



Edmund Rice
Camps
Victoria

PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

FEBRUARY 2021

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WELCOME TO EDMUND RICE CAMPS VICTORIA

Welcome to Edmund Rice Camps Victoria! We're thrilled that you're joining us on a program soon. This document contains lots of useful information that we recommend reading and going through with an adult before the program.

WHO WE ARE

Edmund Rice Camps Victoria (ERCVic) provide recreational camps and programs for children, teenagers and families, experiencing adversity, marginalisation and social isolation in the community. Guided and inspired by the life of founder Edmund Ignatius Rice, it is our priority to encourage sustainable change and development within communities, by promoting self-esteem and a sense of purpose and achievement in every child, adolescent and adult that attends our programs. We are also committed to the personal growth and development of all young adult volunteers, who serve as friends and mentors to those in our care.

We aim to provide a safe and nurturing environment delivering growth opportunities for those in our community experiencing adversity. We work in close partnership with the community to deliver camps and other programs that transform lives, while providing development opportunities for our valued volunteers.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Our Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation. You'll see how friendly, fun, caring and kind they are. They are here to give you the best week ever. Our Volunteers will be your buddies, and you'll have a few hours with a range of Buddies. Your buddy will join in on all the fun with you, making sure you have someone to talk and play with, and answer any questions you may have.

OUR STAFF

ERCVic has just two staff members who work behind the scenes to get everything ready for the programs. You or your adults can reach out to us if you have any questions before, during or after the camp program.



Amy Hills

Programs Officer

0408 454 156

programs@ercvic.com

- Volunteer management and support
- Volunteer training and development
- Participant referrals and program placements
- Program planning, development and delivery



Suzannah Siddles

Executive Officer

0416 105 345

eo@ercvic.com

- Grants and partnerships
- Donations and fundraising
- Strategic direction
- Compliance and governance
- Risk management
- Stakeholder management

OUR PROGRAMS

We have a range of different programs. They're all listed here. All our programs follow the same program ethos on the next page.

KIDS CAMP

Our Kids Camps are regular programs that offer a wide range of activities and opportunities for growth and fun! They are typically in the summer and winter school holidays and bring together participants and volunteers for a week of care, acceptance, and fun! They are residential programs and are fully catered. Our volunteer leaders get creative and create a unique camp program each time. These programs typically run for children aged 8-11 years.

TEENAGE CAMPS

Our Teenage camps are some of our most impactful programs. On these programs, participants can enjoy a week of fun, challenge, relationship building and growth. Great friendships will be formed and additional adventure-based activity is experienced that develops confidence and resilience. These programs typically run for teenagers aged 12-15.

FAMILY CAMPS

Our Family Camps focus on not simply providing an escape from home, but also building a sense of family unity, bonding, resilience and strength. Social isolation is addressed as many families establish relationships with each other and a sense of community. The program invites parents/carers/guardians to bring their children along to enjoy the experience. The program includes activities for guardians separately and alongside their children. These include the typical Edmund Rice Camp activities – games and quizzes, sporting activities as well as opportunities for respite for guardians. Our family camps are open to participants of all ages!

THE EDMUND RICE CAMPS VICTORIA MAGIC

We empower young people to grow, have enriching relationships and be emotionally healthy people. In turn, break the inter-generational cycle of adversity. We aim to raise emotionally well, empowered, active and capable young people who can connect with others and with the work around them; who look to their future with hope and possibility.

AN EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM

We know that experiences of adversity in childhood can impact mental health, well-being and social connectedness in children, adults and families. This can harm a child's social-emotional development and can create conditions leading to social isolation and disconnection. This in turn, can impact a child's sense of well-being, social skills, relationships and sense of self.

Edmund Rice Camps Victoria aims to mitigate these impacts and promote protective factors to both reduce the likelihood of harm, and build resilience to prevent against further harmful impacts.

PROMOTE RELATIONSHIPS

We use Volunteers in a 1:1 ratio to build relationships with our participants - they provide fun, care and individualised attention. Relationships are built through doing fun activities together. The value of these activities is enhanced through the presence of the volunteer mentor relationship.



BUILD RESILIENCE

Our activities are focused on building resilience in the children, adolescents and families that attend our programs. With our volunteers by their side, our participants are supported to challenge themselves and try new things.

WE TARGET:

**SELF
BELIEF**

**SELF-
ESTEEM**

**SENSE
OF SELF**

**ACHIEVE
MENT**

**PROBLEM
SOLVING**

**SOCIAL
SKILLS**

**LIFE
SKILLS**

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Our participants develop the capacity and confidence to connect with others, paired with the discovery of skills and interests, to help them engage and find shared enjoyment.

We assist our participants to confidently engage with the world around them, reducing isolation and disconnection.

SAFEGUARDING

It is incredibly important to us that all children and adults *are safe* and *feel safe* on our programs. At Edmund Rice Camps Victoria we are continuously seeking to engage in best practice which works to prevent and minimise the risk of harm to children and adults who engage with any programs we run. We seek to ensure that all those who hold a duty of care for children and adults are aware of their responsibilities to respond to safety concerns that arise.

We have 6 safeguarding principles. There are:

ZERO TOLERANCE OF ABUSE

Abuse towards a child or adult is not tolerated. The welfare and best interests of children and adults is paramount.

DIVERSITY RESPECTED

All individuals are unique and will be treated equally and fairly. The views of children and others are highly valued. Everyone has the right to be safe regardless of any diversity factors such as attributes, socio-economic status, nationality, sex, culture, ethnicity, beliefs, health, or any other status.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that a culture of safety is fostered and maintained within the organisation and its associated services. All ERCVIC staff and volunteers are committed to the safety and protection of children and adults.

EXISTENCE OF RISK FOR CHILDREN

ERCVIC acknowledges that barriers to child safety still exist within our society and, for that reason, persistent efforts to safeguard children and adults from harm are required.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSES

All concerns regarding the safety, development or wellbeing of a child or adult will be managed with a high degree of professionalism and appropriate confidentiality will be maintained. Our practices seek to ensure that all parties involved in the process will be appropriately supported.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Processes related to effective documentation, monitoring, and review procedures are practiced that support and inform management and staff to ensure their safeguarding roles and responsibilities are being conducted to the best of their ability.

By working to uphold these principles and/or rights, we are seeking to recognise and demonstrate genuine respect for the value, dignity, and worth of all. Through this commitment, we are also demonstrating respect for basic human rights. This, together with a having a sense of connectedness and belonging, is the cornerstone of developing strong communities in which every member feels safe and secure.

All our staff and volunteers adhere to our Safeguarding Policy which can be found at www.ercvic.com/safeguarding-children or by contacting our staff at any time.

On every program and camp, our *Camp Coaches* and staff are specifically trained to respond to any safety, wellbeing or safeguarding concerns. These people will be pointed out to all participants and volunteers at the start of each program.

All participants, agencies, volunteers and family members can contact Jennifer Lewis at any time for more information or to raise a concern.



Jennifer Lewis

Safeguarding Coordinator
Edmund Rice Community Services

Phone: 0438 917 505

Email: safeguarding@edmundrice.org

RULES, RIGHTS AND BEING SAFE

There are rules on each program that all participants and volunteers must follow. This ensures that everyone is safe, healthy and having a good time.

You also have a range of rights when on a camp with us. A right is a moral or legal entitlement to have or do something. For example, you have a right to education, which means that all children should be able to go to school.

The poster on the next page highlights your rules and rights on an Eddie Rice Camp program.

RULE BREAKING

We will do everything we can to support you to follow all the rules. We do understand that mistakes happen and we'll support you to recognise when a rule has been broken and to make amends if necessary.

There are a range of behaviours that are not acceptable on an Edmund Rice Camp program:

- Hitting / or other aggressive and violent or physical behaviour towards other campers, staff or members of the public
- Sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Absconding behaviour (running away)
- Intentional damage to property or equipment
- Possession of prohibited (or illegal) items (eg drugs, alcohol etc)
- Theft
- Abusive or threatening language

Where a person is displaying the behaviours above the *Camp Coach* will contact the *Programs Officer*. The *Programs Officer* will liaise with the *Camp Coach*, the *Executive Officer*, *parents/carers* and the *referring agency* when making the decision to send a young person home. Only an ERC staff member can make the final decision to send a young person home from camp.

In the event that a camper must be sent home, the parents/carers will be notified as soon as practical. If the Program Coordinator feels the camper or other campers' safety is at risk they may require that the camper be picked up immediately, within a reasonable amount of time, allowing for travel. This could mean outside business hours. It is expected that all travel arrangements (and any expense incurred) are the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

In the event that a participant can stay on the program, the Camp Coach and Program Coordinator will collaborate to develop a Behaviour Management Plan to support the person to stay on camp. Input should be sought from other volunteers on the camp, the participant's parents/carers and the participants caseworker.



Edmund Rice
Camps

Rules, rights and being safe

Rules

Also called Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to participants of Edmund Rice Camp Programs (including children, youth, parents, carers and students).

A separate code of conduct applies to Edmund Rice Camps Volunteers.

All participants must keep to the following

Do



- Respect others.



- Have fun in a safe way.



- Respect the privacy of others.



- Listen when others are speaking.



- Include everyone in your games and conversations.



- Make sure you're never alone with just one big buddy.



- Speak to a volunteer if you are worried about something.

Your rights

- Everyone who works and volunteers here is committed to making sure children are protected from any harm.
- It is not okay for anyone to hurt your feelings or your body.
- It is okay for you to say NO to an adult if they ask you to do something that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- If you ever feel unsafe or uncomfortable we will listen to you and act to help you.
- It is always okay to tell someone if you are not feeling comfortable or safe or if you have been hurt.
- If you are unhappy with the way you are being treated please tell a volunteer or staff member.
- Edmund Rice Camps welcomes all children into our programs. It doesn't matter where you were born, or what language you speak at home, or if you have a disability.

Other Resources

You can find other Edmund Rice Camps policies on our website:
www.ercvic.com

The Kids Helpline offers free and confidential support to kids, teenagers and their parents.
You can reach them on 1800 55 1800

Feedback and complaints

During a camp you can speak to the **Child Safety Officer** if you are feeling unsafe or if you have any worries.

After camp you can contact our **Executive Officer** to provide any complaints or feedback.



Phone: **0416 105 345**
03 8359 0145



Email: eo@ercvic.com



Post: **7 Amberley Way,
Lower Plenty VIC 3093**

We will respond to your feedback and let you know what we will do as a result of the feedback / complaint. If we need more information from you we will contact you as soon as possible.

If you are unhappy with how we deal with your feedback/complaint, you are encouraged to make contact with the Chairperson of the Edmund Rice Camps Victoria Board via email:
boardchair@ercvic.com

Do Not



- Swear or use bad language.



- Bring or take any illicit drugs or alcohol on a program.



- Hurt, tease or bully others.



- Take or publish photos, movies or recordings of other participants or volunteers unless they say it's okay.



- Contact volunteers after camp unless it's organized through ERC.



- Take other people's belongings.

PREPARING FOR CAMP

WHAT TO PACK

Please ensure all items and clothing are clearly labelled with the family name to avoid lost items:

- T-shirts
- Shorts
- Long Pants (trackies)
- Jumpers
- Jacket/Rain Coat/Layers
- Underwear
- Socks
- Pyjamas
- Runners
- Thongs (for the shower)
- Good walking shoes
- Bath Towel/Beach Towel
- Bathers
- Pillow
- Facemask
- Drink Bottle
- Sleeping Bag
- Torch
- Toiletries (tooth brush, tooth paste, hair brush, shampoo/conditioner, soap, roll on antiperspirant deodorant (no aerosols))

PLEASE DO NOT BRING

- Electronic devices (phones, iPads, etc)
- Food - all meals will be provided
- Nuts - all our programs are *nut free*, please do not pack any food that contains traces of nuts.
- Drugs (other than prescription) and alcohol

DROP OFF & PICK UP

All our programs start and end at a specific location where all participants will meet our Volunteers. This location is detailed in your confirmation letter.

We encourage you to arrive early if possible and spend some time getting to know the volunteers before your adults leave (if not a family camp).

Your adults will need to sign in with our volunteers, and hand over luggage and any medications. We will have volunteers and staff on hand to answer any questions you may have, and settle any nerves.

Duty of care transfers from your adults to Edmund Rice Camps Victoria as soon as you are signed in and your luggage is handed over.

Drop off occurs at the same location. The transfer of duty of care occurs when you are signed out and your luggage is handed back to your adults.

ILLNESS PRIOR TO CAMP

In fairness to other campers, any participants who have any of the following illnesses/symptoms are asked not to attend camp:

- Gastric illness (Vomiting + Diarrhoea)
- Cold and flu symptoms (cough, runny nose, fever, headache)
- Head lice / nits

If this is the case, please contact our office as soon as possible to discuss possible arrangements and support.

WHEN ON CAMP

VOLUNTEERS

We have a range of volunteer roles that will support you on camp. You'll hear these roles throughout the camp and you'll be introduced to them on the first day of camp:

Leader/Buddy - Leaders are your buddies. You will always have a buddy with you and you'll rotate through lots of buddies throughout the week.

Group Leader - This person is in charge of your colour group (Red, Green, Yellow or Blue). They are responsible for the whereabouts and enjoyment of everyone in your group.

Camp Captain - This person is responsible for running the camp program. They will coordinate everyone and get us to places on time as well.

Camp Coach - This person is responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of everyone on camp. They make sure the camp is running according to ERCVic policies and procedures. The Coach is also specifically trained to respond to accidents, incidents and any safeguarding concerns.

Pastoral Facilitator - This person is on camp to support the welfare of the volunteers. You'll see them speaking with your buddies and checking in on everyone.

ACTIVITIES

Our programs have a range of fun activities, designed to build relationships and resilience. Some of the common activities we do on camps are:

- swimming (beach and pool)
- bike riding
- surfing
- canoeing
- cooking
- archery
- arts & craft
- adventure playgrounds
- camp out
- rock climbing/giant swing
- group games/competitions
- animal therapy
- well-being sessions
- parents/carers sessions

SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

ERCVic recognise that sleep is a fundamental to the success of our camps. Our days are big and long so it's important that we get enough sleep to support our wellbeing.

When we're on camp, the following applies:

- Participants will share a room with other participants in their group, of the same gender
- Volunteers will only share a room with other volunteers, of the same gender
- A room of two volunteers will be signed and shown to the children in the case that something happens during the night. These volunteers will support the children to get back to sleep or will wake the *Camp Coach* to respond to any concerns
- Participants will be shown their room and bed and have time to settle in when they arrive to camp in the afternoon
- A wind-down activity will happen just before bed and all participants will slowly move to the accommodation wing
- Participants will be supported to brush their teeth, have a glass of water and settle into bed by their buddies
- 2-4 Volunteers will stay in the sleeping wing to ensure all participants get to sleep easily once in bed. This is called "Night duty"
- Once the participants are in bed, the volunteers will participate in a nightly debrief and prepare for the next day
- All volunteers will sleep in separate accommodation.

BATHROOM ARRANGEMENTS

All participants on an Edmund Rice Camps program must be able to shower and toilet themselves, unassisted. Our volunteers can support with reminders and prompts and will supervise the bathroom area during shower time.

When we're on camp, the following applies:

- All participants are expected to shower each afternoon before dinner
- Participants will be offered time after a swimming activity to rinse off if preferred
- Two volunteers of each gender will supervise the bathrooms during shower time and can help participants with the water temperature etc
- Participants are expected to bring their own towel and toiletries. ERCVic will have some spares on hand if required.

CATERING

Catering is an important component of every Edmund Rice Camps Victoria program. Some programs are catered by the camp site and some camps are catered by our Volunteer cook.

Edmund Rice Camps Victoria aim to protect the safety and wellbeing of all volunteers and participants on our programs. This includes the safety of all food and beverages prepared and/or served at an ERCVic program or event. ERCVic cooks adhere to our Catering Procedures to ensure the safe handling of food and maintenance of hygiene levels consistent with Occupation Health & Safety Standards and the Australia - New Zealand Food Standards Code.

The kitchen is very much the heart of an Edmund Rice Camps program and it is important that our kitchen and catering processes reflect the nurturing and welcoming environment that we aim to create on our programs.

- **Provision of Nutritious Food**
ERCVic programs can be physically demanding so it is important that the catering is nutritious, appropriate for the volunteer and participant group and meets all dietary needs.
- **Maintaining Food Safety**
The health and safety of our volunteers and participants is the most important factor when planning and delivering catering. Adhering to the Food Safety Practices and Requirements of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code is vital.
- **Creating an Inclusive Space**
The kitchen is a space that aims to be inclusive, inviting and allows volunteers to engage with ERCVic. We welcome people of all abilities and skills and provide support to ensure that they are aware of their food safety responsibilities.

TRAVEL

All volunteers and participants will travel from the drop off/pick up locations to the campsite and to any off-site activities via 12 and 22 seater buses. Our Volunteer Bus Drivers have specific training and qualifications to drive on camps.

Our bus rides are full of songs and games so make sure to pack your singing voice!

MEDICATION

When you arrive to the drop off location on the first day of camp your adults can hand over any medication that you will need to take whilst on camp.

Whilst we will have a list of your medications from your application, we will confirm these with you and your adult so make sure we have current information.

All medication must be provided in a pharmacist-supplied blister pack or in their original packaging, with administration instructions.

It is generally not appropriate for participants to undertake medication changes prior to or during camp. If you think this may impact you, please contact our staff.

CONTACT FROM HOME

We know that sometimes a call home is exactly what's needed and we will do our best to facilitate this. At some campsites, there is limited phone reception but participants can ask the *Camp Coach* to call home to speak with someone. Similarly, if a parent/carer would like to speak with the participant whilst on the phone, you can contact the Programs Officer to organise a phone call.

We will always do our best to facilitate this and the welfare of the child is always our first priority.

In the case of emergency, we ask that all contact is made through the Programs Officer.

FIRST AID

Whilst we aim to ensure all activities are delivered as safe as possible, sometime accidents do happen. From grazes to rolled ankles or something more serious, we have trained First Aiders on each program in the case that something happens.

If an illness or injury occurs, we will contact the emergency contact to advise of the incident as well as to gain verbal permission to administer any medical information.

A First Aid form will be completed for each accident, injury or illness and will be kept on file.

AFTER CAMP

LOST PROPERTY

It is inevitable that items will be misplaced by participants and volunteers throughout the program. We do ask that all items brought to camp are labelled, however we know that some things slip through the cracks.

In most instances we will display all lost items on the final day of camp when participants are going home so that both participants and their adults can view the lost items.

If you become aware of a lost item after camp, please contact our office as soon as possible with a description of the item so we can aim to return it to you.

COMMUNICATION

We know how much the participants can miss the volunteers after their incredible time on camp, however it is not appropriate for direct communication to occur after camp.

If you would like to contact a volunteer after the program, you can do this through our office, in the form of a letter, email or piece of artwork. We will then pass this onto the volunteer.

If you have any queries, please contact our Programs Officer.

We welcome you to follow us on Social Media, and/or join our mailing list. Details of our social media accounts are on the final page of this document. You can join our mailing list via our website: www.ercvic.com.



7 Amberley Way, Lower Plenty VIC 3093



03 8359 0143



www.ercvic.com



@edmundricecampsvictoria



@edmundricecamps.victoria



@edmund-rice-camps-victoria

