

## **OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES**

### **Background**

The Board recognizes that field trips offer meaningful and varied educational experiences to students. The Board also believes that travel for the purpose of an academic, athletic, or cultural activity or exchange enriches school life.

The Board's commitment to providing a safe, effective, and caring learning environment extends to include school activities which take place off school property.

In developing administrative procedures which govern off-site activities, provincial statutory, regulatory, and policy expectations (e.g., Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools publication) must be considered.

### **Definition**

"Field trip" means an authorized school activity which occurs outside the boundaries of the school, excluding off-campus courses and work-study programs.

### **Procedures**

#### 1. General

- 1.1. The principal is responsible for developing and implementing school policy and procedures to govern field trips.
- 1.2. For this administrative procedure, three categories of field trips are recognized as follows:
  - 1.2.1. Same Day, In-Province Field Trips
  - 1.2.2. Overnight or Out-of-Province Field Trips; and
  - 1.2.3. International Travel
- 1.3. Refer to Procedure 12 for a description of prohibited activities.
  - 1.3.1. Field trips shall not involve participation in any activities which are excluded from general liability coverage by the Board's insurance broker.
- 1.4. No student will be denied Same Day educational field trip opportunities due to financial hardship.
- 1.5. A program of instruction will be given to students who do not participate in a field trip due to reasonable circumstances.
- 1.6. Participation in a field trip shall not be a pre-requisite for the successful completion of any required course of study. Field trips are intended to enrich core programming.

- 1.7. Students are expected to comply with the STEM Innovation Academy Student Code of Conduct. If a student is unwilling or is unable to follow instructions or accept supervision, that student shall not be permitted to go, or to continue that field trip.
- 1.8. The Board will not compensate its staff by means of salary or time off in lieu for any field trips which are conducted outside the regular instructional day (e.g. evenings, weekends, holidays).
- 1.9. The Board's liability coverage for students, staff and volunteer supervisors extends to approved field trips.
- 1.10. The following guidelines apply to each field trip unless otherwise noted:
  - 1.10.1. Prior approval from the principal must be obtained.
  - 1.10.2. A teacher must be designated as the Teacher in Charge
  - 1.10.3. Prior written permission must be obtained for participating students (refer to procedures 6, 7, and 8 for timelines for requesting consent); and
  - 1.10.4. Parents are expected to provide their children with appropriate protection from the elements and for the setting of the activity. E.g. the use of sunscreen, wearing of hats, and having the proper attire and appropriate footwear.

## 2. Informed Consent and Parental Permission

- 2.1. To ensure informed consent, parents shall be provided with the following information, in writing, prior to the date of each proposed field trip:
  - 2.1.1. Purpose or educational outcome of the field trip.
  - 2.1.2. Proposed itinerary.
  - 2.1.3. Description of the activities or events proposed.
  - 2.1.4. Safety precautions in place to deal with activities involving risk.
  - 2.1.5. Notification regarding the need for any special clothing, protective equipment, lunches, or snacks.
  - 2.1.6. Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an injury, illness, or unusual circumstances.
  - 2.1.7. Method of transportation to be used.
  - 2.1.8. Supervision arrangements.
  - 2.1.9. Cost to the student, if any.
  - 2.1.10. The responsibility of the parent to advise the teacher-leader of any prescribed or other medication the student will or may need to have administered or self-administered during the field trip.

- 2.1.11. The responsibility of the parent to advise the teacher-leader of any special medical and/or dietary considerations.
      - 2.1.12. Whenever applicable, notice that high-risk activities carry inherent risks, and that accidents and/or unanticipated risks could result in physical or emotional injury, paralysis, or death.
    - 2.2. The nature of each field trip will dictate the detail required on the consent form (e.g. a Same Day indoor field trip within the province requires less detailed explanation than an Overnight or Out-of-Province Field Trip or International Travel).
    - 2.3. The consent form will be distinct from forms designed to request parental volunteers with supervision and/or transportation.
    - 2.4. Written parental permission must be given on the specific consent form provided.
    - 2.5. One “blanket” parental permission will be sufficient for:
      - 2.5.1. School activities involving more than one (1) trip outside the school such as inter-school sports provided the consent form includes a schedule of all activities. Should any activity be high risk, separate parental permission must be obtained.
      - 2.5.2. Scheduled and unscheduled walking field trips in the vicinity of the school.
    - 2.6. For field trips outside the City of Calgary, parental permission shall include consent from parents authorizing supervisors to arrange for necessary medical treatment.
    - 2.7. Supervisors shall not deviate in a material way to the proposed itinerary once parental permission has been received.
  3. Preparation and Supervision
    - 3.1. The principal shall ensure adequate preparation and supervision is in place for all field trips and that there is a designated teacher in charge with overall authority and responsibility on the trip. In addition to teachers, the principal may authorize other persons to provide additional supervision or instruction as warranted by the nature of the specific field trip. Specific requirements include:
      - 3.1.1. A teacher must always be in charge.
      - 3.1.2. The teacher in charge must ensure that adequate supervision is available at all times and that supervisors are prepared to deal with any emergencies that may arise. Staff supervisors, and volunteer supervisors under their direction, are responsible to ensure the welfare and safety of the students from the initiation to the completion of the field trip.
      - 3.1.3. Volunteer supervisors take direction from the teacher-leader and must be suitably qualified (given the nature and demands of the field trip).
      - 3.1.4. Students are never left alone – always in pairs or larger groups.

- 3.1.5. Specific supervisory arrangements will depend upon:
  - 3.1.5.1. The age, maturity, and ability levels of the students,
  - 3.1.5.2. The inherent risk of the activity, and
  - 3.1.5.3. The circumstances of the activity.
- 3.1.6. Competent instruction and supervision of high-risk activities is mandatory. Competence may be demonstrated by a certificate from a governing body for activities such as skiing, swimming, and canoeing. In other areas, competency may be recognized by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity.
- 3.1.7. The teacher in charge is responsible for being familiar with and conducting an in-person site visit (generally within one year of the trip). Site visit must include a safety assessment of the site of the proposed field trip.
- 3.1.8. The teacher in charge is responsible to ensure that training, preparation, orientation, and expectations are provided to all student participants and supervisors.
- 3.1.9. Supervision must include individuals with current Standard First Aid and CPR Level C certification or higher.
- 3.1.10. First aid certification appropriate to the nature of the trip is required and an appropriately equipped first aid kit must be accessible.
- 3.1.11. When necessary, field trips involving students of both genders shall have supervisors of both genders (e.g. Overnight Field Trips and International Travel).
- 3.1.12. Contingency plans must be in place in the event of cancellation, adverse weather and road conditions, or other conditions that may require a change to the original itinerary.
- 3.1.13. In the event written authorization is provided for the pickup of a student at the end of or during a field trip, the teacher leader is responsible to ensure the student is left under the direct supervision of the parent or another adult authorized by the parent.
- 3.1.14. The teacher in charge is responsible for carrying:
  - 3.1.14.1. Emergency phone contact numbers of principal, and guardians/parents of students.
  - 3.1.14.2. Alberta Health Care numbers.
  - 3.1.14.3. Information regarding medical and medication needs of students (including the emergency care plan for students with severe allergies).
  - 3.1.14.4. Cell phone or satellite phone if out of range of cellular service.
- 3.2. When necessary, the principal is expected to seek advice and assistance from experts in planning field trips and in assessing risk:

- 3.2.1. The recommendations contained in Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools shall be met or exceeded.
- 3.2.2. Consultation with the Board's insurance broker is mandatory for any high-risk activity or unique activity and/or any field trips outside Alberta.
- 3.3. Under appropriate circumstances, special considerations may need to be made for students with identified severe allergies. Factors to consider include but are not limited to:
  - 3.3.1. Ensuring an adequate number of injectors is available.
  - 3.3.2. A vehicle should be available for emergencies at all times, or availability of emergency transport and distance to emergency medical facility.
  - 3.3.3. Emergency care plan should be reviewed with the parents and supervisors beforehand.
  - 3.3.4. Assign a buddy who will inform a supervisor if the allergic student is not feeling well.
  - 3.3.5. Avoid including student susceptible to anaphylaxis in clean-up activities.
  - 3.3.6. If risk factors are too great to control, the student may be unable to participate in the field trip. The parent(s) should be involved in this decision.
- 3.4. Similarly, special considerations may need to be made for students with other severe medical conditions.

#### 4. Records

- 4.1. The school office shall maintain a calendar of field trips in order that staff and parents may have immediate access to information.
- 4.2. The teacher in charge must notify the school office of any changes to participants, field trip departure, arrival times or location of activities and secure the approval of the principal, when appropriate.
- 4.3. The school shall keep a record of each field trip including the following:
  - 4.3.1. Principal authorization.
  - 4.3.2. Purpose or educational outcome of the field trip.
  - 4.3.3. Safety assessment.
  - 4.3.4. Parent consent.
  - 4.3.5. Information provided to parents.
  - 4.3.6. List of participating students.

4.3.7. List of supervisors.

4.3.8. Accident report and/or Incident reports (accessed through PublicSchoolWORKS).

Records shall be maintained and stored as identified in Administrative Procedure 408: Records Retention and Disposition Appendix A.

5. Transportation

5.1. Charter bus service is the preferred mode of transportation to be used for field trips (15 passenger vans are prohibited). The use of private vehicles is allowed, when necessary, if the proper documentation has been completed as per Administrative Procedure 407: Volunteer Driver Form.

5.2. Any agency involved in travel arrangements shall be an ACTA (Alliance of Canadian Travel Association).

6. Same Day, In-Province Field Trips (A Trip)

6.1. The principal shall consent to all same day, in-province field trips prior to making commitments to students and parents. Include all information that will be provided to parents.

6.2. Adequate notice must be provided to parents. In most circumstances, two (2) weeks notice is recommended.

6.3. Written (online form completion) parental permission must be received prior to departure.

7. Overnight or Out-of-Province Field Trips (B Trip)

7.1. The principal shall ensure that a high level of parental support for the trip is demonstrated.

7.2. The superintendent shall consent to all overnight or out-of-province field trips prior to making commitments to students and parents. Include all information that will be provided to parents.

7.3. Adequate notice must be provided to parents. In most circumstances, two (2) months is recommended. This notice may be shortened for athletic overnight trips in consideration of tournament and/or Zones play.

7.4. Written parental permission must be received prior to departure.

7.5. The principal shall ensure adequate preparation and supervision is in place and that there is a designated teacher-leader with overall authority and responsibility on the trip.

7.5.1. The ratio of paid staff to volunteers shall not exceed 1:2.

7.5.2. Mixed groups shall include supervisors of both genders.

## 8. International Travel (C Trip)

- 8.1. The principal shall ensure that a high level of parental support for the trip is demonstrated.
- 8.2. The approval of the Board is required for all international travel prior to making commitments to students, parents and travel agencies. Include all information that has been provided to parents along with confirmation of coverage from the insurer.
- 8.3. Adequate notice must be provided to parents. In most circumstances, a minimum of five (5) months is required.
- 8.4. Written permission must be received prior to departure.
- 8.5. Normally, international field trips should be scheduled to coincide with school vacation periods.
- 8.6. To ensure the safety of students and supervisors, areas selected for international travel should:
  - 8.6.1. Have a history of political stability for at least five (5) years and no indications that political turmoil may erupt within the next twelve (12) months.
  - 8.6.2. Experience risk in other areas (e.g. health, transportation, geographic features) that is not substantially greater than would be experienced by students travelling in Alberta.
- 8.7. Normally, the following specific supervisory requirements should be followed:
  - 8.7.1. The ratio of students to adults shall not exceed 10:1.
  - 8.7.2. The ratio of paid staff to volunteers shall not exceed 1:2.
  - 8.7.3. Mixed groups shall include supervisors of both genders.
- 8.8. Students must be covered by extended health coverage through their parent(s) place of employment or purchase insurance (at their own cost) for the specific field trip.

## 9. Funding

- 9.1. Field trips may be funded wholly or in part from the school's budget, funds raised in accordance with Board or School policy, program grants or direct contributions made by individual students and/or parents.
- 9.2. The Board does not assume any liability or responsibility for spending of a personal nature made by a student, parent, or supervisor in preparation for or during a field trip.
- 9.3. In the event of a cancellation of or alteration to a field trip the following guidelines apply:
  - 9.3.1. The Board will not, as a rule, reimburse participants for losses incurred.
  - 9.3.2. If the Board is reimbursed for some or all of the costs, it will share equitably with all participants (including itself) in proportion to the losses incurred and amounts paid.
  - 9.3.3. There will be no reimbursement for personal expenses.

## 10. Private Trips/Non-sponsored School Activities

- 10.1. Private trips are those that are not approved in accordance with this policy.
- 10.2. The Board and the School are not sponsors, nor are connected in any way with a private trip and neither assumes any responsibility or liability whatsoever for the trip.
- 10.3. No advertisements or promotions are allowed within the school or on school property.
- 10.4. The organizers of a private trip must obtain prior approval to rent the school facility for any purpose related to a private trip.
- 10.5. Classroom time and material resources of the school shall not be used to organize or promote a private trip.

## 11. Volunteers

- 11.1. Refer to Administrative Procedure 406 Volunteers.

## 12. Prohibited Activities

- 12.1. Active student participation in the following field trip activities are prohibited:
  - 12.1.1. Activities using firearms including American gladiator style events, boxing, paintball, or war games.
  - 12.1.2. Automobile, motorcycle, and bicycle motocross (BMX) (racing, drag racing, demolition derbies, motocross, off-road all-terrain vehicles, and go-carting).
  - 12.1.3. Extreme sports (bungee jumping, mountain scrambling and technical mountaineering, ice climbing and caving/spelunking).
  - 12.1.4. Hang gliding, paragliding, parachuting ski-diving, hot air balloon rides (tethered and untethered).
  - 12.1.5. Open water scuba diving.
  - 12.1.6. Aerial gymnastics.
  - 12.1.7. Activities involving dunk tanks.
  - 12.1.8. Rodeos, mechanical bull riding or other mechanical rodeo events, horse jumping.
  - 12.1.9. Operation and racing of motorized watercraft.
- 12.2. Other activities such as off-site activities in remote or wilderness areas, water activities, swimming, and skiing, are permitted, provided they meet the safety and security of the students, staff, and volunteers, including appropriate planning to manage risks.

12.3. All field trip activities are subject to approval by the principal or superintendent.

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