

Fort McMurray Catholic Schools

Operating Policies and Procedures

OP 354 – Field Trips

Policy

The practice of conducting co-curricular and extra-curricular educational field trips and excursions is supported by the belief that student participation in such activities can significantly enhance the educational program.

Procedures:

1. Co-curricular and extra curricular educational field trips and excursions must have educational goals established which are compatible with and directly related to specific Alberta Learning course outcomes articulated in the Program of Studies.
2. Co-curricular and extra-curricular educational field trips and excursions must take place within a context of attention to the safety and security of students; attention to risk assessment of off-site activities; and protection of students, staff, volunteers and the Fort McMurray Catholic Board of Education.
3. Co-curricular and extra-curricular educational field trips and excursions are optional; subsequently, participation by any student or adult supervisor is subject to the discretion of the School Principal.
4. Co-curricular and extra-curricular educational field trips and excursions, out-of-town or province, which occur over a weekend, must have provisions for mass attendance.
5. For all field trips and excursions organized to take place during the school day, the following procedures apply:
 - (a) Each field trip has to have one teacher who is in charge overall and who must:
 - i) consult with and obtain the approval of the Principal before planning for the off-site activity may proceed;
 - ii) submit an educational assessment for the Principal's approval that
 - iii) includes a statement of purpose that explicitly defines instructional objectives, and
 - iv) outlines intended lead-up and follow-up activities, as required;
 - v) complete a safety assessment for all off-site field trips and excursions;
 - vi) advise parents of the nature of the trip and secure written permission for their children to attend (the permission form is to be kept on file at the school);

- vii) ensure that students who are unable to pay associated fees are not to be excluded from the activity;
- viii) ensure adequate supervision is provided (a minimum of one supervisor for 10 students);
- ix) ensure meaningful alternative “in-school” learning activities are in place for students who are left behind at the school; and
- x) ensure both students and chaperones are made aware of their responsibilities.

6. The Principal shall ensure that the following apply to the provision of supervision for all field trips and excursions:

- a. The use of parents is encouraged as chaperones when appropriate;
- b. One supervisor for each ten students is required and a minimum of one supervisor per bus must be ensured;
- c. The person in charge of the trip must be a certificated teacher employed by a school board.
- d. That all supervisors are made aware of the fact that they are subject to all policies, guidelines and procedures of the Board, the school, and provincial and federal legislation;
- e. That all supervisors are informed that they must act “in loco parentis” (in place of the parent) making wise and judicious decisions that are in the best interests of the students;
- f. That the instructor/supervisor possesses the specified training certificate when such is required as part of an educational field trip or excursion;
- g. That supervisors are informed that they are to contact the school and/or the student’s parents in a case of an accident, but on circumstances where parents cannot be contacted, shall take whatever steps are necessary to care for the student;
- h. That supervisors are informed that they must report all accidents to the Principal as quickly as possible;
- i. Everyone involved in the educational field trip or excursion must be dressed/equipped in a manner appropriate to the activities to be undertaken;
- j. Where off-site activities include overnight stays and the student group includes female and male students, supervision of the group must include both female and male supervisors;

7. The Principal and school staff shall ensure that the following safety guidelines are followed:

- a) Outdoor activities should normally not be conducted when temperatures are below -25 degrees C;

- b. Alcohol and Drug Use: The use of alcohol or illegal drugs by any participants, including chaperones, is strictly prohibited during off-site activities, and applies to all off-site activities regardless of the circumstances, the age of the participants or local laws, customs and culture.
- c. Swimming or Boating: When field trips or excursions involve swimming or boating the supervising teacher must ensure that:
 - i) the activity is under the supervision of a person trained in water safety procedures with a minimum of a current Bronze Medallion and emergency First Aid;
 - ii) All students involved in boating activities must wear a M.O.T. (Ministry of Transport) approved P.F.D. (Personal Flotation Device); and
 - iii) For boating activities involving power, sail or canoe, direct supervision must be approved by a teacher/instructor experienced with the type of craft being used.
- d. Skiing and Snowboarding: Downhill skiing and snowboarding are acceptable activities for students in grades 4 to 12, as long as all the following conditions have been met:
 - i) conditioning activities have occurred in physical education classes, or as part of a fitness program leading up to the skiing or snowboarding activity;
 - ii) skiing or snowboarding are part of a well balanced yearly program, and reflect the school's commitment to a quality physical education program; and,
 - iii) the activity includes, at a minimum, one mandatory lesson at the beginning of each day on a ski hill;
 - iv) Prior to the skiing or snowboarding trip, the teacher-in-charge must:
 - 1) have visited the ski resort recently and be familiar with seasonal conditions at the time of the activity;
 - 2) make contact with the ski resort operator in order to arrange student identification and controls procedure;
 - 3) understand the ski resort's emergency protocol; and,
 - 4) ensure an additional private vehicle is available at the resort for emergency use.
 - v) Upon arrival at the ski resort, the teacher-in-charge must:
 - 1) divide students into levels of ability as described by the parent's or guardian's signed acknowledgement of the student's skier or snowboarder classification;

- 2) assist the ski resort staff with grouping students for their mandatory lessons;
 - 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
 - 4) assist the ski resort staff with controlling student access to slopes or trails.
- vi) At the conclusion of the mandatory lesson:
- 1) the ski resort instructor will identify the level of ability of the students, and assign appropriate ski or snowboarding slopes or trails, and students may begin supervised skiing and snowboarding on the assigned slopes or trails.
- vii) During the supervised ski time, students must ski in groups of at least three or more.
- viii) A minimum supervision ratio for skiing and snowboarding is one adult to ten students, including at least two adult supervisors in the ski lodge.
- viii) A minimum supervision ratio for skiing and snowboarding is one adult to ten students, including at least two adult supervisors in the ski lodge.
- ix) Supervision of ski slopes must be carried out by supervising the face of the hill or ski area on a constant rotation system by pairs of supervisors.
- x) All participants in snowboarding activities must wear CSA approved helmet and wrist guards, and ski or snowboard only on open runs within the ski area.
- xi) The teacher-in-charge ensures all students have received a copy of the safety rules with an explanation of each.

Parent Permission

8. Parents or guardians must be informed in writing of the following information about off-site activities:
 - a) the purpose and educational objectives of the off-site activity,
 - b) the name of the teacher-in-charge and a contact telephone number,
 - c) the date,
 - d) the destination and, where necessary, a map of the area,

- e) a detailed itinerary, setting out the general nature and number of activities, departure and return times,
- f) mode of transportation,
- g) financial arrangements,
- h) safety precautions,
- i) level of supervision,
- j) the date of the parent meeting, if required,
- k) any unusual factors such as rigorous physical activity, water-related activities or water sports,
- l) any special risks associated with the activity,
- m) a reminder that parents or guardians must inform the teacher-in-charge about any relevant information and/or medical conditions of the student,
- n) emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances,
- o) the need for additional medical coverage for out-of-country trips,
- p) 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, and
- q) behavioural expectations and consequences for inappropriate behaviour by their child.

9. When a parent meeting has been called for a trip,

- a. the teacher-in-charge must keep a record of attendance at the parent meeting, and
- b. the student's parent or guardian must attend the parent meeting to discuss the off-site activity trip and the rules and conduct expected of students, or personally speak to the teacher-in-charge about the trip.

10. One permission form from the parent or guardian is acceptable for:

- a. a series of walking activities in the neighbourhood of the school.

- b. a series of off-site activities such as performing arts, swimming lessons, physical education classes, outdoor education classes, and athletics, as long as the permission form includes a schedule of activities.
- c. If any of these activities include canoeing, camping, hiking, skiing, water-related activities other than swimming lessons, or complex activities, a separate permission form must be obtained from the parent or guardian for that off-site activity.

11. When an off-site activity includes students from two or more schools:

- a. the Principal of each school involved must approve the participation of their student, and
- b. students from all the schools are accountable to the teacher-in-charge.

Remote Wilderness Areas

12. When field trips or excursions are planned for remote wilderness areas, the teacher in charge shall:

- a. Be familiar with the area and have established safety and emergency procedures understood by all participants;
- b. Inform local authorities such as the R.C.M.P., Forestry or Park officials about the program, the location and route;
- c. Be aware of the location of the nearest accessible medical station;
- d. Establish procedures to contact the Principal via R.C.M.P., Forestry or Park officials in the event of an emergency;
- e. Ensure that required permits, fishing licenses and area use permits have been obtained from appropriate authorities;
- f. Ensure that one supervisor is qualified in Emergency First Aid & C.P.R.;
- g. Ensure immediate access is available to a telephone or radio for emergency situations.
- h. Each student is to have completed a medical form to ensure appropriate medical coverage is provided. This information shall be made available to the teacher in charge and the driver of the transport carrier.

Student's Responsibility

13. Each student participating in an off-site activity must:
 - a. comply with the requirements of the school's student code of conduct,
 - b. fulfill all the preparatory requirements at an appropriate level of performance,
 - c. dress appropriately according to the type of off-site activity,
 - d. participate in a responsible and cooperative manner during the trip, and
 - e. carry out all follow-up procedures in an appropriate manner.

14. A student may not participate in an off-site activity unless the student is enrolled in a sponsoring or participating school, and is part of the class or group taking part in the off-site activity.

Chaperone's Responsibilities

15. Chaperones shall:
 - a. comply with District policies.
 - b. have qualifications appropriate to the off-site activity.
 - c. be expected to know the details of the off-site activity and their specific duties and authority prior to departure.
 - d. support and follow the school code of conduct and report any inappropriate conduct to the teacher-in-charge;
 - e. adhere to the schedule or itinerary;
 - f. dress appropriately according to the type of off-duty activity;
 - g. fulfill their duties for the duration of the off-site activity, including evenings and weekends; and
 - h. actively participate in the supervision of students from the moment of departure until the final student is picked up at the conclusion of the trip.

16. If a chaperone fails to comply with the above requirements, the Principal is to report it to the Superintendent as soon as possible.

Travel within Provincial Boundaries

17. For field trips and excursions within Provincial Boundaries, the following shall apply:
 - a. The Principal must review the activities and agree that they are in compliance with policy and indicate that they have done so by signing the appropriate forms, and
 - b. The form must then be sent to the Superintendent for approval.

Travel outside Provincial Boundaries

18. For field trips and excursions outside of Provincial Boundaries, the following shall apply:
 - a. The Principal must review the activities and agree that they are in compliance with policy and indicate that they have done so by signing the appropriate forms, and then submit the reviewed application to the Superintendent for presentation to the Board for consideration.
 - b. The approval of the Board is required prior to preliminary arrangements with respect to travel, fundraising, financial commitments, etc. being made.
 - c. A pre-approval presentation to the Board by the teacher-in-charge is required.
 - d. A follow-up presentation to the Board is also required.

Liability Coverage

19. All staff and authorized supervisors are to be advised by the Principal that they are protected by the Board's liability insurance when acting within in the scope of their duties as approved by the school administration and/or Board.
20. With respect to liability coverage:
 - a. Coverage is normally effective only for activities held within Canada or continental U. S. A. Staff are to contact the Superintendent or Secretary-Treasurer for advice concerning coverage beyond these borders;
 - b. When using a vehicle other than a public vehicle or school bus to transport students, the teacher in charge must make certain that the vehicle has adequate insurance and the driver is appropriately licensed; and
 - c. Where insurance exclusions are noted, educational field activities in these areas are prohibited.

Unacceptable Activities

21. The following off-site activities are not permitted:
- a. off-site activities that require travel time that would be too long for the age of the students involved,
 - b. off-site activities that require inordinate expense or excessive absence from school, or
 - c. off-site activities that are hazardous or prohibited activities.

Prohibited Activities

22. Participation in the following activities is prohibited on school board property, as a school organized activity, or as an off-site activity:
- a. aerial gymnastics,
 - b. American gladiator style events,
 - c. auto racing,
 - d. bicycle motocross (BMX),
 - e. boxing
 - f. bungee jumping
 - g. caving (spelunking),
 - h. demolition derbies,
 - i. drag racing,
 - j. extreme sports
 - k. horse jumping
 - l. hot air balloon rides (tethered and untethered),
 - m. ice climbing
 - n. mechanical bull riding or simulated mechanical rodeo events,

- o. motorcycling and snowmobiling of any nature,
- p. mountain climbing and mountaineering but not including hikes in the mountains;
- q. paintball, laser tag games or war games,
- r. racing of watercraft,
- s. rifle ranges or other activities involving firearms;
- t. rock climbing, (outdoors, natural),
- u. rodeos,
- v. skydiving,
- w. trampoline,
- x. winter biathlon with firearms, and
- y. white-water rafting

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INFORMED CONSENT/PERMISSION FORM FOR EDUCATION TRIPS

The _____ is arranging _____ *(Description of Activity and dates)*.

THIS FORM MUST BE READ AND SIGNED BY EVERY STUDENT WHO WISHES TO PARTICIPATE AND BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF A PARTICIPATING STUDENT.

ELEMENTS OF RISK:

Educational activity programs, such as _____ *(Description of Activity)* involve certain elements of risk. Injuries/illnesses may occur while participating in these activities. The following list includes, but is not limited to, examples of the types of injury/illnesses, which may result from participating in _____ *(Description of Activity)*.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

The risk of sustaining these types of injuries/illnesses result from the nature of the activity and can occur without fault of either the student, the school board, it's employees/agents or the facility where the activity is taking place. By choosing to take part in this activity, you are accepting the risk that you/your child may be injured. The chance of an injury occurring can be reduced by carefully following instructions at all times while engaged in the activity.

If you choose to participate in _____ *(Name and date of activity)* you must understand that you bear the responsibility for any injury/illness that may occur. The Ft. McMurray Catholic School Board does not provide accidental death, disability or dismemberment or medical expense insurance on behalf of the students participating in this activity.

The following are the procedures that will be followed if your child becomes ill/injured while on a school trip: _____ *(Name of staff chaperone)* is the designated staff chaperone who will monitor and care for your child until they can return home safely. In the event that your child's injury/illness requires an extended hospital stay at any time during the trip _____ *(Name of staff chaperone)* is the designated staff member who will remain behind to supervise your child. Should your child become ill, as the parent/guardian you can at anytime make your own supervision and transportation arrangements.

Please be advised that all bags will be checked prior to departure.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

WE HAVE READ THE ABOVE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PARTICIPATING IN THE ACTIVITY DESCRIBED ABOVE, WE ARE ASSUMING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH DOING SO.

Signature of Student _____ Date _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

PERMISSION

I give _____ permission to participate in the _____
(name of student) *(description of activity)*
to be held on or about _____
(date of activity)

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____