

## Administrative Procedure 260

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# FIELD TRIPS

## Background

Purposeful, carefully-planned field trips are valuable educational opportunities that promote student learning and development. The District is committed to ensuring that a safe learning environment is provided to students, volunteers and staff while participating in field trips.

## Definitions

A field trip is defined as a learning experience sponsored by a school or the District that takes place away from school premises. The District supports the following types of field trips as being of educational value to students:

- Co-Curricular Field Trip – the field trip is an extension of a course of study, but is not an integral component of the course (e.g. middle school French Immersion field trip to Quebec).
- Curricular Field Trip – the field trip is an integral component of a course of study (e.g. Grade 6 Science field trip to the Reynolds Alberta Museum as part of study of flight).
- • “Extra-curricular Field Trip”: The field trip is a part of the extra-curricular program offered by the school (eg high school volleyball team field trip to a tournament).
- Reciprocal Student Exchange – a student exchanges places with a student in another province or country, as approved by and in accordance with the regulations of Alberta Education.

Off-campus activities associated with the following programs/activities are not included in the District’s definition of a field trip (see Administrative Procedure 216 – Off-Campus Education):

- Job shadowing programs (e.g. Take Our Kids to Work - TOKW).
- Student conferences in which staff supervision is not provided (e.g. Forum for Young Canadians, Encounters with Canada).
- Work Experience Program.
- Registered Apprenticeship Program.
- Green Certificate Program.
- Extended visit (i.e. greater than three (3) weeks) to another province or country, other than as a participant in a Reciprocal Student Exchange.
- Other activities as determined by the Superintendent.

A participant is defined as a student, teacher, other staff member or volunteer who takes part in a school field trip.

## Procedures

### 1. Approval Categories

Approval procedures for each field trip are categorized according to the duration, destination and/or cost of the trip, as per the following:

1.1 Category 1: Field trips that are within the province of Alberta, and are a maximum of four (4) days in length, and involve a cost per student of less than five hundred dollars (\$500.00). The Principal is authorized to approve field trips in this category provided that:

1.1.1 A written application is submitted to the Principal at least two (2) weeks prior to the anticipated departure date. It is acknowledged, however, that there may be a need for exceptions to this deadline, depending upon the circumstances. Such an application shall contain detailed information about the following:

1.1.1.1 Purpose;

1.1.1.2 Destination;

1.1.1.3 Educational value and curriculum relevance;

1.1.1.4 Number of students;

1.1.1.5 Itinerary;

1.1.1.6 Supervision;

1.1.1.7 Transportation;

1.1.1.8 Accommodation;

1.1.1.9 Costs and funding arrangements;

1.1.1.10 Risks associated with the proposed field trip, particularly if the trip involves a degree of risk beyond that associated with normal day-to-day activities.

1.1.2 Alternative meaningful “in-school” experiences are provided for students who do not participate in the field trip.

1.1.3 Parent field trip information forms are distributed.

1.1.4 Written parental consent has been received for each field trip (in exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the Principal, verbal parental consent may be accepted in lieu of written parental consent). A single, overall parental consent may be obtained for the following types of multiple or serial field trips:

1.1.4.1 A series of walking/running trips within the immediate vicinity of the school; or

1.1.4.2 A series of field trips of the same nature (e.g. instructional ski program, field trips associated with a Physical Education course of study, football team schedule of games).

- 1.2 Category 2: Field trips within Alberta that involve more than four (4) days to complete and/or involve a cost per student of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or more, or field trips that involve Canadian destinations outside Alberta. The Superintendent is authorized to approve field trips in this category, using the following procedures:
- 1.2.1 The Principal shall submit a field trip proposal to the Superintendent at least five (5) months prior to the anticipated departure date; although it is acknowledged that there may be a need for exceptions to this deadline, depending upon the circumstances. The Principal shall also comply with the time guidelines in clause 2.8 below.
  - 1.2.2 The request for approval must be made prior to any fund raising or collection of money designated for a specific trip.
  - 1.2.3 The request for approval shall include detailed information regarding the following:
    - 1.2.3.1 Purpose;
    - 1.2.3.2 Destination;
    - 1.2.3.3 Educational value and curriculum relevance;
    - 1.2.3.4 Number of students;
    - 1.2.3.5 Itinerary;
    - 1.2.3.6 Supervision;
    - 1.2.3.7 Transportation;
    - 1.2.3.8 Accommodation;
    - 1.2.3.9 Costs and funding arrangements;
    - 1.2.3.10 Risks associated with the proposed field trip, particularly if the trip involves a degree of risk beyond that associated with normal day-to-day activities
  - 1.2.4 Alternative meaningful “in-school” experiences shall be provided for students who do not participate in the field trip.
  - 1.2.5 Field trip information forms shall be distributed to parents.
  - 1.2.6 A signed parent field trip consent form must be received for each participating student.
  - 1.2.7 Elementary school students are not normally eligible to participate in Category 2 field trips.
- 1.3 Category 3: Field trips that involve destinations outside Canada. The Board must approve field trips in this category, using the following procedures:
- 1.3.1 The Principal shall submit a field trip proposal to the Superintendent at least five (5) months prior to the anticipated departure date, although it is acknowledged that there may be a need for exceptions to this deadline, depending upon the circumstances. The Principal shall also comply with the time guidelines in clause 2.8 below.

- 1.3.2 The request for approval must be made prior to any fund raising or collection of money designated for a specific trip.
- 1.3.3 The request for approval shall include detailed information regarding the following:
  - 1.3.3.1 Purpose;
  - 1.3.3.2 Destination;
  - 1.3.3.3 Educational value and curriculum relevance;
  - 1.3.3.4 Number of students;
  - 1.3.3.5 Itinerary;
  - 1.3.3.6 Supervision;
  - 1.3.3.7 Transportation;
  - 1.3.3.8 Accommodation;
  - 1.3.3.9 Costs and funding arrangements;
  - 1.3.3.10 Risks associated with the proposed field trip, particularly if the trip involves a degree of risk beyond that associated with normal day-to-day activities.
- 1.3.4 Alternative meaningful “in-school” experiences shall be provided for students who do not participate in the field trip.
- 1.3.5 Field trip information forms shall be distributed to parents.
- 1.3.6 A signed parent field trip consent form must be received for each participating student.
- 1.3.7 Elementary school students are not normally eligible to participate in Category 3 field trips. Middle school students are not normally eligible to participate in Category 3 field trips with destinations outside Canada and the continental United States.

## 2. Cost of Field Trips/Accessibility to Students

- 2.1 Ability to pay shall not unduly limit a student’s opportunity to participate in a field trip.
- 2.2 All eligible students shall have opportunity to participate in curricular field trips (see definition). For co-curricular and extra-curricular field trips, as well as for student exchanges, it may be necessary to implement a selection process to determine eligibility.
- 2.3 When selection of students is necessary, the criteria shall be:
  - 2.3.1 Demonstrated responsibility;
  - 2.3.2 Acceptable record of behaviour; and
  - 2.3.3 Demonstrated commitment to preparation for the field trip.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding clause 2.3 above, it is recognized that in the case of school teams and some clubs, selection based on ability may be necessary.
- 2.5 When selection of students is necessary, the teacher in charge of the field trip shall arrange for the selection, with the final responsibility resting with the Principal.

- 2.6 In most cases, the entire cost of a curricular field trip (see definition) shall be borne by the budget of the sponsoring school. In some cases, students may be required to contribute to the cost. However, no student shall be excluded from curricular field trips due to lack of funds.
- 2.7 The costs of co-curricular field trips, extra-curricular field trips and reciprocal student exchanges may be covered by the school's budget, fund raising initiatives, fees paid by students, or any combination thereof.
- 2.8 If a field trip involves a financial contribution from the student all efforts shall be made to keep it to a minimum. Students and parents also deserve as much advance notice as possible. The following are recommended guidelines:
  - 2.8.1 Student contribution of five hundred to one thousand dollars (\$500.00 - \$1000.00), a minimum of five (5) months' notice prior to the trip and two (2) months prior to any installment payment.
  - 2.8.2 Student contribution above one thousand dollars (\$1000.00), a minimum of twelve (12) months' notice in advance of the trip and four (4) months prior to any installment payment.

### 3. Supervision

- 3.1 All field trips shall be under the direct supervision of a District teacher, with the following exception:
  - 3.1.1 The Principal may approve an adult other than a teacher when fewer than ten (10) students are involved in the field trip or when a school team is coached by a non-teacher.
  - 3.1.2 In these circumstances, the parents of all participating students shall be advised of the Principal's decision.
- 3.2 Supervisory personnel including parents and other volunteers are agents of the Board for the purpose of this Administrative Procedure.
- 3.3 The Principal is responsible for the level and quality of supervision on each field trip and is authorized to approve details regarding supervision, giving consideration to the following factors:
  - 3.3.1 The number of participants.
  - 3.3.2 The age, maturity and competency of the participants.
  - 3.3.3 The distance involved.
  - 3.3.4 The duration of the field trip.
  - 3.3.5 The nature of the venue(s) being visited.
  - 3.3.6 The type of vehicle(s) being used for transportation.
  - 3.3.7 The nature of the activities to be undertaken and the risks associated with them.
  - 3.3.8 The extent to which the teacher supervisor is familiar with the venue(s).
  - 3.3.9 The supervision guidelines suggested in the publication, Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools and Safety Guidelines for Secondary Interscholar Athletics in Alberta.

- 3.3.10 Other factors which, in the judgment of the Principal, are important to the successful and safe implementation of the field trip.
- 3.4 Additional adult supervision must be considered for field trips involving:
  - 3.4.1 Supervisors who are members of the same family; and
  - 3.4.2 Student participants of a single gender, where the designated adult supervisor is of the opposite gender.
- 3.5 Suggested supervision guidelines for many activities associated with school field trips are included in the publications, Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools and Safety Guidelines for Secondary Interschool Athletics in Alberta. Principals shall give consideration to Safety Guidelines and to the factors listed in clause 3.3 above in determining the most appropriate level of supervision for each field trip. In the event that supervision guidelines are not provided in Safety Guidelines, principals shall give consideration to the factors listed in clause 3.3 above and to the following suggested guidelines in determining the most appropriate level of supervision for each field trip.
  - 3.5.1 A suggested guideline of supervision for field trips to destinations of twenty-five (25) kilometres or less from the City of Fort McMurray is:
    - 3.5.1.1 For students in kindergarten to grade five, one (1) adult to ten (10) students; and
    - 3.5.1.2 For students in grades six to twelve, one (1) adult to fifteen (15) students.
  - 3.5.2 A suggested guideline of supervision for field trips to destinations of more than twenty-five (25) kilometres from the City of Fort McMurray is:
    - 3.5.2.1 For students in kindergarten, one (1) adult to five (5) students.
    - 3.5.2.2 For students in grades one to three, one (1) adult to eight (8) students.
    - 3.5.2.3 For students in grades four to eight, one (1) adult to ten (10) students.
    - 3.5.2.4 For students in grades nine to twelve, one (1) adult to fifteen (15) students.
- 3.6 Coeducational overnight field trips shall be accompanied by both male and female supervisors.
- 3.7 An adult supervisor must be available to students at all times (twenty-four (24) hours per day) on all field trips.
- 3.8 Principals must be satisfied that teachers and/or supervisors have sufficient and appropriate qualifications to carry out specialized activities (e.g. canoeing, backpacking into remote wilderness areas, activities undertaken during subzero temperatures).
- 3.9 Principals shall determine the extent to which it is necessary for field trip supervisory personnel to possess a basic, current knowledge of first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, and/or other emergency procedures.

- 3.10 Consideration shall be given to taking a cellular phone on each field trip. Factors such as destination, route being traveled, road conditions, time of day and time of year shall be included in such consideration.
- 3.11 Consideration shall be given to taking a satellite phone on field trips that include destinations beyond the reach of cellular phone service. Factors such as destination, route being traveled, road conditions, time of day and time of year shall be included in such consideration.
- 3.12 When an overnight field trip involves the placement of students with host families, host families must be provided with written expectations for host families that are consistent with the terms of this Administrative Procedure. Host families must indicate their intent to comply with the expectations before students can be placed in their homes.
- 3.13 When an overnight field trip involves the placement of students in commercial venues or institutional settings (e.g. hotel, motel, camp quarters, school gymnasium, or church basement), reasonable supervision of corridors, entrances, exits and similar spaces must be provided when students are assigned to their rooms.

#### 4. Parental Consent

- 4.1 Parents must be provided with written information regarding all field trips.
- 4.2 Parents are required to grant informed, written consent for their child's participation in all field trips. In exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the Principal, verbal parental consent may be accepted in lieu of written parental consent.
- 4.3 With the exceptions listed in clause 4.3.1 and clause 4.3.2 immediately below, parental consent must be received for each field trip on an individual trip basis. A single, overall parental consent may be obtained for the following types of multiple or serial field trips:
  - 4.3.1 A series of walking/running trips within the immediate vicinity of the school; and
  - 4.3.2 A series of field trips of the same nature (e.g. instructional ski program, field trips associated with a Physical Education course of study, football team schedule of games).
- 4.4 Special provision may be required when seeking consent from parents if language, literacy, or cultural barriers exist. The Principal is responsible to ensure that these special provisions are in place when needed.

#### 5. School Absences

- 5.1 If at all possible, field trips are to be planned to occur at times that will not negatively affect the student's school program.
- 5.2 It is recognized that some field trips may infringe upon the instructional time of other subject areas. In such instances, every effort must be made to have the student catch up on the classes that were missed.
- 5.3 The teacher in charge of each field trip is responsible to advise, in advance, all other teachers whose students will be absent from class due to their participation in a field trip.

## 6. Safety

- 6.1 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 publication and this Administrative Procedure or other approved references, the guidelines that set out the most stringent expectations and precautions shall take precedence.
- 6.2 The teacher in charge of a field trip is responsible to carry a list of the following on each field trip:
  - 6.2.1 Names of participants.
  - 6.2.2 Telephone contact numbers for participants.
  - 6.2.3 Alberta Health Care numbers for participants.
  - 6.2.4 Medication and medical alert needs for participants, as needed.
  - 6.2.5 Correspondence which enables the emergency filling of a prescription for medication, on behalf of each trip participant who is using prescribed medication.
- 6.3 The teacher in charge of the field trip is responsible for acquiring sufficient awareness of and information about each venue and about the activities to be undertaken during the field trip, so as to maximize the safety of all field trip participants.
- 6.4 The use of alcohol or controlled substances by all participants, including staff members and volunteer supervisors, is prohibited during all field trips, with the following exception: When, in the judgment of the teacher supervisor, it would be appropriate for adult field trip participants to participate in the consumption of an alcoholic beverage for ceremonial purposes, such consumption is permitted.
- 6.5 Following approval of a field trip, the approving authority (i.e. Principal, Superintendent, or Board) is responsible to monitor the level of risk associated with the field trip and has the authority to cancel the field trip, either prior to or during its implementation, if in the judgment of the approving authority, it is unsafe to commence or continue the field trip.
  - 6.5.1 In the event that a field trip is cancelled under such circumstances, the District will not provide compensation or reimbursement to students, parents, or staff for costs associated with the field trip, unless the specific funds contributed by students, parents, or staff are available to the District.

## 7. Medical Coverage

- 7.1 All students participating in field trips must have health care coverage.
- 7.2 Students participating in field trips to destinations outside Canada shall provide evidence to demonstrate that appropriate out-of-country medical coverage has been obtained.

## 8. Emergency Planning/Responses

- 8.1 All personnel involved in field trips shall be familiar with the doctrine of in loco parentis, as outlined in Administrative Procedure 312 – Medical Assistance to Students and Children.

- 8.2 Principals shall determine the extent to which it is necessary for field trip supervisory personnel to possess a basic, current knowledge of first aid, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, and/or other emergency procedures.
- 8.3 The teacher/supervisor in charge of a field trip is authorized to change field trip plans in the event of an emergency.
- 8.4 The teacher(s) responsible for planning and supervising a field trip shall ensure that, where necessary, a first aid kit is available for use in response to an emergency medical situation.
- 8.5 If an accident occurs during a field trip, the teacher/supervisor shall:
  - 8.5.1 Assess the situation and, if injuries have occurred;
    - 8.5.1.1 Attend to the immediate medical concerns; and
    - 8.5.1.2 Call or make arrangements to call for rescue, assistance or ambulance, as required.
  - 8.5.2 Determine whether or not the trip will continue based upon all the circumstances;
  - 8.5.3 Notify the Principal at the earliest opportunity if serious injuries have occurred, so that the Principal may inform the Superintendent and parents, and
  - 8.5.4 Complete an accident report within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

## 9. Liability and Insurance

- 9.1 The Principal shall ensure that each proposed field trip is covered under policies of insurance held by the District.
- 9.2 When private vehicles are used to provide transportation for field trips, the field trip organizer shall ensure that the owner is informed of the liability insurance coverage carried by the District and the requirement of the District that vehicles be adequately insured when used for conveying students on field trips.
- 9.3 When volunteer drivers are engaged in transporting others on field trips, a volunteer driver authorization form shall be completed and submitted to the Principal prior to the field trip.
- 9.4 At the beginning of the school year, all students shall be provided with the opportunity to purchase student accident insurance.
- 9.5 The use of waiver or release forms, legal documents that waive a person's right to seek damages from an organization or person, is not permitted in District schools. As an alternative, the District will seek to enter into master agreements with field trip vendors, so as to agree on an appropriate sharing of risk with respect to activities undertaken during field trips.

## 10. Transportation

- 10.1 All passengers are required to wear seatbelts.
- 10.2 The District encourages the use of public licensed carriers, including school buses, whenever possible. Under special circumstances, private vehicles may be used (see Administrative Procedure 562 - Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles).
- 10.3 Fifteen passenger vans shall not be used to transport students.

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Reference: Section 1, 12, 16.2, 18, 20, 45, 45.1, 60, 61, 113 School Act  
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12  
Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools  
Safety Guidelines for Secondary Inter-School Athletics in Alberta  
Physical Education Safety Guidelines