

FIELD TRIPS, EXCURSIONS, AND ON-SITE ACTIVITIES

Background

The Division recognizes that field trips that occur off the school site can be an effective means of providing students with learning opportunities beyond those which can be offered within the school. The community can be viewed as being an extension of the school and, therefore, the Division endorses educational field trips when such field studies have educational value and complement the school curriculum.

Definitions

Field Trip means an approved school activity that occurs outside of school property. This definition includes Division-sponsored student exchange programs, classes, programs, and extracurricular activities that occur outside of school property but excludes work study and work experience programs.

Excursion means an approved school activity that occurs outside of school property such as educational travel outside of the province beyond five (5) days in duration including International trips.

Teacher in Charge means the teacher responsible for the planning, coordinating, implementing and attending an excursion or field trip.

Parent/Guardian means a person defined as a parent in the School Act Section 1(q) and (2).

Safety Guidelines means the most current Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta schools that are in force.

Participant means a student, volunteer, teacher or other Division staff member who travels on the off-site activity, but does not include a guide or service provider staff.

Supervisor means a staff member, approved volunteer, certified and/or trained guide or venue staff typically assigned to supervise patrons. A bus driver may not act as a supervisor if doing so compromises transportation regulations.

Procedures

1. All Division policies and administrative procedures are deemed to be in effect during all field trips.
2. No field trip shall be undertaken without prior written authorization by:
 - 2.1 The principal for field trips within the province less than two (2) days and one (1) overnight.
 - 2.2 The principal, in consultation with the Superintendent or designate, for field trips of two (2) or more nights.

- 2.3 The Board, for field trips and excursions involving travel outside of Alberta.
3. Principals must ensure that eligibility criteria are established for all field trips.
4. Field trips may be supported in part or in whole by parents or guardians of eligible students, but no eligible students may be denied participation on the basis of inability to pay. Field trips are expected to be affordable for students, and assistance is available for students who are unable to pay the costs due to financial need.
5. Notwithstanding procedure four (4), excursions are to be financially supported in whole by parents or guardians of eligible students. Excursions are expected to be as affordable as possible.
6. The teacher-in-charge must:
 - 6.1 Consult with and obtain the approval of the principal before planning for the field trip and complete the appropriate electronic forms.
 - 6.2 Accept no money on behalf of the school or the agent for the excursion prior to all required forms being read, reviewed and signed by the parents/guardians of the student.
 - 6.2 Wherever possible or reasonable, have visited the location of the field trip prior to the trip and be familiar with the seasonal conditions at the time of the activity;
 - 6.3 Have the training and knowledge appropriate for leading the trip;
 - 6.4 Select appropriate volunteers for the trip and provide volunteers with direction as to the requirements of the trip and their responsibilities prior to departure; (see Administrative Procedure 490 – Volunteers);
 - 6.5 Use qualified and certified guides when appropriate or as directed;
 - 6.6 Ensure that appropriate documentation is filed with the principal and accompanies the teacher-in-charge on the trip;
 - 6.7 Advise students regarding trip hazards and appropriate safety procedures;
 - 6.8 Ensure a field trip proposed itinerary which includes a Sunday and/or Holy Day of Obligation must include details of arrangements for students and their leaders to attend Mass on the Saturday evening vigil or on the Sunday morning. Should it be truly impossible to attend mass on the Saturday evening or on the Sunday morning the proposed itinerary must include provisions for the students and their leaders to participate in a Liturgy of the Word.
 - 6.9 Ensure that the condition for travel remain unchanged right up to the approved departure date. For excursions the lead teacher should monitor the Government of Canada website (<http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>) on a regular basis and inform the Principal and Superintendent of any changes in travel advice and advisories.
7. Before approving a field trip, a principal must:
 - 7.1 Be satisfied that the teacher in charge understands the policies and procedures defining the teacher's responsibilities and duty of care;

- 7.2 Be satisfied that the current safety guidelines have been met or exceeded;
- 7.3 Be satisfied that the students, teachers, staff, volunteers and parents or guardians will receive the appropriate information about the trip;
- 7.4 Be satisfied that arrangements are in place for covering all the financial matters, including refund procedures, contingency funds and an accounting for all expenditures;
- 7.5 Consult with the teachers in charge before recommending final approval;
- 7.6 Consult with the Superintendent, or designate, for a field trip with atypical circumstances or characteristics;
- 7.7 Ensure that the teacher in charge completes a preliminary risk assessment for any trips not on the approved list; and
- 7.8 Ensure appropriate documentation related to the trip has been submitted.

SUPERVISION

- 8 Unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent or designate, the minimum acceptable standard of supervision for field trips is:

SUPERVISION REQUIREMENT SCHEDULE

Grade Level	Min. Adult/Student In-Town (Day Trip)	Min. Adult/Student Out-of-Town (Day Trip)	Min. Adult/Student (Overnight Trip) <i>Min. 2 Supervisors</i>
ECS	1/5	1/5	n/a
1 – 3	1/12	1/8	2/5
4 – 6	1/12	1/10	2/10
7 – 9	1/25	1/15	2/15
10 – 12	1/25	1/25	2/15

9. Where field trips include overnight stays and the student group includes male and female students, supervision of the group must include both male and female supervisors. Where field trips and/or athletic events include students of only one gender, at least one supervisor must be of that gender.
10. Additional supervision by certificated staff and/or volunteers from the school must be considered for field trips involving:
- 10.1 Increased risks;
 - 10.2 Large numbers of students;
 - 10.3 Participation of students with special needs;
 - 10.4 Crowded venues;
 - 10.5 Trips that are new to the school; and
 - 10.6 For overnight trips, if members of the same family group are supervising students.

11. In all instances at least one certificated teacher shall be in attendance.
 - 11.1 In instances where a student is participating or travelling as a member of another school-based team or group that is not part of the Division, parents/guardians shall be informed of the level of supervision that will be provided by the third party, and be further informed that no supervision, nor responsibility, shall be assumed by STAR Catholic School Division.
 - 11.1.1 Upon the provision of the information referenced in clause 11.1, parents/guardians shall provide written consent to the school that they are authorizing the student to attend the event with the third party supervision provided, and with the understanding that no supervision, nor responsibility, shall be assumed by STAR Catholic School Division. Students will not be permitted to attend or play for another school without this written permission.

TRANSPORTATION

12. Transportation of students on field trips must comply with Division policy and procedures.
 - 12.1 Commercial transportation
 - 12.1.1 Only properly licensed and insured commercial transportation vehicles and drivers shall be used;
 - 12.1.2 Schools are advised to use carriers under contract to the Division;
 - 12.1.3 If a school wishes to use a carrier not contracted with the Division, the carrier must have an Operating Authority Certificate from the Motor Transport Board and a Certificate of Insurance coverage of not less than five (5) million dollars; and
 - 12.1.4 The carrier profile must be provided and reviewed.
 - 12.2 The principal must ensure that a staff member, student, or volunteer driving a vehicle that is not Division-owned is properly licensed and insured.
 - 12.3 The Division has insurance coverage that provides for indemnification in the event of bodily injury or property damage to third parties as the result of an automobile accident for which the staff member, student or volunteer is legally responsible. However, the primary liability protection for the staff member, student or volunteer driving a vehicle that is not Division-owned is provided by his/her own liability policy. The minimum liability coverage is required to be two (2) million dollars.
 - 12.4 Schools are required to retain copies of the drivers' license and insurance pink slip information. The Driver Information Form attached to Administrative Procedure 551: Student Transportation: Private Vehicles may be used as a record.
 - 12.5 Air transportation other than on commercial carriers will not be authorized.

CONSENT

13. In order to ensure informed consent, parents shall be provided with the following information in writing:
 - 13.1 Purpose or educational goal of the field trip;

- 13.2 The name of the teacher-in-charge and a contact telephone number;
 - 13.3 The date;
 - 13.4 The destination, and where necessary, a map of the area;
 - 13.5 A detailed itinerary, setting out the general nature and number of activities;
 - 13.6 Departure and return times;
 - 13.7 Mode of transportation;
 - 13.8 Financial arrangements;
 - 13.9 Safety precautions;
 - 13.10 Level of supervision;
 - 13.11 The date of the parent meeting, if required;
 - 13.12 Any unusual factors such as rigorous physical activity, water related activities or water sports;
 - 13.13 Any special risks and hazards associated with the activity;
 - 13.14 A reminder that parents or guardians must inform the teacher-in charge about any relevant medical conditions of the student;
 - 13.15 Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;
 - 13.16 The need for additional medical coverage for out-of-province and out-of-country trips; and
 - 13.17 Other relevant information about the trip which may influence the parent's or guardian's decision to withhold permission.
14. When a parent meeting has been called for a trip:
- 14.1 The teacher-in-charge must keep a record of attendance at the parent meeting, and
 - 14.2 The student's parent or guardian must attend the parent meeting to discuss the field trip and the rules of conduct expected of students, or, if the student's parent or guardian does not attend the parent meeting, the teacher-in-charge must personally speak to the parent or guardian about the trip.
15. One permission form is acceptable for a series of off-site activities provided all dates are listed on the form. Should a date change or an additional occurrence be added, then parents will be notified at least one day in advance.
16. Each student participating in an off-site activity must:
- 16.1 Comply with the rules of the school and the requirements of the school's code of conduct;
 - 16.2 Comply with the rules of the activity venue;
 - 16.3 Fulfill all preparatory requirements at an appropriate level of performance;
 - 16.4 Dress appropriately according to the type of off-site activity;

- 16.5 Cooperate fully with everyone authorized by the Board to provide education programs and other services;
 - 16.6 Participate in a responsible and cooperative manner during the trip;
 - 16.7 Account to the teacher in charge for their conduct;
 - 16.8 Respect the rights of others; and
 - 16.9 Carry out all follow-up procedures in an appropriate manner.
17. A student may not participate in an off-site activity unless the student is enrolled in a sponsoring or participating school.
18. Volunteers
- 18.1 Volunteers must:
 - 18.1.1 Comply with the requirement of Administrative Procedure 490: Volunteers; and
 - 18.1.2 Complete the appropriate trip forms.
 - 18.2 Volunteers are expected to know the details of the off-site activity and their specific duties and authority prior to departure.
 - 18.3 Volunteers must support and follow the school code of conduct and:
 - 18.3.1 Report any inappropriate conduct to the teacher-in-charge;
 - 18.3.2 Adhere to the schedule or itinerary; and
 - 18.3.3 Fulfill their duties for the duration of the off-site activity, including evenings and weekends.
19. Field trips and excursions to natural disaster areas (i.e. earthquakes, floods, hurricane, tornado, and avalanches), war zones or to regions with political or civil instability are not permitted.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

- Aviation activities ie. Aircraft or helicopter rides from school property, use of private (non-commercial) planes
- Use of fireworks or other pyrotechnic devices
- Aerial gymnastics
- American gladiator style events
- Any form of motorized racing
- Bicycle motocross (BMX)
- Boxing/mixed martial arts
- Bungee jumping
- Bobsledding
- Spelunking
- Demolition derbies
- Drag Racing

- Dunk tanks
- Hang gliding
- Hiking on the West Coast Trail in the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, BC
- Ice climbing
- Motorcycling of any nature
- Paintball, laser tag games or war games
- Rodeos
- Trampolining or use of air filled "Fun Structures"
- Skeleton
- Extreme sports
- Horse jumping
- Hot air balloon rides (tethered and untethered)
- Mountain scrambling and technical mountaineering
- Rifle ranges or other activities involving firearms
- Parasailing and skydiving
- Winter biathlon with firearms
- Diving or jumping headfirst into or on foam, mud, ice or snow
- Other than tobogganing, organized sliding on ice or snow
- Scuba diving outdoors and in open water

The following off-site activities are permitted but require a heightened attention to safety and detail.

- Archery
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Mountain biking
- Open water swimming
- Rock climbing/climbing walls
- Tobogganing and sledding
- Downhill skiing/snowboarding and blading
- Fencing
- Luge
- Mountain Climbing
- Racing of non-motorized watercraft
- Stage fighting and movement
- White-water rafting

19.1 For any event listed or not listed above, the teacher in charge must consult and adhere to the most up to date Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta.

OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES IN REMOTE OR WILDERNESS AREAS

20. In a remote or wilderness area, the teacher-in-charge must:

- 20.1 Have visited the location of the off-site activity prior to the trip and be familiar with the proposed route and seasonal conditions at the time of the trip;
- 20.2 Use professional guides when appropriate or as directed;

- 20.3 Establish and communicate class safety and emergency procedures to all participants and the principal;
- 20.4 Ensure that appropriate communication devices are taken on the trip;
- 20.5 Ensure constant communication within the group and access to external communication as needed;
- 20.6 Be familiar with the nearest accessible medical station and telephone service;
- 20.7 Notify local area authorities, such as police, forestry or park officials about the proposed activity and location or route to be used;
- 20.8 Contact local authorities for information regarding environmental conditions, seasonal wildlife concerns, and trail conditions;
- 20.9 Establish procedures so that contact can be made with the principal via police, forestry or park officials, or other persons in the area;
- 20.10 Obtain camping permits, fire permits, fishing and other licences and area use permission where required; and
- 20.11 Ensure that a minimum of one supervisor is qualified in emergency first aid and CPR.

WATER ACTIVITIES

- 21. Each trip that includes water-related activities must have a safety assessment, unless the trip is on an approved activities list.
 - 21.1 All participants involved in sailing or boating activities must:
 - 21.1.1 Have swimming skills commensurate with the activity, and
 - 21.1.2 Wear a Transport Canada approved lifejacket or personal flotation device.
 - 21.2 For activities involving canoeing, sailing and power craft, the activity must meet or exceed the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools.
 - 21.3 When canoe trips take place on lakes or rivers, the teacher-in-charge must have visited the site prior to the trip, and be familiar with the proposed route and the seasonal conditions at the time of the trip.
 - 21.4 Adequate instruction and demonstration must be given to all participants involved before allowing the participants to undertake any water-related activity.
- 22. Swimming activities
 - 22.1 Students attending off-site activities may not swim unless there is a lifeguard on duty.
 - 22.2 If the facility operator does not provide a lifeguard at a swimming activity, students may swim if the school provides a lifeguard with current certification in National Lifeguard Services (NLS) Lifeguard – Waterfront Option Certification or NLS-Pool Option with two years of waterfront experience, for every fifty (50) participants using the swimming pool.
- 23. Skiing and Snowboarding
 - 23.1 Downhill skiing and snowboarding are acceptable activities for students provided the following conditions have been met:

- 23.1.1 Conditioning activities have occurred in physical education classes, or as part of a fitness program leading up to the skiing or snowboarding activity;
 - 23.1.2 Skiing or snowboarding are part of a well-balanced yearly program, and reflect the school's commitment to a quality physical education program; and
 - 23.1.3 All students must participate in a mandatory lesson at minimum once per year.
- 23.2 Prior to the skiing or snowboarding trip, the teacher-in-charge must
- 23.2.1 Make contact with the ski resort operator in order to arrange the student identification and controls procedures; and
 - 23.2.2 Understand the ski resort's emergency protocol.
- 23.3 Upon arrival at the ski resort, the teacher-in-charge must:
- 23.3.1 Divide students into levels of ability as described by the parents or guardians signed acknowledgement of the student's skier or snowboarder's classification;
 - 23.3.2 Assist the ski resort staff with grouping students for their lessons;
 - 23.3.3 Along with the ski resort staff, emphasize to the students that they will be given permission to use specified slopes or trails, and that the use of other slopes or trails is prohibited; and
 - 23.3.4 Assist the ski resort staff with controlling student access to slopes or trails.
- 23.4 At the conclusion of the mandatory lesson:
- 23.4.1 The ski resort instructor will identify the level of ability of the students, and assign appropriate ski or snowboarding slopes or trails;
 - 23.4.2 Students may begin supervised skiing and snowboarding on the assigned slopes or trails; and
 - 23.4.3 Students should ski with others, preferably in groups of 3 or 4.
- 23.5 The teacher/instructor must postpone activity if there is an indication of inclement weather or conditions severe enough to put student safety at risk.
- 23.6 Supervision of ski slopes must be carried out by supervisors on the hill and in the lodge.
- 23.7 All participants in downhill skiing and snowboarding activities must:
- 23.7.1 Wear approved ski/snowboard helmets; and
 - 23.7.2 Ski or snowboard only on designated open runs within the ski area.

Reference: Section 18, 20, 45, 60, 61, 113, School Act
 Traffic Safety Act
 Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools
 Safety Guidelines for Secondary Inter-School Athletics in Alberta
 ASBIE Off-Site Policy and Procedures Manual – January 2012