

Outdoor Education at King's School

Why Outdoor Education?

Outdoor education provides a unique experience that few other activities can rival. It gives children an opportunity to develop initiative, resourcefulness and a better awareness of self. It stimulates an appreciation of the environment and broadens the horizons of our children.

It is difficult to overstate the benefits of a well-planned Outdoor Education Programme on the health, happiness, character and growth of the boys. Outdoor education not only promotes self-reliance and teamwork, but also affords a sense of community that embraces the whole school. From past experiences we have observed improved group relationships, with the boys becoming more caring and thoughtful of others. The boys demonstrate a sense of their own achievement and are supportive and appreciative of their classmates' achievements.

Outdoor education challenges the students in many different ways and gives staff the opportunity to gain a valuable insight into the personality and potential of the boys in a more informal learning environment.

The Outdoor Education Programme provides an opportunity for each boy to:

- Develop self-awareness and confidence in his own abilities
- Increase his personal fitness level
- Develop and practise a diverse range of skills
- Increase his awareness of the environment
- Enjoy the social and personal benefits of interaction with others
- Share in planning, organisation and administration
- Experience a wide range of outdoor activities
- Experience challenge and adventure

Doug Weston
Head of Sport

Where Do We Take The Boys?

The Outdoor Education Programme camps take place at the following locations:

Year 3	Mangawhai Heads	End of November – 2 days
Year 4	Finlay Park	Week 1: November – 4 days
Year 5	Kawau Island	Week 5: March – 5 days
Year 6	Kauaeranga Valley, Coromandel	Week 5: March – 5 days
Year 7	Turangi - Tongariro Crossing	Week 5: March – 5 days
Year 8	Northland Venture	End of November – 5 days

What Happens At Each Camp?

Year 3 Camp (Campbell Park, Mangawhai Heads)

This is a three-day / two-night trip to Mangawhai Heads. The boys travel by bus from the school to Mangawhai Heads and everybody sleeps in dorms with food catered.

While at Mangawhai the boys take part in a range of activities, including kayaking, raftmaking, surfing, tramping, flying fox, water sliding and top team competition.

Year 4 Camp (Finlay Park, Lake Karapiro)

This four-day trip is the first longer stay camp that the boys will experience. The boys leave Auckland on a Tuesday and return on Friday. The boys will stay at Finlay Park, a purpose-built camp at the eastern end of Lake Karapiro, where they will have the opportunity to take part in activities such as kayaking, rafting, go-carting, bush tramp and rock climbing. In addition, this camp offers a confidence course and an adventure trail. The boys will be accommodated in bunk rooms, and have all meals provided. Parents attending this camp should be confident around water, and prepared to take part in all activities.

Year 5 Camp (Kawau Island)

This is a five-day camp that takes place on Kawau Island. The boys leave school on a Monday and travel to the base camp on Kawau Island where they will spend the majority of their stay. While on the island the boys take part in a number of activities including hiking, kayaking, snorkeling, orienteering, sailing, ropes course, confidence course and team building. Each class will spend one night in tents at different locations away from the base camp, where they will have the opportunity to pitch a tent and cook their own meal. The boys return to School on the Friday afternoon. Parents attending this camp should be confident around water and have a reasonable level of fitness.

Year 6 Camp (Kauaeranga Valley)

This is a five-day camp that takes place in the Kauaeranga Valley. The boys leave school on Monday and travel to the Kauaeranga Valley Christian Camp, where they spend the majority of their stay. From here the boys will tramp 8km to a base camp and spend a night in a tent. The next morning they climb the Pinnacles track up to the Pinnacles hut where they stay the night before descending via the Billy Goat track. They are picked up and taken back to the main camp site where they will participate in the following activities: Kayaking, Go Karts, Rifle Shooting, Flying Fox, Archery and Orienteering. The boys return to School on the Friday afternoon. Parents attending this camp should be confident around water and have a good level of fitness. Tramping experience will be preferred.

Year 7 Camp (Turangi)

This is a five-day camp at Turangi. The boys depart from the School on Monday and travel by bus to Turangi Camp where they spend the week. The main focus of the camp is the Tongariro Alpine Crossing. This is an 8-hour tramp from the Mangatepopo Valley up to the Emerald and Blue Lakes, past the Crater and down to the Ketetahi Springs. The boys are also involved with white water rafting (grade 2 rapids), abseiling and mountain biking. The boys return to school on Friday afternoon. Adults who attend this camp should be confident around water and have a very good level of fitness. Camping experience will be preferred.

Year 8 Camp (Northland Venture)

This is a five-day trip down the West Coast of the North Island, from Opononi to the Kai-iwi Lakes. The boys depart from school on a Monday and travel by bus up to the Hokianga Harbour. They spend the first night in Omapere. On the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the boys make their way down the coastline following the Waipoua coastal track, camping at Kawerua and Waikara Beach, before climbing over the Maunganui Bluff to Kai-iwi Lakes. The boys spend the last night at Kai-iwi Lakes before returning to school on the Friday. The three-day tramp covers a distance of approximately 55km. Boys, staff and parents each carry a full pack during the entire tramp. The average weight of the boys' packs is 9kg. The tramp is challenging but achievable, and promotes a degree of self-reliance, physical fitness and co-operation. Adults who attend this camp should be confident around water and have a very good level of fitness. Tramping experience will be preferred.

What Risks Are Involved And How Do We Manage These Risks?

The Outdoor Education Programme does involve some risk, however we would like to assure you that we do our utmost to minimise all risks. To do this we identify and assess all potential risks using a Risk Assessment Matrix. We then apply the Hierarchy of Control to each risk to create a residual risk rating. This then shows us if the level of risk is at an acceptable level to continue. The Risk Assessment Matrix is re-evaluated prior to each activity.

The responsibility for managing risks lies with the camp coordinator and the teaching staff on the camp. It is their collective responsibility to assess all risks and develop a plan to manage those risks. The safety of the boys is paramount. Therefore, if the staff or parents are in any doubt about the safety of any given activity, that activity will not take place.

What Is The Value Of Perceived Risk In A Child's Discovery Of Self?

Children grow through taking risks, whether it is climbing a tree or walking home from school alone for the first time. It is through taking perceived risks that children grow in confidence and develop a sense of self. Too often today's society is removing all risk from our lives and children grow up fearful of the unknown.

Children need to be able to test their limits in a relatively 'safe' environment. Our boys need to be able to challenge themselves through taking perceived risks and to grow in confidence because of this experience. Our Outdoor Education Programme offers the boys a chance to do this in a controlled way.

What Are The Supervision Requirements?

Ensuring adequate supervision of the boys during the Outdoor Education Programme promotes safety and helps to minimise risks. The level of supervision required depends upon the type of activity being engaged in. The following adult to pupil ratios are the minimum required:

- Water-based activities require a ratio of 1:4
- Land-based activities require a ratio of 1:8
- Activities taking place in the bush require a ratio of 1:6

What About Medical Problems?

Parents are required to complete a permission form prior to the boys going on camp, and as part of the information required, they are asked to provide details of any existing medical problems affecting their child. This information is discussed with the doctor attending the camp so that they can be made aware of any problems that may arise and arrange the necessary equipment to deal with these. On arrival at the camp the doctor will meet with any boys who have specific problems or who are taking medication.

Camp Doctor

We are very fortunate to have the services of our parent doctors. These parents freely give their time in order to assist us with the provision of medical support for the boys while on camp. The presence of a doctor ensures that help is available should any of the boys have any concerns about their condition. Teaching staff will work in conjunction with the doctor to manage the provision of medical support.

Medical Kits

We have extensive medical kits which are reviewed annually by a team of doctors. Most of the problems that arise tend to be relatively minor, such as blisters, headaches etc.

What Do Parent Helpers Do?

We are extremely fortunate that so many of our parents wish to attend school camps as parent helpers. Parents play an important role in guiding, encouraging and supporting the boys taking part in the Outdoor Education Programme.

The role of parent helper at camp is very rewarding but also requires a degree of responsibility. Your main responsibility is to act in 'Loco Parentis' just as we do. This should not be a burden to you as the teaching staff will take ultimate responsibility for planning, control, supervision, major decisions and follow-up work. You join us in a much-needed support role and we ask you to assist us in all aspects of camp life. There will be times when you will be required to make decisions using your own initiative just as you would at home.

Parents must:

- Assume responsibility for their assigned group of boys
- Encourage, support and challenge all boys
- Make sure the boys are dressed suitably as per staff instruction
- Ensure that boys wear their sunhats and sunblock
- Encourage them to be self-reliant
- Expect boys to listen when being spoken to, show respect and good manners and be cooperative with the rest of the group
- Report any difficulties to the group teacher or Camp Director
- Most of all remember to enjoy your time and have fun with the boys

The harmony of the camp is very important. It is essential that parents helping on camp are there for the right reasons. It is difficult not to focus solely on your own child, however parents who are not attending the camp need to know that their children are being just as well supported and encouraged as those children whose parents are at camp. To facilitate this, we usually place parents with a different group to the one their child is in.

All parent helpers can expect the boys to demonstrate cooperation and good manners, and staff will always be available for support. Parent helpers that participate fully and have fun with the boys will find the camp a very enjoyable experience.

Parent Selection Policy

We are extremely fortunate that so many of our parents wish to attend school camps as parent helpers. Parents play an important role in guiding, encouraging and supporting the boys taking part in the Outdoor Education Programme.

An application form will be sent out a couple of months prior to the camp for interested parents to complete.

Parents applying for Year 6, 7 and 8 camps must be physically fit enough to complete the respective tramps. These tramps are very challenging for the boys and we need parents who are physically and mentally fit enough to help out when required. Parents are required to carry their pack with all of their belongings... just like the boys. A full pack will weigh between 8 - 10kg.

Parents can be assured that the School will select parents by consistently applying criteria that are widely regarded as being fair. Subject to not compromising the fundamental purpose of the outdoor education programme, the School seeks to involve as many parents as possible.

Criteria:

Supervision of Outdoor Education must ensure that:

- All participants are safe
- The staff and leaders are qualified to teach the skills we want to develop
- Adult/child ratios are appropriate for the activity
- The harmony of the total group is encouraged and supported.

With these criteria in mind we select the parents to achieve the following:

- A number of medically trained parents appropriate to the nature of camp
- All specific responsibilities can be competently managed

Process:

1. The process will make every endeavour to create the best management team for that particular camp.
2. School selects staff, parents and other leaders for each camp.
3. The selection of parents will be a cooperative effort involving all staff attending that camp and a staff member from the previous year group. The Head of Sport will supervise these selections. All selections will be confirmed by the Headmaster.
4. The School will try and involve as many parents as possible throughout the camps. The breakdown of parents selected for camps will be based on medical experience and suitability for a particular camp programme.
5. A number of places will, on the Year 7 camp in particular, be allocated to new parents. It should be noted, parents who attend the Year 7 camp may be selected for the Year 8 Venture.
6. In all selections the boys' needs and safety will come first.

N.B. The Headmaster reviews all nominations and has the final say on which boys, staff and parents attend camp.