



St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

VINNIES 
SCHOOL
SLEEPOUT
KIT



WELCOME

The St Vincent de Paul Society NSW (Vinnies) School Sleepout kit is designed to help you organise your own Sleepout or fundraising event.

The Vinnies School Sleepout provides students with an opportunity to experience, what it is like to be homeless by 'sleeping rough' for one night. Their participation raises awareness of the realities facing those experiencing homelessness. Students gather sponsorship from friends and family for their sleepout which assists Vinnies in providing vital services.

This kit contains everything you need to know to get started including guidelines, activity suggestions and information about your responsibilities as a Vinnies School Sleepout event organiser.

For more information and resources on homelessness please see the [Resource page](#) on the [School Sleep Out website](#) or contact your local Youth Coordinator. As the Sleep Out is part of the Winter Appeal there are other opportunities for you to make a difference within your local area. These may include the donations of goods such as blankets or good quality clothing that can be donated to your local Vinnies Centre. We want to ensure that your donation reaches those most at need! To find out what donations are required in your area please contact either your local conference or local youth coordinator.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The Vinnies School Sleepout gives students and teachers the opportunity to make a difference in their local community.

Homelessness is a problem often overlooked and misunderstood in Australia. Over the past five years, there has been a 30% increase in the number of families with children being assisted by homeless services. Most of the children in homeless services are under 12 years of age. Homelessness has serious impacts on children's education, health and wellbeing.

This hands-on event develops students' understanding of the impact of homelessness and provides an opportunity to take action. Through 'sleeping rough' for one night, the Vinnies School Sleepout initiative hopes to raise awareness of the realities faced by members of the community with no place to call home.

WHY GET INVOLVED?

Schools are uniquely placed to help shape and influence community awareness and opinions. Hosting a Vinnies School Sleepout will :

- encourage students to connect with an evident and increasing need in their local community
- challenge your school community to make a difference to those experiencing homelessness in your local area
- raise awareness of the many faces of homelessness to break down commonly held stereotypes
- connect with pre-existing homeless services within your community such as food vans or social justice groups
- brings students together with a united cause

ABOUT THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

The St Vincent de Paul Society first began helping Australians in 1854 and have been active in the community ever since.

Vinnies assists people living in crisis; most crucially, provides a hand up to prevent people from falling into the cycle of homelessness. In NSW we operate a range of accommodation and support services to help people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. Last year our 16,000 members and volunteers provided assistance to over 682,000 people in NSW alone.

Across Australia, Vinnies operates numerous homeless services including:

- Food vans
- Crisis accommodation for men
- Family services
- Refuges for women and their children escaping domestic violence
- Education and recreation facilities that offer life skills courses, training and access to medical, legal and financial advice



HOW YOUR VINNIES SCHOOL SLEEPOUT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

BY FUNDRAISING

We rely on donations from thousands of loyal supporters to ensure we can continue providing our services. The Vinnies School Sleepout plays a substantial role in contributing to these donations.

Money and material goods raised will directly support people experiencing or facing homelessness in your local community.

BY RAISING AWARENESS

In today's financial climate, homelessness is a growing problem, with more and more people turning to Vinnies for help. The Vinnies School Sleepout raises awareness of this pressing social issue and gives people an understanding of the realities of homelessness.

Homelessness is experienced by everyday people living in your local community. Many families living on the edge are only three pay packets away from homelessness. If individuals have no family or friends to rely on, it's easy for someone to fall through the cracks and end up sleeping in their car or on the street.

There are three different types of homelessness defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- **Primary homelessness:** People without conventional shelter, such as people living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings or using cars or railway carriages for temporary shelter.
- **Secondary homelessness:** People who move frequently from one form of temporary shelter to another. This includes all people staying in emergency or transitional housing or people residing temporarily with other households.
- **Tertiary homelessness:** Refers to people living in boarding houses for 13 weeks or longer. They are considered to be homeless because their accommodation is seen to be below "minimum community standards."

HOW TO ORGANISE A VINNIES SCHOOL SLEEPOUT

8 STEPS TO MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR SCHOOL SLEEPOUT

At least one school staff member or designated adult must be present during your Vinnies School Sleepout event.

1 REGISTER YOUR SCHOOL

To register your schools sleep out event please register your school at the Vinnies Sleep Out site via this link (nswvinnieschoolsleepout.gofundraise.com.au). Fill in your details on the School Sleep Out page and then start planning your sleep out!

It is necessary that you register your event to ensure your compliance with fund-raising legislation.

2 PLAN YOUR EVENT

- **Choose a date** You can hold your Vinnies School Sleepout any time to coincide with the Vinnies Winter Appeal from May to August each year.
- **Find a suitable, safe location** anywhere within your school community. Some examples are within your parish grounds, school multi-purpose centre / hall, school classrooms or staff rooms.

Remember, your location should be:

- safe
- offer appropriate sleeping conditions for students
e.g. dry and sheltered floor areas
- near toilet facilities that can be accessed all night
- near power facilities so you can make hot drinks / soup
- near a water supply
- **It is also important to:** let everyone know they should wear warm clothing and bring a pillow and sleeping bag or blankets for extra warmth.
- Remind participants to bring a torch
- The St Vincent de Paul Society does not provide public liability insurance for fundraisers. You should consider insurance for your school sleepout event in order to ensure that you and the participants are protected. We suggest that you find a suitable venue which is already covered by public liability insurance.

- **Permissions** Ensure you have the Principal's permission to host your event and ensure that the event adheres with schools policies. You will need to follow the relevant procedures for seeking permission from parents/guardian for students to attend the event. Also check your school's policy in regards to adults per children ratio for school camps and use this as a guide for the amount of staff you will need to attend your Vinnies School Sleepout.

3 ADVERTISE

- Put posters up around your school to advertise your event
- Please note that your event will not be a St Vincent de Paul Society event, rather it is an event to raise funds for donation to the St Vincent de Paul Society. If you would like to use the St Vincent de Paul Society logo on any promotional materials, you must obtain prior written approval from the St Vincent de Paul Society.
- Promote the event in your schools newsletter
- Ask a suitable representative from your school's administration to register the event with your local Vinnies Youth Coordinator so they can build awareness through official social media networks.

4 SPONSORSHIP

- Ask students to seek sponsorship from as many people as possible - They can ask their parents, relatives and friends, as well as their sporting groups or church.
- To make a donation please search for your school fundraiser on the Schools Sleep Out page.

5 MANAGE RISK

- Consider the potential risks associated with your event and plan what you can do to reduce or eliminate these risks.
- Have a first aid kit and a trained first aid officer available onsite
- Make sure to note who actually arrives on the night on a sign-in sheet so that you have a list of everyone onsite in case of emergency
- Consider registering your event with the local police
- Let students know about emergency and first aid procedures
- If adverse weather, you may want to postpone the event

6 PREPARE AN AGENDA

Groups are welcome to follow any format that suits them, or you can use the following agenda as a guide:

NIGHT

- 6.30pm** Participants arrive – sign in and find a spot to sleep. You may want to take a photo of each participant
- 7.30pm** Dinner – soup, bread roll, water and juice
- 8.00pm** Talk about homelessness from a guest speaker and play DVD
Group involvement – get groups input and/or ask them what they would do to tackle homelessness. Get a shot of the group
- 10.30pm** Lights out and good luck!

NEXT DAY

- 5.30 – 6am** Breakfast! If you wanted to treat your participants, this would be the time to do it. For example, see if a local business will supply pastries or porridge
- 6.30 – 7am** Event concludes and departure

7 ON THE NIGHT

- Have a first aid kit onsite (and someone familiar with it)
- Make sure you have cardboard boxes or sheets to sleep on
- Advise participants and supervisors to bring torches
- Sleeping bags and blankets are a must to keep participants warm
- Supply appropriate food to 'set the scene' e.g. soup and bread
- Take lots of photos to record the event. Make sure you have parent/ guardian permissions
- Consider having information sheets available for participants and also having someone give a talk or presentation about homelessness to the students. For further information or resources please contact your local Vinnies Youth Coordinator on the details provided at the end of this kit

8 AFTER THE EVENT

- Return donations / evaluation forms to Vinnies along with photos and any other relevant information and feedback so we can mention your event's success in state-wide communications
- Put an article in your school newsletter and tell the rest of the school about your event at the school assembly and let them know where the funds will go
- We will send you a certificate for your school!

Your event can be an inspiration to others! Please remember to capture it on camera and share it with your community, especially the Vinnies Youth team. Email your memories to youth.nsw@vinnies.org.au along with a consent form.



EXTRA INFORMATION

There are other ways your school can take action within your local community. For further information or to organise additional materials, please contact the Vinnies Youth Department in your local area.

YOUTH COORDINATOR IN YOUR AREA:

Diocese	Phone	Email
Armidale	02 6772 1785	armidaleyouth@vinnies.org.au
Broken Bay	02 9495 8306	bbayyouth@vinnies.org.au
Bathurst	02 6362 2565	bathurstyouth@vinnies.org.au
Lismore	02 6698 0502	svdp@vinnieslismore.org
Maitland/Newcastle	02 4032 3560	maitland.newcastle@vinnies.org.au

Parramatta	02 8861 9700	parrayouth@vinnies.org.au
Sydney	02 9350 9653	youth@sydneyvinnies.org
Wilcannia/Forbes	02 6862 5758	forbesyouth@vinnies.org.au
Wollongong	02 4627 9013	youth@svdpwgong.org.au
Wagga Wagga	02 6971 7175	waggayouth@vinnies.org.au
State Youth Office	02 9568 0255	youth@vinnies.org.au



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