

# FIELD TRIPS

## Background

The Division believes that off-site activity and field trips can enhance the learning opportunities for students. Therefore, the Division authorizes such activities when these activities have educational value and are curricular-based. While field trips and excursions have positive educational value, care must be taken to ensure that trips and excursions are organized in a manner that maximizes the educational benefit and ensures the protection and safety of students.

The Superintendent or designate is responsible for the general administration of this administrative procedure. The Manager of Risk and Materials is the Division's contact for questions of clarification, particularly as it relates to insurance and approved activities.

## Scope of Procedure

1. This procedure governs all field trips, excursions or community-based activities that take place off school grounds. This also includes travel by individual students in connection with student conferences/competitions, and any other off-site school-sponsored activities. The primary reference for safety expectations and precautions shall be:
  - Appendix A: Alberta Risk Managed insurance Consortium (ARMIC), Approved and Prohibited Activities,
  - Appendix B: Best Practices and;
  - [School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety](#)
2. This procedure does not apply to:
  - Any student trip or activity planned and organized outside of the school program by a parent, parent group or any other out-of-school organization. Such activities are not considered to be "school or Division sponsored", and are therefore the responsibility and liability of that parent or organizing group;
  - Student off-campus work experience placements, registered apprenticeships, and dual credit programs; and
  - Student exchange programming. Please refer to AP 301.

## **Educational Goals**

All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel shall have:

1. Educational goals established which are compatible with the provincial programs of study and the school's instructional program;
2. Sufficient educational value to outweigh any loss of instructional time from the regular school program

## **Access and Eligibility**

1. Participation is limited to students who are enrolled in Foothills School Division.
2. School principals must ensure that eligibility criteria are established for off-site activities.
3. Where reasonably practicable, Off-site activities should be accessible for all eligible students and the principal should ensure that the school publicizes that financial assistance is available for students who are unable to pay the costs.
4. Off-site activities may be supported in part or whole by parents or guardians of eligible students, however, no eligible student should be denied participation on the basis of the inability to pay.

## **Procedures**

### **General** (All field trips)

#### **1. Planning**

All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel shall be planned in such a way as to maximize student safety. Principals\* are responsible for reviewing and approving off-campus activities. \* Additional approvals are required for all overnight trips.

- The teacher-in-charge or designated Division employee is responsible for acquiring sufficient awareness of and information about the proposed site(s) of the activity to create a hazard assessment (Form 260-4) for the activity. If possible, a pre-trip visit to the site to complete a site assessment is highly recommended.
- Competent instruction and supervision for off-campus activities are mandatory. Competence may be established by virtue of a certificate from a governing body for an activity, or where certificates are not issued, competence may be recognized by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity. It is the responsibility of the teacher-in-charge or designated Division employee to ensure that a contracted service provider holds the appropriate certification or training.
- The teacher/Division employee-in-charge of any field trips, off-campus activities or student travel shall be responsible for carrying a list of student participants, including telephone contact numbers, Alberta Health Care numbers, medication, and medic-alert needs.

- Students shall not be required to walk to an off-campus venue in circumstances where extreme weather or temperature exists, or where a student is improperly dressed for the weather conditions. Students must have appropriate attire for the weather conditions.
- The use of alcohol or drugs by any participant, including staff members and volunteers, is strictly prohibited during all field trips, off-campus activities, and student travel, regardless of the circumstances, the age of the participants, or local laws and customs.
- ensure that the destination is appropriate for the age, fitness, and maturity of the participants
- confirm activities fall within the green or yellow categories of appendix A
- ensure that the teacher has read and understood this Administrative Procedure before submitting a Field Trip proposal
- ensure the teacher-in-charge has reviewed, copied, and followed up on student medical forms and other documentation
- ensure the teacher-in-charge has signed out and brought an emergency kit and has developed and is familiar with an emergency response plan specific to the activity site
- confirm the experience is of curricular value to students
- parental consent, including an acknowledgement of all the risks involved in the trip, has been obtained in writing using the *Informed Consent Form* approved by the Division
- alternative meaningful educational experiences are provided for those students not participating
- opportunities are provided for parental involvement in the planning
- participation is not a requisite for successful completion of the related course
- cost of substitutes required should be borne by the students, students' union, or other sponsoring body

## 2. Supervision

Principals are responsible to ensure:

- All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel must be under the direct supervision of at least one Division employee. Students are accountable to the teacher-in-charge for their conduct at all times during the trip.
- That teachers and/or supervisors have sufficient and appropriate qualifications including first aid training to ensure proper supervision based on the nature of the trip or activity. [School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety](#) and Appendix B

- That teachers and/or supervisors have sufficient and appropriate qualifications to carry out specialized activities (e.g. canoeing, backpacking in remote areas, activities undertaken in subzero temperatures). Refer to [School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety](#) and Appendix B
- Both male and female supervisors are required for situations where both male and female students are present.
- An adult supervisor must always be available to students (24 hours per day) for the entire duration of the trip or activity.
- For activities or events where students might travel alone responsibility for ensuring adequate supervision shall rest with the parent.
- Before, during, or after field trips and off-campus activities where students might travel alone in a motor vehicle with a supervisor, it is recommended that another adult be in attendance.
- Supervisory personnel including parents and other volunteers are agents of the board for the purpose of this guideline. Refer to AP 490 and AP 491
- All supervisor/chaperones are responsible to ensure the welfare and safety of the students from the initiation to the completion of the field trip. All supervisors and chaperones must be aware of all pertinent Administrative Procedures (AP 170 – Bullying and Threatening Behaviour, AP 350 – Student Code of Conduct and Policy 14 – Welcoming, Safe, Caring, Inclusive, Respectful Learning Environments) that relate to the care and safety of students. The principal or designate will review expectations for chaperone conduct prior to the trip
- That the adult/student ratio is appropriate for the age, skills, and type of activity being done. Supervision ratios (age, maturity, and the activity itself are the determining factors for supervision ratios. The following is a list of standard **minimum** student-adult supervisor/chaperone ratios:
  - grades K to 7 is 8:1 (eight students to one adult supervisor/chaperone)
  - grades 8 to 12 is 10:1 (ten students to one adult supervisor/chaperone)

### 3. Safety and Insurance

A Field Trip Risk Assessment (Form 260-4) must be submitted to the Superintendent, or designate for review prior

- Follow division best practices outlined in Appendix B
- all 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers must provide proof of insurance for Commercial General Liability with FSD added as an Additional Insured. Minimum Insurance amounts are detailed in Appendix B. In addition, the approved vendor should not request a Waiver to be signed by participating students from your school.
- A signed *Informed Consent Form* is required for all and should be used in place of 3<sup>rd</sup> party waivers.

- If a school's proposed activity has received proper authorization and a copy of the proposal is filed with the principal, all students, teachers, and volunteers are insured for liability purposes for the duration of the activity.
- The division's **mandatory** Outbound Student Plan Policy covers all out of Province and International field trips. The fee for this insurance is \$100.00 (one hundred dollars) per participant and must be collected by the school. **This fee is only applicable to students participating in international and out of province trips. The division is not responsible for non-recovered funds from coverages that fall outside of the existing policy.** This plan policy should be reviewed with trip participants to determine if additional insurance should be purchased. <https://www.mshgroups.com/armicoutbound>

#### 4. Transportation

- division bus transportation - Administrative Procedure 553
- use of private vehicles - Administrative Procedure 553
- ensure parental supervision if a student is picked up during or at the end of an activity.
- Teachers-in-charge are required to remain until all students have been picked up at the end of the trip by the parent/guardian.
- Buses may be equipped with cameras operated in accordance with Administrative Procedure 181

#### 5. Financing

- determine costs for:
  - Substitutes
  - Transportation
  - accommodation/food
  - admission
- approving:
  - collection of fees
  - refunds
  - fund raising

#### 6. Field Trips and Other Travel Programs Within Alberta – Overnight

- 6.1 A Field Trip Request Application (Form 260-1) must be submitted to the Superintendent, or designate for review prior to any final commitments being made to students, parents, etc. This form shall be submitted a **minimum of 6 weeks prior to the date of the trip.**
- 6.2 The Manager of Risk and Materials may provide the Division's insurers with a completed copy of Form 260-1 and our written review (response) together with any

other relevant background information and request their observations and direction.

- 6.3 After a written response (if required) is received from the Division's insurers, the trip request will be reviewed by the Superintendent, or designate and, if approved, the school will then be authorized to proceed with planning.

## 7. Sports Tournaments

In developing school-based policies and procedures which govern sports tournaments, principals shall be attentive to the following:

- 7.1 A detailed schedule (including all tournaments) should be prepared and distributed at the start of the season.
- 7.2 A signed *Informed Consent Form* is required for all participants (could be a blanket form for all scheduled trips/tournaments).
- 7.3 For unscheduled sports trips or tournaments, Section 1, 2, 4, or 5 Field Trip criteria will apply. In such instances, the timelines for approval are waived.

## 8. Field Trips and Other Travel Programs Outside of Alberta

- 8.1 A description of a proposed trip and the Field Trip Request Application (Form 260-1) must be submitted to the Superintendent, or designate for review prior to any commitment being made to students, parents, airlines, travel agencies, etc. This form must be submitted a **minimum of 6 months** prior to the date of the trip.
- 8.2 At the discretion of the Manager of Risk and Materials the Division's insurers will be supplied with a completed copy of together with any other relevant background information and request their observations and direction.
- 8.3 After a written response (if required) is received from the Division's insurers, the trip request will be reviewed by the Superintendent, or designate and, if approved, the school will then be authorized to proceed with planning.

## 9. International Travel (outside of Canada)

- 9.1 A description of a proposed trip and the Field Trip Request Application (Form 260-1) must be submitted to the Superintendent, or designate for review prior to any commitment being made to students, parents, airlines, travel agencies, etc. It is preferred that this form be submitted **at least 10 months prior to the date of the trip and definitely not less than 6 months prior** to the date of the trip.
- 9.2 For international travel, the Manager of Risk and Materials shall provide the Division's insurers with a completed copy of Form 260-1 together with any other relevant background information and request their observations and direction.
- 9.3 After a written response is received from the Division's insurers, the trip request shall be reviewed by the Superintendent, or designate and, if approved, the school will then be

authorized to proceed with planning. As part of the planning process, the school will ensure that:

- a. all appropriate insurance coverage is in place;
- b. the experience is of curricular value and limited to students at the Junior and Senior High School levels;
- c. parental consent, including an acknowledgement of all the risks involved in the trip, has been obtained in writing using the International *Informed Consent Form* approved by the division;
- d. adequate supervision is provided;
- e. alternative meaningful educational experiences are provided for those students not participating;
- f. parental involvement is provided for in the planning including at least one meeting with all parents of students involved in the trip;
- g. participation is not a requisite for successful completion of the related course;
- h. maximum use is made of weekends and regular school holidays;
- i. cost of substitutes required will be borne by the students, students' union or other sponsoring body;
- j. the travel agency serving the students in national or international tour projects is a member of a certified professional travel association and must be able to provide default protection insurance for the carrier and hotels mandatory to the students, on an individual or group basis.

9.4 Although international travel is most suited to Grades 10-12, consideration will be given to Grades 7-9 depending on the destination selected. For Grades 7-9, precautions, and supervision in addition to those identified herein may be required.

9.5 The teacher-in-charge, in consultation with the principal, may shorten, cancel, or terminate an off-site activity at any time if, in the opinion of the teacher-in-charge, the off-site activity cannot proceed or be completed in a safe or satisfactory manner.

9.6 The Board assumes no responsibility for any financial loss or personal expenses incurred as a result of cancellation or alteration of any field trip or excursion program. Schools are encouraged to maintain an "emergency fund" that can be made available to the teacher-in-charge if an emergency were to occur during the trip.

9.7 The superintendent or designate shall notify the board of all trips approved pursuant to sections 6,8, & 9 of the administrative procedure.

## **10. Service Providers**

If the teacher-in-charge does not possess the qualifications necessary to instruct a specialized activity, a reputable service provider will be used. In consultation with the principal and/or the teacher-in-charge, the Manager of Risk and Materials will approve the service provider's qualifications. The service provider will be expected to provide qualified and/or certified instructors who must be present at all times when the activity is taking place. They will instruct and supervise students in addition to the teacher-in-charge. Although a service provider is used, the teacher-in-charge is still required to complete a site assessment and risk analysis and be in control of the activity at all times.

## 10.1 Contracts

Most service providers require waivers to be completed by the client. Since this measure is not valid or applicable in the case of minors, it is necessary for the school to enter into an alternate contractual agreement. In this instance, it is the Manager of Risk and Materials' responsibility to negotiate and approve the contract and its terms in consultation with the principal. Obtaining a copy of the service provider's Certificate of Insurance is necessary. The principal or teacher-in-charge will obtain this and forward it to the Manager of Risk and Materials for review and to ensure that the service provider has adequate insurance to cover the activity.

## 10.2 Performance Expectations

All service providers are held to the same expectations of staff and supervisor/chaperones. If the teacher-in-charge suspects a service provider does not appear competent, is not adequately trained or is impaired, immediate action to remove students from his or her supervision and instruction is imperative. If a supervisor/chaperone suspects a service provider is impaired, consultation with the teacher-in-charge is required. In such an event, the teacher-in-charge's consultation with the principal regarding a course of action (time permitting) will be required.

[Form 260-1 - Field Trip Application – Overnight & Longer Trips](#)

[Form 260-2 - Medical Information – Day Trips](#)

[Form 260-3 - Medical Information – Overnight & Out of Province](#)

[Form 260-4 – Hazard or Risk Assessment](#)

[Form 260-5 – Informed Consent for International Trips](#)

[Informed Consent Forms](#)

[Appendix A - ARMIC](#)

[Appendix B – Best Practices](#)