

Newman College Year 10 Outdoor Education Programme October 2023 Frequently Asked Questions

Outdoor Discoveries have created this document of 'FAQs' to help support the students / parents and answer any extra questions that might have come after receiving the information package that was sent out recently by the school. If you still have any questions after reading this document, please contact the school's Year 10 Leader of Well Being (LOWB) for help. They can then contact us if needed for assistance.

What do I need to bring to camp?

Please refer to our participant packing list and reach out to the school co-ordinator if you need more advice on the quality of gear you may have or need to source. Also see some of the below questions on specific items needed. Quality camping equipment is expensive, with this in mind make sure you ask around to borrow from family, friends and neighbours that might have equipment on the list.

Once you arrive on camp one of our instructors will run through a list that will be needed from the gear you have brought and how to best pack it into your backpack. Anything extra that is not needed will be left in your home bag.

What shall I pack it all into?

Use a lightweight 'soft' bag – duffle or sports type bag to pack into. As much as possible please avoid large travel luggage bags as they are bulky and difficult for our logistics team to collect, transport, store and drop off. Bags will be collected and stored in a secured location during the programme. Bags will be dropped off either on the final night or day at the groups campsites for students to repack their items and have access to fresh clothing for the bus ride home.

Can I bring my own hiking backpack?

There is no need to bring your own backpack as we have a range of sizes to suit all participants. It will also be big enough to suit all the personal items and equipment needed to be carried. If you do choose to bring your own backpack our instructors will assess if the pack will be suitable for the programme and have the space to carry the additional group gear. Also note that if your instructor does find your pack suitable it will get wet and dirty throughout the programme.

What activities will I be doing during the programme?

Students will be taking part in an expedition style programme packing all their essentials into backpacks, cooking on camp stoves, and camping in tents. They will be required to pack up camp each morning to then take part in the day's activities. These vary from day to day but include hiking, canoeing, adventure caving and learning about the local Indigenous culture. Students will arrive at a new campsite after the day's activities to set up camp for the night.

What are the sleeping arrangements?

Throughout the programme, students will be split into groups of three and sleep in quality three-season tents as they travel to a new campsite each day. Our instructors will teach the groups on how to pick a safe and comfortable spot to pitch their tent and how to set it up and pack it away.

Does the programme go ahead in rain or more significant weather conditions?

We work in the great outdoors, which means that we work through all sorts of weather conditions. The weather sometimes isn't perfect, so make sure you are ready with appropriate gear to keep you comfortable. However, when it comes to significant weather events safety always comes first. We closely monitor weather conditions before and during programmes and we are prepared with alternative plans should the need arise to alter the programme. We shall be working closely with the Outdoor Education Coordinator from the school to make these decisions should the need arise.

What equipment do you recommend to stay comfortable in bad weather?

A quality waterproof (not just shower or water resistant) rain jacket can make all the difference when it's raining. Thin plastic ponchos do not last very long when worn with a backpack or during activities.

Lightweight wool/polar fleece/polypropylene jumpers can be used to layer up to keep you warm and can keep you warm even when wet, unlike cotton jumpers that lose insulating properties when wet.

A beanie, thick socks and gloves will reduce heat loss from your extremities and help keep you warm.

Thermals are a must! Thermals are like long underwear (top and pants) that you wear as a base layer under your regular clothes. They hug tight to your body and trap body heat to help keep you warm. Thermals made from either wool or polyester will continue to trap body heat even when wet and will wick the water away from your body to keep you from getting chilly.

A sleeping bag that is compact so that it is easy to pack and doesn't take up too much space in your backpack is important, but you do want to ensure it is going to keep you warm at night. All good sleeping bags should have a temperature rating displayed on the bag or cover. We recommend a bag that has a comfort rating of 0°C-5°C, this means a 'cold sleeper' should be comfortable using this bag if the temperature reaches 0°C-5°C. Avoid falling into the trap of buying a bag that has a 'limit' or 'extreme' or 'survival' rating of 0°C-5°C as this means it will keep you alive but not comfortable at these temperatures. If confused or in doubt check in with the school co-ordinator for more advise.

Can I bring a phone or other electronic equipment?

At the heart of every great camp experience is spending quality time with your friends and making new ones. Not having access to technology promotes a rewarding learning environment free from distractions and gives you greater opportunities for social interaction. For these reasons, we and the school do not permit phones, tablets, music players or other electronic devices during the programme.

If you believe that you have special circumstances that mean you will require access to technology during the programme (e.g. blood sugar monitoring app for diabetes), please discuss this with the school co-ordinator.

A small digital camera (that is not a phone or tablet) is very welcome to capture memories made while on the programme. Disposable cameras are a great option if you don't have access to a digital camera.

Do I need to pack any food?

Outdoor Discoveries will provide meals from lunch after arrival on Day One till lunch prior to departing on the last day. A small amount of snacks for the bus journeys from and to Perth are acceptable.

We ask that you don't pack any food for the expeditions for a variety of reasons a couple being that it takes up space and adds weight to your backpack, increases waste of the food we provide as you are not hungry and could increase the risk of someone with an allergy having a reaction due to something that you have bought.

Our menu will be made up closer to the programme but will consist of nutritious meals containing fresh ingredients to sustain the energy required for the activities during the programme. If the instructors notice the group could do with more supplies, then they will be able to put a call through to our logistics team to provide more.

I have special dietary requirements; will these be catered for?

Yes, as long as your dietary requirements are up to date on your medical form. We will be working with the school co-ordinator to receive this information so if you are in doubt, please check with them.

How do we maintain hygiene throughout the programme?

Despite being on expedition there are still strict hygiene practices that are implemented throughout the programme. This is especially important after using toilet facilities, where food is being prepared or consumed or where first aid is being administered. We use an effective lightweight handwash system using water and disinfectant soap that will be set up at campsites and during lunch times whilst moving between campsites. There will be group sanitiser readily available during times when this handwash system is not set up.

Will there be the opportunity to shower?

There will not be the opportunity to shower during this programme due to it being an expedition style programme and the campsite being used not having the facilities for showering. Each group will have a day canoeing on the Blackwood River so there is an opportunity for a swim if the weather is warm or for those wanting to join the polar bear club if it is cold. Our expedition programmes can showcase how living with less is possible and help us reflect on the things we take for granted back at home. The shower upon returning home will be the best shower of your life!

Will there be toilet facilities during the programme?

Some of the campsites will have drop/composting style toilets available and our instructors will brief the correct use of these facilities.

When camping at sites that don't have any facilities available or while moving between campsites students will be taught a Leave No Trace appropriate method of toileting. The thought of toileting out in the bush can be a scary as we are fortunate to live in a society that has access to hygienic toilets, and we are not used to not having these facilities available to us. Rest assured that our instructors will not only provide an in-depth brief of the processes of toileting in the bush to keep the toilet hygienic and private but will also help with lowering the anxiety of toileting in the bush.

How is menstrual health and hygiene managed on programme?

Our instructors will again provide an in-depth brief on how menstrual health and hygiene needs will be managed to the female students and teachers. We recommend packing a small supply of tampons and/or pads even if you are not expecting your period while on the programme, this way you are prepared either way. Our instructors will also be carrying a small supply of products in case anyone runs out or forgets to pack any.

As there are no showers available during this programme what we recommend using to stay hygienic if do have your period is baby wipes. Only a small supply will be needed (2 per day) so please bring the smaller packs rather than the larger ones as they are heavy and take up more space in your backpack.

The disposal of any used products will also be briefed by our instructors to ensure that we are maintaining a high standard of Leave No Trace in the areas we are travelling and camping in.

If period pain or cramping becomes an issue our instructors will be carrying a supply of Panadol or Nurofen in their first aid kits that can be offered if there has been permission granted in your medical form.