

607.1 Field Trips, Off-Campus Activities and Student Travel

Policy

Field trips, off-campus activities and student travel shall be organized in such a way as to maximize educational benefit and ensure the safety and protection of students.

Regulations

Scope of Policy

1. The policy governs all field trips, excursions or community-based activities that take place off school grounds. This includes travel by individual students in connection with student exchanges, student conferences/competitions and any other off-site school activities including athletic events.
2. The primary reference for safety expectations and precautions shall be Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools. In the case of a difference between guidelines set out in that document and Board policies, the guideline that requires the closest supervision of students shall take precedence.
3. This policy does not apply to:
 - 3.1. 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; and
 - 3.2. student off-campus work experience placements.

Educational Goals

4. All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel shall have:
 - 4.1. educational goals established which are compatible with the provincial programs of study and the school’s instructional program;
 - 4.2. sufficient educational value to outweigh any loss of instructional time from the regular school program;
 - 4.3. participation restricted to include only students who are enrolled in Lethbridge School Division.

Student Safety

5. All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel shall be planned in such a way as to maximize student safety.
 - 5.1. 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 make a safety assessment for the activity. A pre-trip visit to the site is highly recommended, if possible.

- 5.2. 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. For teachers or community volunteers, **Form 607.1.4 Assessing Teacher/Leader Qualifications for Outdoor Pursuits Programs/Activities** should be used.
- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. 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 if travelling outside city limits.
- 5.5. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs by any participants, 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.

Risk Levels and Destination Classifications

6. All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel shall be categorized according to both risk level and destination as follows:
 - 6.1. Risk levels shall be color coded as Green, Amber or Red, such that:
 - 6.1.1. Green = Low risk, thus requiring regular application of Division policies;
 - 6.1.2. Amber = Some risk, but may be approved with a proper risk management plan established; and
 - 6.1.3. Red = High Risk, and are prohibited.
 - 6.2. Destination classifications are defined as:
 - 6.2.1. Day trip in city;
 - 6.2.2. Day trip out of city;
 - 6.2.3. Overnight or out of province; or
 - 6.2.4. International trips.
 - 6.3. Approval levels and required forms shall be determined by the combination of both risk level (Green or Amber) and destination classification.
 - 6.4. All Red activities are strictly prohibited regardless of destination.

Age-level travel restrictions

7. Student travel shall be limited to destinations in:
 - 7.1. Canada, for elementary level students; and
 - 7.2. Canada and the continental United States, for middle school students.

Approval levels

8. All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel shall require approval at the appropriate administrative levels as follows:
 - 8.1. Principal (or administrative designate) approval only for travel limited to day trips within the province.

- 8.2. Principal and Superintendent (or designate) approval for travel outside of the province and/or if an overnight stay is required.
- 8.3. Principal, Superintendent (or designate) and Board approval for travel outside of Canada.
9. Approval shall only be granted when it is clear that the trip or activity is organized in such a manner that it conforms to all Division policies.
 - 9.1. A Division manual shall be developed which outlines the specific requirements to obtain trip approval including:
 - 9.1.1. Forms required
 - 9.1.2. Approval timelines
 - 9.2. This manual shall be considered the primary procedural document for this policy and it shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services.
10. No commitment shall be made to students, parents, transportation authorities, travel agents, etc., until at least approval in principle has been received for the proposed activity by the approving authority.
11. Based upon the level of risk and potential liability associated with student travel outside Canada, the Board reserves the right to cancel such travel at any time. Furthermore, the school and Division shall not be responsible for compensating parents, students or staff for any costs associated with such a cancellation.

Supervision of students

12. All field trips, off-campus activities and student travel must be under the direct supervision of at least one Division employee. There may be some extenuating circumstances such as secondary athletics where a coach may be given supervisory responsibilities.
13. Supervisors must have sufficient and appropriate qualifications to ensure proper supervision based on the nature of the trip or activity.
14. Minimum supervision ratios shall be as follows:
 - 14.1. For day trips within the city, the principal shall decide on minimum supervision levels based on the nature of the trip or activity.
 - 14.2. For day trips outside of the city:
 - 14.2.1. ECS, Elementary: one adult per 8 students
 - 14.2.2. Middle school: one adult per 10 students
 - 14.2.3. High school: one adult per 15 students
 - 14.3. Additional supervision may be required when:
 - 14.3.1. the risk level is Amber;
 - 14.3.2. the trip is out of province; or
 - 14.3.3. an overnight stay is required.
 - 14.4. Both male and female supervisors are required for situations requiring modesty (eg. change rooms, hotel rooms), if both male and female students are present.
 - 14.5. An adult supervisor must always be available to students (24 hours per day) for the entire duration of the trip or activity.
 - 14.6. For activities or events where students might travel alone, such as during student exchanges, responsibility for ensuring adequate supervision shall rest with the parent.

14.7. In the event that a student requires transportation, consideration needs to be given to safety.

Notification, permission and waiver forms

15. Parents/guardians:

- 15.1 notification shall be provided for all field trips, off-campus activities and student travel.
- 15.2 permission shall be obtained in advance of travel outside the city.
- 15.3 permission and signed waiver forms shall be obtained in advance of travel out of province, for overnight events and/or for Amber activities.

16. Students are prohibited from participation in any activity or trip when notification has not been provided or when permission or waivers have not been obtained.

Cost and Participation

17. Every effort shall be made to ensure that all students are provided with equal opportunity to participate in field trips, off-campus activities and student travel however:

- 17.1. the demands of the activities shall not exceed the capacity of the students (i.e. fitness, skills); and
- 17.2. extenuating circumstances may require an opt-out option by the parent/guardian. Non-participants shall be provided meaningful alternative activities.

18. Costs associated with field trips, off-campus activities and student travel, including substitute costs, shall be borne by the school, the club or organization, the student, the individual supervisor or some combination of the above, as appropriate, however:

- 18.1 where course requirements make off-campus travel necessary, transportation shall be provided free of charge;
- 18.2 the ability to pay should not unduly limit a student's opportunity to participate. Fund raising in accordance with Division policy may be used to help defray costs; and
- 18.3 the responsibility for the cost of trips by individual students in connection with programs available through the school (e.g. student exchanges, student conferences) shall rest with the parent.

19. Teachers and other staff members traveling with students, as approved supervisors, shall be paid their regular salary for those days that are part of the designated school year.

Transportation

20. Transportation of students may include commercial (airline, bus, taxi etc.) or private vehicles.

- 20.1 Where it is necessary to use private or leased vehicles, policy 700.3.1 shall be followed.
- 20.2 Students must return to the school at the end of an off-campus activity unless parent/guardian consent has been obtained for alternate dismissal procedures.

Itineraries

21. For any out-of-province, overnight, or Amber activities, a detailed itinerary shall be provided to parents, the principal and the Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services.

- 21.1 Deviations from the itinerary shall occur only after receipt of approval from the principal or the Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services.
- 21.2 Unplanned changes (such as flight delays) should be reported to the principal or Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services as soon as possible.

Insurance

- 22. All staff and authorized supervisors shall be protected by the Division’s liability insurance when acting within the scope of their duties as approved by the school and/or Division administration.
- 23. Liability coverage is normally effective only for activities held within Canada or continental U.S.A. Contact should be made with the Associate Superintendent, Business Affairs for advice concerning insurance coverage beyond these borders.
- 24. Students shall be required to carry approved medical coverage for all travel outside of Canada.

Reporting accidents and/or incidents:

- 25. In the event of delays in transporting students home such as a school bus accident or road conditions, the Division employee in charge shall notify the school’s administrator. Upon receiving this notification, the school administrator or designate shall:
 - 25.1 notify the Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services if the delay will be extensive, or if an accident has occurred. In the case of an accident, a list of participating students shall be provided to the Associate Superintendent, Instructional Services;
 - 25.2 notify parents if the delay causes the students to arrive back to the school significantly later than expected; and
 - 25.3 remain at the school to answer parent inquiries until the students arrive.
- 26. Any incidents in which an injury occurs shall be fully documented using Division form 607.1.6 Incident Report.

The Board delegates to the Superintendent the authority to develop the procedures necessary to implement this policy.

References:

Alberta School Act:	Sections 12, 20, 45, 60, 62
Division Policies:	502.1 Code of Conduct, 502.6 Student Conduct on School Authorized Transit, 503.5 Student Activities, 504.1.Managing Health Issues in Schools, 504.4 Supervision of Students, 600.3 Poverty Intervention, 608.6 Parent and Student Handbook, 502.5 Student Transportation, Bussing, 700.3.1 Use of Private Vehicles and Volunteer Drivers, 802.2 Student Fees, Fines and Charges
Other:	Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools Field Trips, Off Campus Activities and Student Travel Procedures Manual, June 2013.