

FIELD TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

Background

The District supports the practice of conducting co-curricular and extra-curricular educational field trips, excursions and exchanges that enhance student learning as described in the program of studies and align with the District mission statement.

Participation by students in special events such as field trips, athletic competitions, music and drama festivals, and student exchanges can significantly complement the educational program. While field trips and excursions have positive educational value, care must be taken to ensure that field trips or excursions are organized in a manner that maximizes educational benefit and ensures the protection and safety of students.

Guidelines

All field trips have some risk. The objective is to reduce and manage the foreseeable risk. The most effective way to manage risk is to plan ahead. When planning field trips, there needs to be a balance between the educational value of the field trips and the foreseeable risk. Schools and parents must work together to ensure a balance of exciting and educational activities with a high degree of safety. Every effort must be made to minimize foreseeable risk.

1. Excursions that are not sponsored by a school or the District are the total responsibility of the planners, tour agencies and transportation agencies involved.
2. Field trips sponsored by the school or District must:
 - 2.1 Have sufficient educational value to enhance the regular curriculum and the loss of instructional time in the regular program.
 - 2.2 Be adequately supervised to ensure acceptable levels of student behavior and safety.
 - 2.3 Be organized in a manner that conforms to all relevant Board policy and District Procedures, including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the need to complete both an educational assessment and a safety assessment regarding the proposed activity, student department, transportation and use of private vehicles, and the use of informed consent procedure.
 - 2.4 Regarding insurance coverage:
 - 2.4.1 Under normal circumstances, District staff and authorized supervisors are protected by the Board's liability insurance when acting within the scope of their duties as approved by the school administration. Proof of insurance should be obtained for field trip approval for field trips such as outdoor education camps, skiing, international trips, etc. The organizing

teacher should consult with the secretary-treasurer regarding this requirement and to verify insurance coverage for the proposed activity.

2.4.2 Coverage is normally effective only for activities held within Canada or the continental U.S.A. (Contact must be made with the secretary-treasurer for advice concerning insurance coverage beyond these borders.)

2.4.3 When using a vehicle (e.g. other than a public or school bus to transport children), the supervisory teacher must make certain that the vehicle has adequate insurance and the driver is appropriately licensed as per Administrative Procedure 543 - Transportation of Students/Private Vehicles.

3. The teacher organizing, planning and implementing a field trip or excursion must:

3.1 Be a certificated teacher employed by the Board.

3.2 Have visited the location of the field prior to the trip or gathered reliable information on the field trip location. The teacher should also be familiar with seasonal conditions and other information to prepare an educational and a safety assessment as per Clause 6.

3.3 Ensure that a teacher is present and supervising all field trips and excursions except in the most exceptional circumstances.

3.4 Consult with the Principal and obtain approval of the school Principal before planning the field trip.

3.5 Consider the attitude of other teachers, parents and the community toward the proposed excursion.

3.6 Assess the educational value of the trip against the value lost as a result of lost regular instruction.

3.7 Determine the costs associated with the trip.

3.8 Review policy requirements.

3.9 Consult with other teachers who teach courses to students who will be affected by the trip to arrive at a mutually acceptable time for the trip.

3.10 Work with the Principal of the school to provide for:

3.10.1 The eligibility of students who would attend a field trip.

3.10.2 Procedures for refunds

4. When facilities are adjacent to the school such as playing fields or track and field facilities:

4.1 That are used to teach the regular curriculum such as physical education, the school must notify parents in handbooks or other effective media, that students will access these facilities under the supervision of a teacher to instruct the regular program.

- 4.2 But for activities with higher levels of risk such as ice skating activities, the teacher must follow regular field trip and excursion procedures as outlined in this policy and meet the requirements of the Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools. (Consultation with the deputy superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer should be sought to verify activities having higher levels of risk.)
5. Prohibited activities include but are not limited to the following. A risk assessment and insurance coverage review will be conducted for other questionable activities.
- 5.1 Aviation – small aircraft, helicopter, hot air balloon rides, sky diving or any other aviation or aircraft related activity.
 - 5.1.1 Excursions requiring non-commercial aircraft (i.e. private planes).
 - 5.2 Automobiles – racing, drag racing, auto demolition derbies, motor cross, snowmobiles, off-road all-terrain vehicles.
 - 5.3 Mechanical bulls.
 - 5.4 Rodeo event participation.
 - 5.5 Bungee jumping.
 - 5.6 Boxing.
 - 5.7 Canoeing in moving water greater than grade one (1) rapids.
 - 5.8 Horse jumping.
 - 5.9 Ice climbing.
 - 5.10 Firearm activities.
 - 5.11 Trampoline activities.
 - 5.12 Aerial gymnastics.
 - 5.13 Paintball and related activities.
 - 5.14 Parasailing.
 - 5.15 Excursions to natural disaster areas (i.e. earthquakes, floods, hurricane, tornado zones).
 - 5.16 Excursions to war zones – imminent or existing.
 - 5.17 Excursions to regions with political or civil instability.
 - 5.18 Dunk tanks.
 - 5.19 Diving into or sliding on foam, mud, ice or snow.
 - 5.20 Demolition or derelict vehicles, equipment or buildings.
 - 5.21 Ice climbing/mountain climbing.
 - 5.22 Use of fireworks or other pyrotechnic devices.
 - 5.23 Use of air-filled “Fun Structures”.

6. These high risk activities require careful consideration and assessment of risk factors and are not for every grade or student.
 - 6.1 Archery.
 - 6.2 Cliff rappelling/rappelling towers.
 - 6.3 Climbing walls.
 - 6.4 Downhill skiing.
 - 6.5 Firing ranges.
 - 6.6 Gymnastics.
 - 6.7 Ice skating.
 - 6.8 Ice hockey.
 - 6.9 In-line skating.
 - 6.10 Mountain biking.
 - 6.11 Scuba diving.
 - 6.12 Skateboarding.
 - 6.13 Snowboarding/snow blading.
 - 6.14 Tackle football.
 - 6.15 Tobogganing.
 - 6.16 Whitewater rafting/kayaking.
 - 6.17 Winter camping.

Procedures

1. All staff shall refer to and follow administrative procedures relevant to the proposed field trip including, but not limited to:
 - AP 132 Inclement Weather
 - AP 265 Volunteers
 - AP 533 Hazardous Materials Management
 - AP 350 Student Conduct
 - AP 354 Suspension and Expulsion of Students
 - AP 355 Use of Alcohol, Restricted and Illicit Drugs
 - AP 313 Student Health Services
 - AP 310 Student Safety
 - AP 540 Student Transportation
 - AP 543 Transportation of Students/Private Vehicles
 - AP 542 Use of District-Owned Vehicles

2. The school Principal, in conjunction with the superintendent (or designate), will compile a list of approved field trips that is based on a thorough review of educational and safety assessments for commonly held field trips within the Province of Alberta.
 - 2.1 Grades 10-12 are eligible to attend International Field Trips.
3. The school Principal and the superintendent or designate must review and may supplement any safety assessments prepared for the school before placing any field trip on the district's approved field trip list.
4. The teacher planning, coordinating and implementing the proposed field trip must comply with the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools.
5. Prior written approval for various types of field trips is required as follows:
 - 5.1 The teacher responsible for planning, coordinating and implementing a field trip must submit an educational and safety assessment for the Principal's approval which meets the requirements of Clause 6 of the procedures.
 - 5.2 If a safety assessment has previously been completed and approved for the proposed field trip and is identified on an approved field trip list maintained by the school Principal, the request for approval need not include a new safety assessment provided, however, that the requirements of the policy and its guidelines and procedures and the requirements of the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools are met or exceeded.
 - 5.3 The teacher applying for field trip approval must have the training and knowledge appropriate for the proposed field trip or provide personnel with the training and knowledge appropriate for the field trip.
 - 5.4 The Principal may approve field trips within the Province of Alberta without superintendent or designate approval.
 - 5.4.1 For field trips of one-day duration or less within the Province of Alberta, the teacher must obtain prior written approval from the Principal at least seven (7) days before the proposed field trip date.
 - 5.4.2 For overnight field trips, the teacher must obtain prior written approval from the Principal at least thirty (30) days before the proposed field trip date.
 - 5.4.3 The principal will not accept late field trip proposals unless there are 'extenuating' circumstances and the superintendent or designate have been consulted. If a field trip proposal that does not meet the required time lines as stated in procedure 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 is accepted due to 'extenuating' circumstances, a record of this must be made by the principal in that field trip file.
 - 5.5 For out-of-province field trips, such as national or international field trips:
 - 5.1.1 Principal, will make a formal request for approval to the superintendent or designate, based on the organizer's report and request for field trip approval.

- 5.5.2 All requests for superintendent or designate approval 'in principle', for national or international field trips, shall be submitted to the superintendent or designate at least six (6) months prior to the date of the proposed trip and prior to the payment of any non-refundable deposit. No financial commitment, nor parental commitment, shall be sought or made for the proposed field trip until prior written superintendent or designate approval has been received.
 - 5.5.3 Final approval for national or international field trips will be considered two (2) months prior to the departure date for the field trip.
 - 5.5.4 The Board or the superintendent or designate, may cancel a field trip up to the departure day of the field trip and during the field trip for grave and unforeseen circumstances.
 - 5.5.5 A Board or superintendent or designate, decision to cancel a field trip will be made without costs to the Board and parents must be made aware of this in the parent consent process.
 - 5.5.6 The principal will not accept late field trip proposals unless there are 'extenuating' circumstances and the superintendent or designate have been consulted. If the superintendent or designate accepts a field trip proposal that does not meet the required time lines as stated in procedure 5.5.2 and 5.5.3, the principal must write a letter to the superintendent or designate explaining the reasons for the late field trip proposal and requesting that the superintendent or designate waive the required time lines as per Administrative Procedure 260. The principal must keep a record of this request in that field trip file.
 - 5.5.7 The superintendent or designate will strike an Out-of-Province Field Trip Committee to review the merits of an out-of-province field trip as per the educational criteria and risk assessment criteria.
 - 5.5.8 The Out-of-Province Field Trip Committee will consist of at least the following and may include others providing specialized expertise:
 - 5.5.8.1 the superintendent or designate;
 - 5.5.8.2 the Assistant superintendent;
 - 5.5.8.3 and the Secretary Treasurer.
 - 5.5.9 The Out-of-Province Field Trip Committee is responsible to review and decide upon approval of the Out-of-Province Field Trip based upon the criteria within this Administrative Procedure (260) and the Field Trip Checklist (F260-1) as well as any other relevant information.
 - 5.5.9.1 The Out-of-Province Field Trip Committee will determine if the roles of the principal and the organizing teacher have been fulfilled as per the procedures.
6. The teacher who applies for field trip approval must submit a report and a sample parental consent form to the Principal for review and approval. The report must address any matter that could affect safety on the field trip including the following matters:

- 6.1 An educational assessment:
 - 6.1.1 The purpose and educational value of the field trip including a provision for the incorporation of faith-based activities.
 - 6.1.2 The name of the teacher in charge and a contact telephone number.
 - 6.1.3 The date of the proposed field trip.
 - 6.1.4 The destination and, where necessary, a map of the area.
 - 6.1.5 A detailed itinerary setting out the general nature and number of activities, including an alternate plan if an activity is cancelled for unforeseen circumstances such as weather conditions.
 - 6.1.6 Departure and return times.
 - 6.1.7 Mode of transportation.
 - 6.1.8 Financial costs and arrangements for those able to pay and for those unable to pay.
 - 6.1.9 The date of the parent meeting, if required by the procedure manuals or school policy.
 - 6.1.10 That meaningful learning experiences are made available for those students not going on the field trip.
 - 6.1.11 Level of supervision.
 - 6.1.12 A reminder that parents or guardians must provide information to the teacher in charge about any relevant medical conditions of the student.
- 6.2 A safety assessment or risk assessment must be completed for all field trips and include details on:
 - 6.2.1 Review of type of activity and level at which it is undertaken including the safety evaluation or risks associated with each activity and procedures for reducing risks of these activities.
 - 6.2.2 Plan for the supervision of students.
 - 6.2.3 Consideration of the location (i.e. mountainous terrain, outdoor water, urban vs country setting).
 - 6.2.4 Qualification and certification of instructors, staff and volunteers.
 - 6.2.5 Consideration of the age appropriateness of the activity.
 - 6.2.6 The role of any volunteers.
 - 6.2.7 Consider the characters of the students and the students together in the group.
 - 6.2.8 Consider the fitness level and experience of the student.
 - 6.2.9 The required student knowledge or training and how the student knowledge and training will be conducted.
 - 6.2.10 Required safety equipment and packing list for students.
 - 6.2.11 Seasonal conditions.

- 6.2.12 Possible insurance issues.
 - 6.2.13 Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances.
 - 6.2.14 The need for additional medical coverage for out-of-province and out-of-country field trips.
 - 6.2.15 Any other relevant information about the trip which may influence the parent's or guardian's decision to withhold permission, such as a controversial museum exhibit.
 - 6.2.16 Contingency for possible travel delays, lost baggage or in the case of events such as poor weather, risk associated with social or political conditions, etc. that requires changes or cancellation of the field trip.
7. For international field trips, a further assessment must be completed as to whether there are any particular conditions or additional requirements that need to be met in such circumstances. Where applicable, the following circumstances must be assessed:
- 7.1 The country's social and economic stability and the potential for civil strife during the field trip.
 - 7.2 Health conditions of the country and any unique diseases.
 - 7.3 Access to fresh water.
 - 7.4 Availability of medical care and hospitals.
 - 7.5 Supervisor/student ratio needed for this trip.
 - 7.6 Males supervisor(s) for male students and female supervisor(s) for female students.
 - 7.7 Accommodations and sleeping arrangements.
 - 7.8 The availability of information for sites to be visited.
 - 7.9 Contacting local sources of information for perspectives on the location and activities.
 - 7.10 The use of a local guide.
 - 7.11 Expected weather conditions at the time of the field trip.
 - 7.12 How parents and students can have access to each other by telephone or radio, or if and when students and parents will be out of contact.
 - 7.13 Which supervisor(s) will have the medical histories and records in case of an emergency.
 - 7.14 If passports are required and who will be responsible for these during the field trip.
 - 7.15 For international field trips, trip organizers must attach the most recent travel report issued by the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for the destination(s) of the international field trip to be used as information for Parent Consent for the field trip and for the proposal and approval processes – available at: www.voyage.gc.ca/index-eng.asp

8. In terms of supervision:
 - 8.1 The Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools is to be used to determine the level of supervision for field trips requiring physical activity. Where the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools does not indicate a specific requirement for a supervision ratio, the Principal will consider:
 - 8.1.1 The level of risk for the activity;
 - 8.1.2 The number of students attending the activity;
 - 8.1.3 The type of students attending the activity; and
 - 8.1.4 The level of supervision provided by the service provider to ensure adequate supervision.
 - 8.2 For activities not included in the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools, the guidelines for supervision are as follows:
 - 8.2.1 A ratio of one adult to fifteen (15) students for all field trips where the element of risk is similar to the risks encountered in daily life.
 - 8.2.2 A ratio of one adult for ten (10) students for national and international field trips.
 - 8.2.3 A ratio of one adult to six (6) students under eight years old and/or where the students have special needs.
 - 8.2.4 A ratio of one adult for five (5) students or less for high-risk activities. (Consult the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools, the secretary-treasurer or the deputy superintendent to verify high risk activities.)
 - 8.3 All field trips must be under the direct supervision of one certificated teacher unless risk factors and student needs indicate more teacher supervision is needed.
 - 8.4 Exceptions to 8.2 may be made for local field trips for specialized programs, such as work experience and living skills in special education in which field trips involve small groups of students.
 - 8.4.1 Work experience students would be expected to make their own way to the work site, assuming parents have provided informed consent.
 - 8.4.2 A teacher assistant may take a small group of students on a field trip assuming the Principal provides approval and the parents provide informed consent.
 - 8.5 An individualized assessment for the specific field trip is to be conducted to determine the appropriate number of supervisors in consultation with the Principal of the school.
 - 8.6 Parents and volunteers can be counted as supervisors for field trips. All supervisors must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
 - 8.6.1 The teacher in charge of the field trip must brief all supervisors in detail regarding their respective assignments.

- 8.7 Both male and female supervisors must be provided for overnight (or longer) co-educational field trips.
 - 8.8 The teacher in charge of the field trip is responsible for ensuring an acceptable level of student discipline.
 - 8.9 Everyone involved in the field trip or excursion must be dressed/equipped in a manner appropriate to the activities to be undertaken.
 - 8.10 The use of intoxicants and controlled substances is not permitted by any participant on a field trip.
 - 8.11 The supervising teacher must have:
 - 8.11.1 Student lists.
 - 8.11.2 Phone contacts for school and parents.
 - 8.11.3 Student medical information.
 - 8.11.4 First aid kit appropriate for the activity.
 - 8.11.5 Cell phone.
9. With respect to student safety and notwithstanding the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools, nor the related risk assessment for field trips, the teacher in charge of the field trip, as well as the Principal and staff, should take reasonable measures to minimize risks to pupils.
- 9.1 It is required that the teacher in charge of the field trip and the Principal ensure that research is conducted with the local, provincial and federal health authorities to determine what immunization may be required for any field trip. Parents are to be advised of these requirements and recommendations. Students who do not meet the required immunization recommendations of the local, provincial or federal health authorities, will be refused to attend the field trip.

The following are further safety guidelines for the following types of activities:

- 9.2 Outdoor activities should normally not be conducted when the temperature is below -25 C or with a wind chill factor of -25 C.
- 9.3 When field trips involve swimming or boating:
 - 9.3.1 The supervising teacher must ensure that the activity is under the supervision of a person trained in water safety procedures with minimum of a current Bronze Cross and emergency first aid.
 - 9.3.2 Students involved in boating activities must wear a MOT (Minister of Transport) approved PFD (personal floatation device).
 - 9.3.3 For boating activities involving power, sail or canoe, direct supervision must be provided by a teacher/instructor experienced with the type of craft being used and licensed according to boating regulations set out by the Province of Alberta.

10. If an accident occurs on the field trip, the teacher in charge must:

- 10.1 Assess the situation and, if injuries have occurred, attend to the immediate medical concerns.
 - 10.2 Determine whether or not the trip will continue based upon all the circumstances.
 - 10.3 Notify the Principal or designate at the earliest opportunity if serious injuries have occurred so that the Principal or the supervising teacher may inform the parent or guardians and others as necessary.
 - 10.4 Complete a student/teacher accident report within forty-eight (48) hours of the incident or as soon as possible upon return to the school, and forward it to the District office.
11. When field trips are planned for remote wilderness areas, the supervising teacher must:
- 11.1 Be familiar with the area and have established safety and emergency procedures understood by all participants.
 - 11.2 Inform local authorities such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, forestry or park officials about the program, the location and route.
 - 11.3 Be aware of the location of the nearest accessible medical station.
 - 11.4 Establish procedures to contact the school Principal via the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, forestry or park officials in the event of an emergency.
 - 11.5 Ensure that required permits, fishing licenses and area use permits have been obtained from appropriate authorities.
 - 11.6 Ensure that at least one supervisor is qualified in emergency first aid and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
12. The transportation of students for field trips must adhere to the following:
- 12.1 All participating students shall use the transportation that has been arranged for the field trip by the school unless other arrangements have been made between the parent and the teacher organizing the field trip. The Principal must be informed in writing using form F260-3 if a Parent and Student are declining School Transportation.
 - 12.2 Should parents be responsible for the transportation of their children to a school event and from a school event, the parents must be informed by the school of this and parents should be informed of the designated meeting and departure places.
 - 12.3 Commercial transportation (buses and taxis) shall be used wherever possible. Only properly licensed and insured commercial transportation vehicles and drivers shall be used except:
 - 12.3.1 When an arrangement has been made with a parent as in section 12.1.
or
 - 12.3.2 When a volunteer driver is required as per Administrative Procedure 543 – Transportation of Students/Private Vehicles.
 - 12.4 Schools are advised to use carriers under contract with the school District.

- 12.5 If a school wishes to use a carrier not contracted with the District, the carrier must have an Operating Authority Certificate from the Motor Transport Board and a Certificate of Insurance showing insurance coverage of not less than five (5) million dollars;
 - 12.6 Only major commercial carriers shall be utilized to provide transportation by air;
 - 12.7 Under normal circumstances, the school should transport students on field trips and excursions.
 - 12.8 For events such as inter-school athletics that take place well after school hours, or on weekends, a Principal may allow:
 - 12.8.1 A student with a valid driver's license to drive to and from a field trip or excursion within the Edmonton region provided that the Principal has written permission from the parent or guardian acknowledging that their student will be driving to the field trip or excursion.
 - 12.8.2 Students cannot drive other students to school events – such as athletes or participants in curricular, co-curricular or extra-curricular events sponsored by the school.
 - 12.9 Students may be transported in District-owned vehicles as per Administrative Procedure 542.
 - 12.10 Any vehicle used to transport students and supervisors cannot exceed the rated passenger capacity.
13. Once the Principal has approved a field trip within the province of Alberta, or the superintendent or designate has provided final approval for an out-of-province field trip, parents must provide an informed written consent for their child to attend a field trip.
- 13.1 Parents are advised in writing the nature of the field trip including the following information:
 - 13.1.1 Board policy and district procedures regarding field trip approval process, refund policy, cancellation policy.
 - 13.1.2. Educational assessment.
 - 13.1.3 Safety assessment.
 - 13.1.4 Detailed itinerary.
 - 13.1.4 Expectations of students and parents.
 - 13.1.5 The supervision provided.
 - 13.1.6 The dates for any planned parent meetings and expectations for those who do not attend.
 - 13.1.7 Student eligibility.
 - 13.1.8 All financial information and costs.
 - 13.2 When a parent meeting has been called for a field trip:
 - 13.2.1 The teacher in charge must keep a record of attendance at the parent meeting.

- 13.2.2 The student's parent or guardian must attend the parent meeting to discuss the field trip and the rules to be followed and the conduct expected of students or personally speak to the teacher in charge about the trip.
 - 13.2.3 If a parent or guardian has not attended the parent meeting nor personally spoken to the teacher in charge about the field trip, the student is not eligible to attend the field trip.
 - 13.3 When a series of field trips or excursions are planned for a course or school extra-curricular programs (i.e. Physical Education 20/30; team travel, etc.):
 - 13.3.1 All applicable clauses will apply to the parent consent process.
 - 13.3.2 A series of related field trips can be consolidated on one parent consent form provided that the parent is informed of the educational and safety assessments for each activity.
 - 13.3.3 The parent is able to provide written consent or refuse consent for individual field trips or activities.
 - 13.4 Parents must be informed of changes to any field trip or activity and provide written consent for these changes.
 - 13.5 Signed written consent from parents must include a copy of all information provided of all activities for which consent is provided. Parents must be provided a copy of the same information to keep for their personal use.
 - 13.6 All signed written parental consent forms for field trips within the province of Alberta must be stored by the school for two (2) years, stored for eight (8) years by district office and then destroyed. (Note: Schools may send these forms to district office immediately following the field trip.)
 - 13.7 All signed written parental consent forms for national or international field trips must be stored by the school for two (2) years, then sent to the District storage services for eight (8) years, and then be destroyed.
14. For field trips/excursions that involve being away on a Saturday, Sunday, or Holy Day of Obligation, the group shall make every effort to attend a Catholic Mass. If this is impossible, the group shall arrange to participate in a Liturgy of the Word or other liturgical celebration approved by the District's Religious Education Consultant. The Mass or liturgical celebration must be included in the itinerary as part of the Field Trip Request in order for the trip to be approved.
15. The superintendent or designate will provide an information report to the Board of the out-of-province field trips that have received final approval, prior to the departure date of the field trips.