

FIELD TRIPS

Background

The Division supports curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities in order to provide students with a well-balanced educational experience. Field trips designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry and provide opportunities for social growth and development are considered appropriate extensions of the classroom. The Division is committed to ensuring that a safe learning environment is provided to students, staff, and volunteers while participating in field trips. The health, safety, and welfare of students are of the utmost importance in all activities which occur away from the school premises.

To the extent that they provide a most effective means for accomplishing general curriculum objectives for the Division's schools, field trips may be approved by the Principal, subject to the following procedures. High risk or overnight field trips require Superintendent/designate approval.

Definitions

Curricular field trips are an integral component of a curriculum, in which all students at the appropriate level have the opportunity to participate.

Co-curricular field trips are extensions and/or enrichment of a curriculum, but are not mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Extracurricular field trips are school sponsored but fall primarily outside of the curriculum.

Local field trips are those that occur within the local community, usually within walking distance, or for the purpose of sports teams, are within the boundaries of the Division.

Procedures

1. There shall be no unsupervised time for students on field trips. Supervisors are required to be on duty at all times.
2. The field trip organizer is responsible for the level of supervision on each trip, giving consideration to the following factors:
 - 2.1 number of participants
 - 2.2 age of the participants
 - 2.3 distance involved
 - 2.4 duration of the field trip
 - 2.5 nature of the activities
 - 2.6 risk of activities
 - 2.7 nature of the venue(s) being visited
 - 2.8 supervision level of any service providers
 - 2.9 needs of particular students
3. The *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools* should be consulted by the field trip organizer for all applicable field trips. https://education.alberta.ca/media/160206/sg_pa_final_2014.pdf

4. If there are concerns with the safety of a site, contact the Division's Safety Coordinator.
5. A safety assessment shall be completed by the field trip organizer for all field trips.
6. **Weather/Road Conditions**
 - 6.1 If all buses are canceled, all extra-curricular / co-curricular events will be cancelled.
 - 6.2 If some buses are running, the School Administrator(s) must make the decision, based on student and staff safety, whether or not to participate in the activity.
7. As much as possible, co-curricular field trips should take place during or adjacent to school vacations, in order to minimize the amount of instructional time missed. As extracurricular activities generally fall outside the instructional program, care should be taken to minimize the amount of school time lost.
8. Teachers who are supervising field trips shall be considered to be on duty. Teachers wishing to participate in field trips may do so providing the substitute costs (if any) are assumed by the school.
9. The field trip organizer must show written evidence that parents/guardians acknowledge the participation of their child(ren) in the proposed activity, after having been fully informed about the nature and purposes of the trip.
10. The field trip organizer must ensure that adequate safeguards are in place for students with known medical problems.
11. **Local Field Trips**
 - 11.1 Typical school day supervision levels are deemed to be adequate.
 - 11.2 Parent/guardian consent for the entire school year for local curricular field trips is satisfactory -- *Field Trip Informed Consent (Form 260-1)*.
 - 11.3 Parents/guardians should receive adequate prior notice of trips (agenda notice, notes home, etc).
 - 11.4 The supervising teacher should have access to any required student medical information and contact numbers.
12. **Field Trips Within Alberta (overnight and/or high risk)**
 - 12.1 Depending on the nature of the field trip, level of risk, and venue, the following are suggested supervision guidelines:

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|----------------------------|------------|
| Kindergarten to Grade Six: | 1:8 ratio |
| Grades Seven to Nine: | 1:12 ratio |
| Grades Ten to Twelve | 1:15 ratio |
 - 12.2 Generally field trips of this nature are to be approved by the school Principal.
 - 12.3 High risk field trips considered (see #14) require Superintendent/designate approval. Complete Form 260-2 "*Field Trip Request*" and submit 4 weeks in advance (minimum).
 - 12.4 Overnight field trips require Superintendent/designate approval. Complete Form 260-2 "*Field Trip Request*" and submit 4 weeks in advance (minimum).
 - 12.5 Field trips shall show relevance to the curriculum/program of studies.
 - 12.6 Any student going on an extracurricular field trip shall accept the responsibility of completing any tasks/assignments missed during the trip.
 - 12.7 Parent/guardian consent is required *Field Trip Informed Consent - High Risk (260-3)*.
 - 12.8 The supervising teacher should have access to any required student medical information and contact numbers.

13. **International and National Travel Study** (See *Administrative Procedure 261*)

14. **Excluded Activities** (not allowed):

- Automobile activities (ie. demolition derbies, auto races, drag races)
- Aviation activities (ie. aircraft or helicopter rides)
- Hot air balloon rides
- Parasailing and Paragliding
- Sky-diving
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Any other aviation or aircraft related activity
- Excursions requiring the use of non-commercial aircraft (ie. private planes)
- Bungee jumping
- Demolition of derelict vehicles, equipment or buildings
- Diving into or sliding on foam, mud, ice or snow
- Dunk tanks
- Excursions to natural disaster areas (ie. earthquakes, floods, hurricane, tornado zones)
- Excursions to war zones – imminent or existing
- Excursions to regions with political or civil instability
- Ice climbing \ mountain climbing
- Mechanical bulls
- Use of fireworks or other pyrotechnic devices
- Use of air-filled “Fun Structures”

15. **Restricted Activities**

15.1 The health, safety and welfare of students on all field trips are of the utmost importance. Any field trip which has the potential to expose students and/or supervisors to unusual hazards that would not normally be encountered in a school setting, (rock climbing, gun handling, archery, etc) are required to obtain prior written approval from the Superintendent (Form 260-2 “*Field Trip Request*”), and clarification of insurance coverage, if appropriate. Documentation outlining current certification of instruction or experience must be included in the field trip request. A detailed list of activities is required to be submitted.

15.2 The field trip organizer should check any travel medical coverage that the students will be purchasing to see if these activities are covered or excluded from the travel medical.

15.3 **High Risk Activities** (require careful consideration and assessment of risk factors and are not for every grade level or student). *Please note this list may change.*

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|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| Archery | Ice hockey | Skateboarding |
| Cliff/Tower rappelling | Ice skating | Snowboarding/snow blading |
| Climbing walls | In-line skating | Tackle football |
| Downhill Skiing | Mountain biking | Tobogganing |
| Firing ranges | Paintball warfare games | Whitewater rafting/kayaking |
| Gymnastics | Scuba diving under controlled environment | Winter camping |

15.4 Risk Assessment Factors should include:

- 15.4.1 Review of *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools*.
- 15.4.2 Review of type of activity and level at which it is undertaken.
- 15.4.3 Consideration of the location
(ie. mountainous terrain, outdoor water, urban vs. country setting).
- 15.4.4 Qualification and certification of instructors, staff and volunteers.
- 15.4.5 The age appropriateness of the activity.
- 15.4.6 The characters of the students and the students together in a group.
- 15.4.7 Fitness level and experience of the student.
- 15.4.8 Availability and appropriateness of the safety equipment (ie. helmets).
- 15.4.9 Seasonal conditions.
- 15.4.10 Number and experience of Supervisors.

15.5 Parent/Guardian consent is required -- *Field Trip Informed Consent (High Risk Activity)* (Form 260-3).

15.6 The supervising teacher should have access to any required student medical information and contact numbers.

16. Severe Weather

16.1 During severe weather or poor driving conditions, the Lead Teacher, in consultation with the School Administrator(s), must ensure that weather and road conditions are conducive to travel before students leave for a field trip.

16.2 A field trip may not proceed by vehicle if any one or more of the following exist (this does not apply to regularly scheduled bus runs):

- 16.2.1 There are blizzard conditions enroute or blizzard or severe weather conditions are forecast by Environment Canada.
- 16.2.2 The RCMP or the Alberta Motor Association has issued a warning against travel on any enroute highway.
- 16.2.3 The temperature is below -40 degrees Celsius or is forecast to be below -40.
- 16.2.4 The wind chill falls in the 'very high or extreme' categories as defined by Environment Canada.

16.3 On return trips, the Lead Teacher must verify weather and road conditions.

16.4 Students must be appropriately clothed for travel by road during the winter, as determined by the Lead Teacher.

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

Related AP's: Transportation - Cancellation of Bus Routes Due To Weather/Road Conditions (AP 131)
Transportation - Field & Extracurricular Trips (AP 557)

Forms: 260-1 Field Trip Informed Consent
260-2 Field Trip Request - High Risk Activity / Overnight
260-3 Field Trip Informed Consent (High Risk Activity)

Amended: February 2018