge and will be supported in their decision
2. No Put Downs – We focus on positive language
3. Taking Personal Responsibility for your own Decisions and Actions

Risk Management - We accept risk as a positive part of our programs. We use the perceived risk a student feels as a tool for them to develop strategies to identify and respond appropriately to the risks and challenges they will face throughout life. Our risk management measures are extensive and we are always striving to achieve best practice through auditing and review processes and keeping abreast with national and international standards.

All programs are well staffed with a dedicated Program Manager, a minimum of two qualified Explorus staff per group (group leaders) and, an accompanying school staff member who is with each group throughout the program. We have additional skills instructors for technical areas such as roping activities and canoeing where ratios require additional staff.

We provide excellent program resources including technical equipment, quality food, communication tools, 4WD vehicles, first aid kits and post program evaluation from both Explorus staff and accompanying school staff.

Our number one priority is to take care of every participant and ensure they have a positive experience. We employ professional staff experienced in outdoor experiential learning who utilise recognised Australian and international standards for safety practices and equipment.

We combine this with an adventure-based program designed to meet the outcomes and objectives of your child's school.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

Explorus Adventure Learning is a private company that works in partnership with many schools in Western Australia and we have been creating and strengthening these relationships since 1986. We work with thousands of school students every year either from our purpose built base in Karridale or our mobile programs throughout Western Australia. This program has been collaboratively designed to meet the outcomes and objectives specified by your child's school. We are aligned with the school in our approach to this valuable learning experience. The activities that make up your child's program act as a vehicle for their personal growth and learning.

SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What is the most appropriate form of footwear for the bushwalking?**
 - If you have ready access to hiking boots then use them by all means.
 - However a good pair of running shoes are just as effective in this terrain.
 - DO NOT bring skate shoes, Volleys, elastic sided boots (eg., Rossi's) or plimsolls to walk in.
 - Make sure that your walking shoes are comfortable when walking extended distances and that they have **been well worn in**. This will greatly reduce the chance of blisters on program.

- **What is the most appropriate form of footwear for canoeing?**
 - These shoes are **separate** from walking shoes and will get wet.
 - All water shoes must be fully enclosed and must be able to stay on feet in a water environment.
 - Good examples include; old running shoes, Volleys, wetsuit booties (neoprene) or neoprene shoes.
 - Please **do not** bring Reef sandals, Crocs, thongs or other open shoes.

- **What will my child be sleeping in and on?**
 - Students sleep in a three person tent that has been designed specifically for school-based outdoor use.
 - For co-educational schools campsites are clearly delineated into male and female areas with staff monitoring this.
 - Students will need to bring a closed cell foam sleeping mat (**10mm maximum thickness**) to sleep on and they are readily available at most camping/outdoor retailers. If you already own a Thermo-Rest or similar small self-inflating mat you are welcome to bring it (at your own risk!)
 - Please **do not bring** air mattresses or other bulky sleeping mats (more than 10mm thick) as they **need to fit within a backpack. No Yoga mats as they are too thin.**

- **What size and material should their sleeping bag be?**
 - Again, the sleeping bag needs to fit easily into the confines of a backpack so the smaller the better! This does not mean spending lots of money but making the best of what you already have or can borrow. A bigger sleeping bag can have its size reduced significantly by using a **compression sack** that uses compression straps to squeeze the air out of the bag making it a more manageable size. These sacks are available at most outdoor/camping stores.
 - A good size guide would be, once compressed, about the size of an AFL or rugby ball.
 - Fill material – there are many choices from synthetic fill to down fill. Our advice would be whatever keeps the student warm! Everyone sleeps at different temperatures so it is hard to generalise. A synthetic bag will dry quickly and keep the student warm if it were to get wet.

- **What about Raincoats?**
 - One of the most neglected items on the clothing list and one of the most important!
 - It must have a hood, be able to be done up at the front and mid thigh length is ideal
 - It must keep your child dry! Test it out under the shower before camp.
 - There are plenty of good quality, inexpensive raincoats available.
 - Please do not bring poncho raincoats, hoodless raincoats, spray jackets, heavy japeras / oilskins, padded or quilted jackets.

- **What clothing will I need to provide?**
 - Please use the "Clothing & Equipment" list provided because all the items on it have a purpose!
 - **Thermals: beware of cotton items** promoted as thermals. **Only** buy polypropylene or wool.

- **What if my child is a weak swimmer and they are going canoeing?**
 - All participants will be issued with a Type 2 / Level 50 PFD (personal floatation device) that is worn on the water at all times.
 - Very weak or non-swimmers will be monitored closely throughout a canoe trip and will share a canoe with a strong paddler and swimmer.
 - All Explorus staff have their relevant rescue certification as well as training / experience in canoeing.

- **How fit does my child need to be?**
 - Our programs are more physically demanding than the average day but are manageable for students with an average level of fitness.
 - We recommend your child prepares by doing some moderately strenuous walking in the shoes they will be wearing on program. They can try this with some weight in a pack as well if they choose to!

SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Severe weather warnings**
 - If a Severe Weather Warning is issued by the Bureau of Meteorology, for an overnight period in our operational area, we will bring most or all students in to our base for the night and transport them back out the following morning to resume their program if the warning has been cancelled.
 - If this occurs, the school will be fully informed.
 - Remember that weather can be extremely localised so what you are experiencing at home may be very different to our local conditions!
- **Bushfires**
 - We have sound procedures in place regarding bushfires & will take the threat of one in any operational area seriously with the safety of students & staff being our priority.
 - Please look at your Clothing & Equipment List for Term 1 & Term 4 programs re bushfire clothing requirements.
- **Can I contact my child during their program?**
 - Emergency contact with your child may be made by contacting your child's school who have all our contact details. Otherwise, we discourage non-critical direct contact so that we maintain that sense of being away from all the mod-cons & foster independence.
 - **Explorus and your school request that all student mobile phones be left at home.**
 - Please let your School Coordinator know if your child has their birthday during program and we will organise a cake for them.
- **What happens if my child is injured / ill during their program?**
 - Rest assured that we will make contact with you as soon as we can if your child sustains an injury or becomes ill. This contact will usually be made by the School Coordinator or our Explorus Program Manager.
 - In the event of your child being unable to complete their Explorus program, a pick up from the program venue will be required. Directions will be given if this occurs.
 - All our staff have current first aid and resuscitation qualifications and carry a comprehensive expedition first aid kit with them at all times.
 - All Explorus groups carry a satellite phone and a UHF radio (where appropriate) and our Program Manager, or support staff are contactable 24 hours a day via various means.
- **Medical Forms – Do I have to complete all these forms?**
 - The information provided on the Medical & Consent Form you must fill out for your child needs to be **signed & completed in full**. Our staff rely heavily on this information if your child sustains an injury, illness, asthma or has an allergic reaction. This is the only information they have to call on out in the field.
 - If your child has Asthma or Allergies (apart from Hayfever) you **must complete** the one page form pertaining to that condition.
 - **IF** you have ticked **YES** to any of the **FIVE KEY QUESTIONS** on the Asthma or Allergy Form, you will need your child's **Doctor** to complete the **Fitness to Participate Form**. This process separates those with mild asthma or allergies from those with more severe forms. The FTP Form asks the Doctor for treatment *specific to a more remote location*. This is **extremely important** for our staff looking after your child in the field.
 - The **Fitness to Participate Form** should also be completed by a **Doctor** for any student with a serious, pre-existing illness, injury or condition, eg. Anaphylaxis, severe asthma, heart conditions, severe epilepsy, Spina Bifida, Cerebral Palsy etc.
 - **Diabetes Forms** will need to be completed by a doctor & a **meeting** with the teacher from school who will be with your diabetic child (see below under Student Medication).
 - This may seem onerous but this information is **vital** for the wellbeing of your child.
- **Student Medication**
 - Details of any medication(s) needed by your child must be provided on the Medical & Consent Form you complete for them, including dosage and frequency.
 - All medicines must be clearly labelled with your child's name and waterproofed (zip lock bags are fine).
 - All medicines, **apart from** asthma puffers, must be given to the school staff member who will be with your child's group. Please give this to them **before** putting your child on the bus at the start of camp.
 - For any medication that your child may need assistance with, or for students with diabetes, we would advise meeting up with the school staff member who will be with your child's group **before camp** to run through procedures with them.
- **What if my child has an injury/condition that needs daily strapping?**
 - Please ensure you provide sufficient tape for the duration of the program and, if possible, make sure your child knows how to strap this injury.

SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- ***Will they be showering?***
 - This depends on the style and duration of their program. Some groups who do have access to showers at our base choose not to! However, we have strict hygiene practices in place when away from our base.
 - Our base has a shower block and environmentally friendly dry composting toilets.
 - When operating away from our base students are able to “bathe” (minus soap, shampoo etc.) in creeks, rivers or ocean where available / appropriate.

- ***What happens if my daughter has her period – can she still participate, even in water based activities?***
 - Absolutely! We encourage the girls to participate fully and make provisions for water - based activities.
 - Explorus staff will discuss sanitary protocols with the girls at the start of each program. They will be carrying some sanitary supplies but please ensure your daughter carries her own supplies whether she is expecting to need them or not.
 - There are many opportunities for privacy and maintenance of hygiene practices during the program and we would encourage your daughter to bring along a small pack of baby wipes to assist in this. We will also be near water-courses a lot of the time.

- ***What sort of food will they be eating and can they bring snacks?***
 - Regardless of whether it is an expedition or base camp program, there will be plenty of fresh, good quality food.
 - The menu is varied and the students will be cooking for the group and for the Explorus and school staff with them (a bit of guidance will be required at first!). The preparation of this food into a good meal eaten as a small community is one of the key goals of their program.
 - We also provide plenty of fresh fruit and snacks throughout the program so there is no need to bring anything extra apart for **lunch on day one**. Lollies and other snacks create problems – not eating enough good food as they have filled up on these; and less of a community feel due to individual or small group snacking.

- ***What if my child has special dietary requirements?***
 - Please write these down on the Medical & Consent Form. It is difficult to cater for these needs if we find out from your child once they are on program!
 - We will cater for most dietary requirements – vegetarians, food allergies, gluten or yeast intolerances, and religious dietary restrictions. We draw the line at fussy eaters!
 - Please feel free to call us at Explorus to discuss any dietary issues your child may have, as we may not be able to source very specific items down here.

- ***What about cameras?***
 - We'd love you child to bring a camera on program and would recommend a waterproof disposable variety.
 - Digital cameras are to be the responsibility of your child if they choose to bring one. There is a chance that they could get damaged or wet. We also find that they detract from students being “present” with the group as they are busy reviewing photos that were taken previously.
 - No “Go-Pro's” allowed on camp

- ***Eye care***
 - If your child wears glasses, we recommend a retainer strap so they can't lose them, especially when canoeing.
 - A lens cleaning kit would be an excellent idea too.
 - With contact lenses, ensure your child knows how to change them and, if possible, bring a spare pair.

- ***Special Considerations***
 - Please feel free to call and discuss anything further you think we should know about your child. Anything we discuss will remain confidential. Phone 9758 5500.

Thanks for your time in reading this and completing our Medical forms and we are looking forward to having your child with us on their upcoming Explorus program.