

## 207 Field Trips

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### Policy

The Board recognizes the benefits of student field trips when such optional trips supplement educational programs for students.

Effective learning experiences often result from first hand observation of, or participation in, events or activities that occur out in the community away from the school. The Board believes it is of paramount importance that field trips are selected, planned, organized, and conducted in the context of:

- Clear benefit to students
- Safety and security of all participants
- Risk assessment and management of off-site activities
- Protection of students, staff, volunteers, and the School District.

### Administrative Procedures

The principal or designated administrator must ensure that all school field trips are appropriately planned, authorized, organized, and supervised.

All School District field trips are governed by Board *Policy 207: Field Trips* and may be approved only after giving due consideration to factors identified in this policy and accompanying administrative procedures.

All field trip documents related to the approval, planning, communication, and written informed consent shall be stored at the originating school and retained on file, as required by the School District's *Records Classification Manual*. These documents will include:

- Detailed written description of the field trip
- Written informed consent signed by parent/guardian
- Student roster with home and emergency contact information
- Transportation information
- Detailed and full accounting of costs, expenditures, etc.

### One-Day Field Trips

The principal is responsible for ensuring that the approval documents for a one-day field trip are completed prior to approving one-day field trips.

### Multiple-Day and/or Out-of-Province Field Trips

The principal or designated administrator is responsible for ensuring the field trip proposal documents are prepared for all multiple-day field trips and the proposal is evaluated, recommended, and submitted to the Zone Assistant Superintendent for preliminary review and approval, prior to proceeding with planning, travel and scheduling arrangements, or initiating fund-raising.

The principal or designated administrator is responsible for the final approval of a field trip. Final authorization for the field trip is obtained with the principal's signature on the completed field trip approval documents confirming all requirements of the field trip policy have been met. Additionally, for all out-of-country trips, the principal will sign the permission for trip departure within seven (7) days of departure, after consideration of government-issued travel advisories for the destination.

The Superintendent or designate shall notify the Board in advance of any planned out-of-country multiple-day field trips.

## **General Guidelines for Organizing Field Trips**

### **Planning**

The following guidelines should be observed when planning field trips:

- The safety, security, supervision, and well being of students must be the prime consideration when planning a trip
- Principals must ensure that suitably qualified employees and approved volunteers are selected for supervisory responsibilities
- Arrangements must be made for students not participating in the trip and for the instruction of classes normally taught by teachers who will accompany students on the trip
- The teacher and school office must have a student roster list including home and emergency contact information for all participants
- At least one supervising adult will have a cellular phone or another radio communication device available for emergency use
- The teacher must carry or have access to a first aid kit during the field trip
- A copy of each student's medical form must be available to staff on multiple-day field trips in case of medical emergencies
- Mandatory group medical/travel/cancellation insurance coverage must be in place for all out-of-province field trips
- Field trip itinerary must not include areas where the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has published a travel advisory. In the event that a significant security, safety or health issue arises before or during a trip, the trip will be effectively cancelled and participants will return home unless the Superintendent or his designate determines otherwise.
- The Board is not responsible for any losses which may arise from cancellation or alteration of a supplementary or optional field trip itinerary
- Fund-raising activities for a supplementary or optional field trip must be approved by the principal
- Supplementary or optional field trips will operate at no additional cost to the Board
- The cost of teacher(s)-on-call shall be included in the cost of a supplementary or optional field trip
- Related expenses of the supervisor(s) may be included in the total cost of a supplementary or optional field trip
- Revenues and expenditures for the field trip are to be accounted for in a budget statement.

### **Informed Consent**

The written informed consent of parents/guardians is required for participation of students in all field trips. A full description of the field trip must be provided to parents/guardians in writing and must address:

- How the field trip supplements the educational program
- Notice that the field trip is optional, and that arrangements will be made for students who are not participating
- Notification of student/parent Pre-Trip meeting. A Pre-Trip meeting is required for all Multiple-Day and/or Out-of-Province field trips

- Description of supervisors: teachers, employees of the Board, and other adult volunteers, along with contact information
- Transportation and accommodation arrangements
- Itinerary consisting of date(s), departure and return times and schedule of planned activities
- Description of planned activities and levels of direct and indirect supervision
- Description of inherent risks and potential consequences
- Assessment of student skills and abilities as pertaining to the field trip activity (*if applicable*)
- Behavioural expectations of students plus rules and regulations
- Emergency Planning/Cancellation of Trip information, including cancellation provisions, collection/disclosure of student medical and personal information, first-aid arrangements, and the Emergency Communication and Return Plan
- Description of budget consisting of revenue (cost to student) and expenditures (cost of trip) (optional trips only)
- Parent/guardian responsibility to arrange student accident or liability insurance
- Parent/guardian responsibility to determine whether the student may participate in the field trip
- *Student Awareness of Risk and Responsibility Form* completed by student (if applicable).

A written informed consent form for the field trip must be obtained with a parent/guardian signature.

A written informed consent form must state that the parent/guardian has been alerted to the increased risk and consequences of injury inherent in the activity and accepts responsibility for the consequences of that risk should they freely choose to have the student participate.

A Pre-Trip parent/student scheduled information meeting is mandatory for all high-risk day activities, multiple day, and/or out-of-province field trips. An administrator must be present at the meeting to discuss expected behaviour.

A *Student Awareness of Risk and Responsibility Form* must be signed by the student indicating that the student freely chooses to participate and acknowledges being alerted to the expectations, risks, safety precautions, and responsibilities associated with the proposed field trip. The student agrees to act in a safe and responsible manner according to the Board [Policy 302: Student Conduct](#) and the school's *Code of Conduct*.

The principal may design a permission form to obtain written informed consent of the parent/guardian for the season or school term for repetitive or scheduled activities such as interscholastic games, walking field trips, or activities associated with a specific course.

In exceptional circumstances, the principal may accept informed parental/guardian consent given orally for participation in a field trip involving low-risk activities.

## **Supervision**

Conscientious supervision of students is mandatory during all School District field trips.

Volunteer supervisors must be screened by the principal or designate for suitability, be advised of the expectations of their role as outlined in Board [Policy 404: Volunteers in Schools](#) and be competent to deal with emergencies that might arise.

Student conduct is governed by Board [Policy 302: Student Conduct](#) and the school's *Code of Conduct*.

Parent/guardian participation in field trips to augment supervision is generally encouraged and in some cases necessary. Circumstances determined by the principal may warrant increased levels of supervision according to the age, maturity, knowledge and skill of the students, and the nature and inherent risk of the field trip. The suggested adult to student supervision ratio should range from 1:10 to 1:15. This ratio is a

general guideline and may vary, at the discretion of the principal, depending on circumstances.

1. **Day Trip Primary K-Grade 3** (activity has minimal inherent risk, e.g., walking field trip) -- one (1) teacher supervisor per class and one (1) approved supervisor.
2. **Day Trip** (activity has minimal inherent risk, e.g., guided tours, museum, art gallery, public performance) -- one (1) teacher supervisor per class and one (1) approved supervisor.
3. **Day Trip** (activity has an increased level of inherent risk, e.g., skiing, kayaking, swimming, canoeing, and wilderness experiences) -- one (1) teacher supervisor and one (1) other employee of the Board and one (1) approved supervisor.
4. **Day Trip** (activity related to a Special Education Program) Special Education Assistant may assume sole or primary supervision responsibility to accommodate the out-of-school program needs of a student(s) with special needs -- adult to student ratio to be determined by principal or designate.
5. **Overnight Indoor** (activity has a higher level of inherent risk due to extended absence from school and home, e.g., secondary extracurricular activities, athletic, band, or club tours) -- one (1) teacher supervisor and one (1) other approved supervisor.
6. **Out-of-Province, Out-of-Country** (activity perceived as having a higher level of inherent risk due to increased travel complexity and distance, e.g., cultural exchanges, athletics, band tours) -- one (1) teacher supervisor and one (1) other employee of the Board
7. **Overnight Outdoor** (activity perceived as having a much higher level of inherent risk due to nature of activity, e.g., wilderness hike, camping) -- one (1) teacher supervisor and one (1) other employee of the Board supervisor and one (1) other approved supervisor.

All overnight excursions must have at least one (1) teacher and one (1) adult supervisor.

All overnight co-educational excursions require the supervision of both male and female adult supervisors.

Specialized instructional competence is mandatory for supervision of higher risk activities and may be established by virtue of certification from a governing body (e.g., Red Cross, Canadian Canoeing Association). In areas where certificates are not issued, competency may be recognized by the leader's peers by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity.

The principal must be satisfied that the teacher(s) and other supervisors will provide adequate supervision and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities to mitigate potential risks and address the safety of students and supervisors. Either the principal, vice principal, or a designated administrator will be accessible to and/or available at the school, if necessary, to attend to emergencies that arise during field trips.

## **Transportation**

Transportation of students by private vehicles shall be in accordance with Board [Policy 607: Transportation of Students](#) and School District transportation procedures. All field trip transportation is subject to the regulation and law of the relevant municipal, provincial, federal or international jurisdiction.

## **Annual Review of Policy**

The Superintendent or designate will review this policy as needed.

## **Resources**

[Motor Vehicle Act Regulations - Child Seating and Restraint Systems 2008](#)

[New Booster Seat Laws Affect Field Trips with Volunteer Drivers](#) - BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation & BC Field Trips - July 2008

[Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada](#)