

## Policy and Regulation

### 3.03.05 - Field Trips

Policy Approved: 2003.11.26

#### POLICY

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

#### REGULATION

##### A. Definitions

1. A “field trip” is defined as a learning experience sponsored by a school or the school district that takes place away from school premises. The Board supports the following types of field trips as being of educational value to students:
  - a. “Curricular Field Trip”: The field trip is an integral component of a course of study (eg Grade 6 Science field trip to the Reynolds Alberta Museum as part of study of flight).
  - b. “Co-Curricular Field Trip”: The field trip is an extension of a course of study, but is not an integral component of the course (eg middle school French Immersion field trip to Quebec).
  - c. “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).
  - d. “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.
2. Off-campus activities associated with the following programs/activities are not included in the Board’s definition of a field trip (see Off-Campus Education Policy 3.01.07):
  - a. Job shadowing programs (eg Joining Adults in Careers with Kids at School -JACKS);
  - b. Student conferences in which staff supervision is not provided (eg Forum for Young Canadians, Encounters with Canada);
  - c. Work Experience Program;
  - d. Registered Apprenticeship Program;
  - e. Green Certificate Program;
  - f. Extended visit (ie greater than three weeks) to another province or country, other than as a participant in a Reciprocal Student Exchange; and/or
  - g. Other activities as determined by the Superintendent
3. A “participant” is defined as a student, teacher, other staff member or volunteer who takes part in a school field trip.

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### **B. Approval Categories and Procedures**

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

1. Category 1: Field trips that are within the province of Alberta, and are a maximum of four days in length, and involve a cost per student of less than \$500.00. The principal is authorized to approve field trips in this category provided that:
  - a. A written application is submitted to the principal at least two 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:
    - i. purpose
    - ii. destination
    - iii. educational value and curriculum relevance
    - iv. itinerary
    - v. supervision
    - vi. transportation
    - vii. accommodation
    - viii. costs and funding arrangements
    - ix. 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
  - b. Alternative meaningful “in-school” experiences are provided for students who do not participate in the field trip.
  - c. Parent/guardian field trip information forms are distributed.
  - d. 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:
    - i. a series of walking/running trips within the immediate vicinity of the school; or
    - ii. a series of field trips of the same nature (eg instructional ski program, field trips associated with a Physical Education course of study, football team schedule of games).
2. Category 2: Field trips within Alberta that involve more than four days to complete and/or involve a cost per student of \$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:
  - a. The principal shall submit a field trip proposal to the superintendent at least five 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 C.8 below.
  - b. The request for approval must be made prior to any fund raising or collection of money designated for a specific trip.

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- c. The request for approval shall include detailed information regarding the following:
    - i. purpose
    - ii. destination
    - iii. educational value and curriculum relevance
    - iv. itinerary
    - v. supervision
    - vi. transportation
    - vii. accommodation
    - viii. costs and funding arrangements
    - ix. 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
  - d. Alternative meaningful “in-school” experiences shall be provided for students who do not participate in the field trip.
  - e. Field trip information forms shall be distributed to parents/guardians.
  - f. A signed parent/guardian field trip consent form must be received for each participating student.
  - g. Elementary school students are not normally eligible to participate in Category 2 field trips.
3. Category 3: Field trips that involve destinations outside Canada. The Board of Trustees must approve field trips in this category, using the following procedures:
- a. The principal shall submit a field trip proposal to the superintendent at least five 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 C.8 below.
  - b. The request for approval must be made prior to any fund raising or collection of money designated for a specific trip.
  - c. The request for approval shall include detailed information regarding the following:
    - i. purpose
    - ii. destination
    - iii. educational value and curriculum relevance
    - iv. itinerary
    - v. supervision
    - vi. transportation
    - vii. accommodation
    - viii. costs and funding arrangements
    - ix. 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
  - d. Alternative meaningful “in-school” experiences shall be provided for students who do not participate in the field trip.
  - e. Field trip information forms shall be distributed to parents/guardians.
  - f. A signed parent/guardian field trip consent form must be received for each participating student.

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- g. 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.

#### **C. Cost of Field Trips/Accessibility to Students**

1. Ability to pay shall not unduly limit a student's opportunity to participate in a field trip.
2. All eligible students shall have opportunity to participate in curricular field trips (see A.1.a). 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.
3. When selection of students is necessary, the criteria shall be:
  - a. Demonstrated responsibility;
  - b. Acceptable record of behaviour; and
  - c. Demonstrated commitment to preparation for the field trip.
4. Notwithstanding C.3 above, it is recognized that in the case of school teams and some clubs, selection based on ability may be necessary.
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.
6. In most cases, the entire cost of a curricular field trip (see A.1.a) 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.
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.
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:
  - a. Student contribution of \$500.00 - \$1000.00: a minimum of five months notice prior to the trip and two months prior to any installment payment.
  - b. Student contribution above \$1000.00: a minimum of twelve months notice in advance of the trip and four months prior to any installment payment.

#### **D. Supervision**

1. All field trips shall be under the direct supervision of a District teacher, with the following exception: The principal may approve an adult other than a teacher when fewer than ten students are involved in the field trip or when a school team is coached by a non-teacher. In these circumstances, the parents of all participating students shall be advised of the principal's decision.
2. Supervisory personnel including parents and other volunteers are agents of the Board for the purpose of this policy.

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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:
  - a. The number of participants;
  - b. The age, maturity and competency of the participants;
  - c. The distance involved;
  - d. The duration of the field trip;
  - e. The nature of the venue(s) being visited;
  - f. The type of vehicle(s) being used for transportation;
  - g. The nature of the activities to be undertaken and the risks associated with them;
  - h. The extent to which the teacher supervisor is familiar with the venue(s);
  - i. The supervision guidelines suggested in the publication, *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools*; and
  - j. Other factors which, in the judgment of the principal, are important to the successful and safe implementation of the field trip.
4. Additional adult supervision must be considered for field trips involving:
  - a. Supervisors who are members of the same family; and
  - b. Student participants of a single gender, where the designated adult supervisor is of the opposite gender.
5. Suggested supervision guidelines for many activities associated with school field trips are included in the publication, *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools*. Principals shall give consideration to *Safety Guidelines* and to the factors listed in D.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 D.3 above and to the following suggested guidelines in determining the most appropriate level of supervision for each field trip.
  - a. A suggested guideline of supervision for field trips to destinations of 25 kilometres or less from the City of Red Deer is:
    - i. For students in kindergarten to grade five, one adult to ten students; and
    - ii. For students in grades six to twelve, one adult to fifteen students.
  - b. A suggested guideline of supervision for field trips to destinations of more than 25 kilometres from the City of Red Deer is:
    - i. For students in kindergarten, one adult to five students;
    - ii. For students in grades one to three, one adult to eight students;
    - iii. For students in grades four to eight, one adult to ten students; and
    - iv. For students in grades nine to twelve, one adult to fifteen students.
6. Coeducational overnight field trips shall be accompanied by both male and female supervisors.
7. An adult supervisor must be available to students at all times (24 hours per day) on all field trips.

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8. Principals must be satisfied that teachers and/or supervisors have sufficient and appropriate qualifications to carry out specialized activities (eg canoeing, backpacking into remote wilderness areas, activities undertaken during subzero temperatures).
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.
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.
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.
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 policy/regulation. Host families must indicate their intent to comply with the expectations before students can be placed in their homes.
13. When an overnight field trip involves the placement of students in commercial venues or institutional settings (eg hotel, motel, camp quarters, school gymnasium, church basement), reasonable supervision of corridors, entrances, exits and similar spaces must be provided when students are assigned to their rooms.

#### **E. Parental Consent**

1. Parents/guardians must be provided with written information regarding all field trips.
2. Parents/guardians 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.
3. With the exceptions listed in (a) and (b) 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:
  - a) A series of walking/running trips within the immediate vicinity of the school; and
  - b) A series of field trips of the same nature (eg instructional ski program, field trips associated with a Physical Education course of study, football team schedule of games).
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.

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#### **F. School Absences**

If at all possible, field trips should be planned to occur at times that will not negatively affect the student's school program. 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. 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.

#### **G. Safety**

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 Board policy or other approved references, the guidelines that set out the most stringent expectations and precautions shall take precedence.
2. The teacher in charge of a field trip is responsible to carry a list of the following on each field trip:
  - a. Names of participants
  - b. Telephone contact numbers for participants
  - c. Alberta Health Care numbers for participants
  - d. Medication and medical alert needs for participants, as needed
  - e. Correspondence which enables the emergency filling of a prescription for medication, on behalf of each trip participant who is using prescribed medication
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.
4. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs 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.
5. Following approval of a field trip, the approving authority (ie Principal, Superintendent, or Board of Trustees) 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. 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.

#### **H. Medical Coverage**

1. All students participating in field trips must have health care coverage.
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.

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#### **I. Emergency Planning/Responses**

1. All personnel involved in field trips shall be familiar with the doctrine of in loco parentis, as outlined in Board Policy 4.04.02 (Medical Treatment of Students).
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.
3. The teacher/supervisor in charge of a field trip is authorized to change field trip plans in the event of an emergency.
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.
5. If an accident occurs during a field trip, the teacher/supervisor shall:
  - a. Assess the situation and, if injuries have occurred;
    - i. attend to the immediate medical concerns; and
    - ii. call or make arrangements to call for rescue, assistance or ambulance, as required.
  - b. Determine whether or not the trip will continue based upon all the circumstances;
  - c. Notify the principal at the earliest opportunity if serious injuries have occurred, so that the principal may inform the superintendent and parents/guardians, and
  - d. Complete an accident report within 24 hours of the incident, as per Board policy.

#### **J. Liability and Insurance**

1. The principal shall ensure that each proposed field trip is covered under policies of insurance held by the Red Deer Public School District No. 104.
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 Board and the requirement of the Board that vehicles be adequately insured when used for conveying students on field trips.
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.
4. At the beginning of the school year, all students shall be provided with the opportunity to purchase student accident insurance.
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.

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### **K. Transportation**

1. The Board encourages the use of public licensed carriers, including school buses, whenever possible. Under special circumstances, private vehicles may be used (see Board Policy 6.03.02 Student Transportation in Non-Commercial Vehicles for School Sponsored Activities).
2. Effective September 1, 2010, fifteen passenger vans shall not be used to transport students. Until that time, the following restrictions shall apply to the use of fifteen passenger vans in the transportation of students:
  - a) The vans shall only be used within the limits of the City of Red Deer.
  - b) The back seat of the van is to be removed whenever possible.
  - c) The back portion of the van shall not be used for cargo, as the vehicle is safer with no weight behind the axle.
  - d) In the unusual event that the back seat must be used for students, the students weighing the least amount shall occupy those seats.
  - e) The roof rack shall be removed.
  - f) Tires shall be well maintained and properly inflated, and the tread should not be worn down. When tires are replaced, E-class wide tires shall be used.
  - g) The driver shall have a Class 4 license.

### **REFERENCES:**

Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools, Revised Edition June 2000 (all subsequent revisions also apply to this policy)

### Board Policies:

- 3.01.07 Off-Campus Education
- 4.02.05 Student Supervision
- 4.04.01 Student Safety
- 4.04.02 Medical Treatment of Students
- 6.02.05 Accident Insurance and Accident Reports
- 6.03.02 Student Transportation in Non-Commercial Vehicles for School Sponsored Activities

### Related Form(s):

- [30305 Volunteer Drivers Abstract.pdf](#)
- [30305 Field Trip Info.pdf](#)
- [30305 Volunteer Driver Auth.pdf](#)