

# Positive Start in 2022



## Frequently Asked Questions

The Victorian Government, with the support of the CECV, will deliver the Positive Start in 2022 initiative to boost the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of students in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Students who attend one of the 486 low-fee Catholic schools to qualify for the program will have access to additional camps, swimming programs, sports programs and cultural experiences.

### Positive Start initiative

#### *What is Positive Start?*

The \$112.9 million Positive Start in 2022 initiative will help make up for the disruption the global pandemic has caused to extracurricular programs and give primary and secondary school students the best possible start to 2022.

Students who attend a qualifying low-fee Catholic school will get access to additional camps, swimming programs, sports programs, and cultural experiences.

Through Positive Start, students will have more opportunities to attend camps with their peers and enjoy adventure activities such as abseiling, canoeing and rope courses. They will be able to visit museums, zoos, and galleries, and get involved in the visual arts, music production, drama and sport workshops.

School camps are a great way to build confidence, learn leadership skills and strengthen social and emotional resilience. In teams and individually, students will have the chance to ride mountain bikes, learn to surf, negotiate rapids in a canoe, or go hiking.

Positive Start will provide fully subsidised camps to more than 81,000 students who will benefit the most, during term and in the school holidays.

Term camps throughout 2022:

- term camps will be available for students at targeted schools, including schools that may be unable to provide students with a chance to go on camps
- eligible schools will be contacted by the Positive Start team and provided with information on how to book in early Term 1, 2022.

Holiday camps:

- holiday camps will be available for targeted students who experience disadvantage, and information will be provided for parents and carers on how to register their child for a holiday camp
- schools with students eligible to attend a funded holiday camp in 2022 during the Term 1, 2 or 3 holiday periods will be contacted directly by the Positive Start team.

### *Why is this initiative being announced?*

Coronavirus restrictions required schools to cancel sports, camps and the extra activities.

This initiative will address the impacts these cancellations had on student engagement, confidence, connectedness, and their mental health and wellbeing, by providing more opportunities for students to re-engage.

### *What are the eligibility criteria for students participating?*

Holiday camps will be available to students who are enrolled in a low-fee Catholic school and will be in Years 3-12 for the 2022 school year. Students will be eligible if they were enrolled in a school that experienced more than 5 days of closure as a COVID-19 exposure site in 2021, received the Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF) in 2021 and/or are eligible to receive the CSEF for the 2022 school year.

In addition, students who were in statutory Out-of-Home Care at any point during 2021 or are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or refugee background will be eligible.

Term camps will be targeted to schools that don't normally provide students with opportunities to go on camps.

For arts, sporting and cultural programs, the initiative will be open to all low fee Catholic schools. The Victorian Government will also work with providers to ensure students at schools such as rural and regional schools who would normally not get the opportunity to experience these programs do so.

## **Camps**

### *How will this program complement the Camps, Sports, and Excursions Fund?*

Families holding a concession card will continue to be eligible to apply for CSEF which provides payments for those students to attend activities like school camps, swimming and sports programs, outdoor education programs and excursions and incursions.

As the initiative provides additional free access to experiences and programs for students, families will be able to continue to access CSEF for the camps and programs that the school already offers to students.

### *Who will be delivering the camps? Will they have the appropriate working with children checks etc.?*

Camps will be delivered by accredited camp providers who must meet stringent Child Safety and Duty of Care requirements. To be eligible to participate in the initiative, providers must ensure that all camp staff and volunteers hold current Working With Children checks or are registered as teachers with the Victorian Institute of Teaching.

### *How can parents express their interest in the holiday camps? Where can they get more information from?*

Information about the holiday camp program and how to register will be found on a dedicated holiday camp website, which will be open for bookings in Term 1, 2022. Information and links will be provided to schools to share with the parents/carers of eligible students at the start of the 2022 school year.

### *Will kids with disability / additional needs be able to attend camps?*

The Victorian Government will work with industry providers to ensure appropriate programs are provided to students with additional needs.

### *When will the camps start?*

Term camps will commence in Term 1 of 2022

Holiday camps will be available during the Term 1, 2 and 3 school holidays.

A small number of students from schools that have been most affected by COVID-19 closures during 2021 will be invited to attend camps during the 2021-2022 summer holiday period.

### *How long / where are the camps? What sort of activities will kids do?*

Camps are being held at accredited camp sites across Victoria. Most secondary students will attend camps for 5 days (4 nights) and primary school students will attend camps for 3 days (2 nights).

Some students with additional needs may attend shorter camps to best meet their needs.

The Victorian Government will work with industry leaders and outdoor education specialists to develop camp programs appropriate to the age, skill and experience of the participating students. Activities may include adventure activities such as abseiling, canoeing and high and low ropes courses, as well as other activities such as bush walks, hut building, cooking and orienteering.

A key feature of all camps, regardless of the provider, will be programs that will support students to re-engage with learning, build resilience and support student health and wellbeing.

## Sports and cultural programs

### *How will the programs work?*

The Victorian Government will procure a menu of programs from a range of Victorian organisations for schools and students to choose from.

The organisations deliver arts, sports and cultural programs across the state, with a mixture of excursions and incursions, as well as events. Schools will be able to access fully subsidised places in programs from Term 1 of 2022 until the government-negotiated places are exhausted.

These programs can support students to undertake activities and experiences that will be additional to their normal school excursions and events.

The programs will be open to all low fee Catholic schools.

It is at the discretion of the school what programs they'd like to participate in.

## Swimming

### *How will the additional funding for swimming work?*

Additional funds will be provided to schools through the [Swimming in Schools](#) initiative to allow delivery of additional swimming lessons in Catholic primary schools across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years.

## Impact on schools

### *Will some schools benefit more than others?*

All low-fee Catholic schools will be able to access this initiative. All schools in the Diocese of Ballarat have been confirmed as eligible.

The Victorian Government will work with the providers of the different programs to ensure programs are also targeted towards students who would not normally take part in such a program or experience.

### *Will schools be locked in to pre-procured options?*

Each school will be able to choose what programs they'd like to participate in and will have the flexibility to choose the programs and/or camps that work for them.

All schools in the Diocese of Ballarat have been confirmed as eligible for the Positive Start program.

### *What is this program delivering on for schools that they don't already do?*

Positive Start 2022 will provide additional places for students on top of the programs currently accessible to schools.

Providers will ensure that these programs provide additional opportunities for students on top of what they currently offer.

### *Won't this take away from school time for the regular curriculum?*

Academic learning is important; however, evidence shows that student's mental health, wellbeing and engagement are critical to student learning.

Students have experienced two years of disruption to their schooling, friendships and connections with learning. This initiative will help students get back into the world and experience the richness of Victorian life and culture.

Funding for programs and excursions in the Positive Start Initiative also allows schools to identify activities that are aligned to the curriculum.