

Field Trips

(Including athletics competition trips, instructional and student field trips, and extended or international travel.)

The Board of Education supports field trip activities that complement the schools' instructional programs and enrich the educational opportunities of students.

Instructional Activity Field Trip – a planned excursion away from the school taken by the students, under the direction or supervision of a teacher to enrich and extend the classroom instructional program and to give students practical application of the ideas and theories they are studying.

Student Activity Field Trip – a planned excursion away from the school taken by the students under the direction or supervision of a teacher in support of academics, athletics, performing or fine arts groups, or other sponsored student activities.

Extended or International Travel - the Board of Education recognizes that extended or international travel can provide participating students the opportunity to acquire a deeper understanding of other cultures, and enrich and expand their educational and cultural learning experiences.

This procedure is divided into the following sections:

- A. General Safety Guidelines
- B. Low Risk Field Trips
- C. High Risk Field Trips
- D. Planning Elements for Field Trips
- E. Guidelines for Parent Information Letters
- F. Roles and Responsibilities
- G. Criteria for Denying Student Participation
- H. Transportation Regulations

A. General Safety Guidelines

- Well defined procedures are necessary to minimize the potential of serious harm to the health and safety of students and teachers.
- Prior to the field trip activity application to the principal, teachers must review the [Field Trip Overview Checklist](#).
- All field trip activities must have approval of the school principal. Changes to the approved field trip activity must have the approval of the principal.
- All field trip activities must have active written parental (guardian) consent for students to participate (see Guidelines for Parent Information Letters below).
- Extra medical insurance is mandatory for students when participating in school district activities outside of Canada (including to Washington State), no matter the length of the activity.

B. Low Risk Field Trips

Low risk field trips are for one day, stay within the Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver and do not involve high risk activities or overnight stays.

Examples of low risk field trips include, but are not limited to, community visits to the local fire hall, police station etc., travelling to local destinations such as other schools, museums, libraries, historical sites, musical/drama events, parks, farms, pumpkin patch, on-going activities such as beach/seaside studies, wetlands, sporting events, man-made indoor/outdoor ice-skating rinks, roller blading and swimming in supervised pools with certified lifeguards e.g. municipal pools.

The [Field Trip or Off Site Activity Parent / Guardian Consent Form](#) must be completed for all low risk field trips. This form may also be used by a classroom teacher for several very low risk activities of a like nature (for example, grade 7 walk/run trips away from the school) and by a sponsoring teacher/athletic teacher for several sport team related activities of a like nature (for example, volleyball games).

C. High Risk Field Trips

High risk field trips include one or more of the following characteristics: are for more than one day (overnight), involve high risk activities, involve travel outside of the Fraser Valley and Metro Vancouver.

Examples of high risk activities include, but are not limited to: out of province and/or international travel, camping, hiking, orienteering, outdoor rock climbing, horseback riding, cycling, mountain biking, boat trip, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, windsurfing, natural outdoor ice-skating, skiing, snowboarding, snow shoeing, swimming in natural settings or water parks e.g. Bridal Falls or Cultus Lake.

As part of the planning for high risk activities, the principal and teacher-in-charge must:

- Determine age appropriateness of the activity.
- Determine skill level needed to participate in the activity.
- Identify and assess students' potential exposure to injury.
- Weigh the risks against the educational value.
- Identify risk management strategies to reduce or remove the risk of harm.
- Select and implement appropriate strategies to reduce or remove the risk of harm.
- Communicate risk potential and management strategies to parents and students (see [Field Trip or Off Site Activity Parent / Guardian Consent Form](#)).
- Ensure that consent forms include specific risks and potential injuries associated with the activity or trip.

For high risk activities, in addition to the written signed Consent and Waiver Notice form, a pre-trip briefing meeting must be held with parents and students. The pre-trip briefing meeting is to ensure parents and students have all the appropriate information with respect to the trip that parents know and accept the level of risks involved in the activity and that the school and district code of conduct prevails.

The teacher-in-charge must have the training and knowledge appropriate for leading the trip and must have visited the location of the off-site activity prior to the trip and be familiar with the seasonal conditions at the time of the trip.

The volunteers selected must be appropriate for the activity and must be provided with direction as to the requirements of the trip and their responsibilities before the departure of the off-site activity.

Students must wear appropriate clothing and safety equipment recommended for the activity.

D. Planning Elements for Field Trips

- Students should participate in out of school learning experiences that further the goals of the school.
- All field trips that require students to miss class time must be related to the curriculum or to goals of the school. In order to minimize the loss of instructional time and disruption at school, excursions should be organized to include weekends and/or school holidays.
- Early notification and effective communication by the coordinating teacher to all teachers and parents is essential.
- Concepts developed and tentative scheduling of field trips must be discussed and planned through the department at the secondary level, and through the administrator at the elementary level.
- Times during the year when field trips should not take place:
 - During the months of January and June in order that secondary students can prepare for final and provincial exams.
 - On the seven school days prior to the marks cut off day for that term in order that secondary students can prepare for term exams and unit projects (please refer to yearly calendar).
 - Possible exceptions include work experience and competitions (Music, Athletics, Drama, Car Racing, etc.) with other schools.
- Trips should focus on the curriculum and all trips should be planned to minimize disruption to students' regular instructional program.
- Each school funded trip should have a post trip educational evaluation.
- The ability of a student to pay should not be a factor in determining participation in a trip.
- Appropriate supervision must be provided to minimize the risks to students.
- Where the excursion is an overnight co-educational trip, the supervision team will include both male and female supervisors. Where only male students are involved, there will be at least one adult male supervisor; and where only female students are involved, there will be at least one adult female supervisor.
- Sponsoring teachers must fill out the appropriate field trip application form and have the required approvals before commencing fundraising activities for the trip.
- An itinerary must be available in the school office for all overnight trips, including contact information in the event of an emergency.
- Students participating in extended or international travel must complete a [Medical History](#) form.
- Health Canada Travel Advisory information will be considered whenever travel is out of province and/or the country.
- Low-risk activities occurring less than twenty (20) minutes from first responders should have at least one person accessible (not necessarily part of the group) with at least some basic emergency first aid understandings and skills.
- High-risk activities or where the activity is more than twenty (20) minutes from first responders should have at least one person accessible with Standard First Aid Training.
- Volunteers must undergo a Criminal Record Check in accordance with the [Criminal Record Checks Administrative Procedure #105](#).

- Communication protocols consistent with [Safety Procedures for Employees Working Alone Administrative Procedure #112](#) will be established for overnight or isolated field trips.
- Field Trip Application Short Trip - required for trips involving 3 days or less within BC and Washington State – approved by the Principal.
- Field Trip Application Long Trip - required for trips involving 4 to 5 days within British Columbia and Washington State, or, any travel outside BC but within Canada – approved by the Superintendent or designate.
- Field Trip Application Extended or International Trip - required for trips greater than 5 days within Canada, or, any travel outside of Canada and Washington State – approved by the Board of Education.

E. Guidelines for Parent Information Letters

The following are intended to help teachers create parent information letters that will clearly outline the criteria for students going on the field trip.

- Criteria by which teachers may deny participation - see section G.
- Classes or groups involved (including grade levels).
- Destination, including address or nearest locatable centre.
- Purpose and objectives of the trip, including curricular learning outcomes where relevant.
- Dates and times (arrival at school, departure for trip, arrival back at school, departure for home).
- Transportation/travel arrangements.
- Lead teacher's name and supervision arrangements (e.g. ratio or number of supervisors anticipated).
- Key activity involved.
- Potential known risks.
- Notification of the existence of a safety plan.
- Notification of the existence of an emergency transport to medical services in the event that the student is injured and the parents/guardians will be responsible for any costs associated with such transport.
- Student conduct expectations and consequences.
- What to bring (e.g. types of clothing, water food).
- Financial arrangements (e.g. cost to the student, when fee is due).
- Notification that an alternative activity will be provided for students unable to attend the trip.
- School contact name and number for more information.
- Include some form of permission statement.

F. Roles and Responsibilities

Student

It is expected that students participating in any school-sponsored activity will abide by their school's code of conduct and the district's [District Code of Conduct Policy #19](#). For high risk field trips and extended or international travel, parents and students will be expected to sign a [Field Trip Guidelines and Regulations](#) form.

Teacher

- Teachers sponsoring trips requiring the [Field Trip Application Long Trip](#) will make initial application for approval six to twelve months before the event.
- Supervisors must ensure that a proposed itinerary of student activities and schedules is provided for each day of the trip with the application. If required, the Board will request the final itinerary three months prior to the trip.
- Supervisors will establish a phone tree with parents of all participants as part of the field trip application before it is given final approval.
- Supervisors will establish emergency administrative contact in planning for all trips.
- Supervisors will establish with an administrative officer at least one telephone debriefing (the time of which will be established beforehand).
- **The teacher sponsor will register the trip with the Canadian Embassy – ADD TO CHECKLIST.**
- Supervisors must ensure that all methods of transportation are provided in accordance with the Transportation Section of this procedure.
- Supervisors must have the ability to be contacted by, and to communicate, with students at any time (for example, pay phone or cell phone).
- Supervisors must organize/coordinate/attend at least two team/group meals per day.
- Supervisors shall meet daily with all fellow supervisors to review/debrief the day's activities (student reps to be included) and confirm the supervision schedule for the following day.
- Supervisors shall have the right to send students home at any time for reasons of student misconduct after discussion with the principal.
- Supervisors will indicate to students the specific times at which first hand contact is expected.
- Supervisors will ensure that group medical insurance has been provided for all students.
- Supervisors will provide at least two room checks to take place within one hour after the curfew established in the itinerary.
- Supervisors will be provided with a list of all students, contact #'s, brief medical history or alert and space to add in Room #'s or Billets #'s for overnight stays. (Provide a compact, one-page list for supervisors when on trips for easy reference.)

G. Criteria for Denying Student Participation

Any teacher with a concern about a particular student participating on a field trip (see criteria below) must see the sponsor teacher to try and resolve this problem. If this does not appear to be successful, consult the administrator at least two weeks in advance of the field trip so that he/she may have an opportunity to resolve the situation.

1. Current academic achievement is not at an acceptable (passing) level.
2. Effort on the previous term was "N" and no improvement has been noted in the current term.
3. Scheduled term reviews create conflict, and alternate arrangements have not been made with the teacher.
4. Assigned work from previous field trips was not completed.
5. The student has **excessive** unexcused absences in the month prior to the trip.
6. The student is currently under suspension or has been withdrawn for disciplinary reasons from participating in school events and activities as a result of gross misconduct.

H. Transportation Regulations

The Board will endeavour to provide busing services on a cost recovery basis for schools. Dangerous articles such as skis, ski poles, hockey sticks, skateboards, etc. shall not be allowed in the passenger area of buses. Ice skates shall be allowed if equipped with blade guards. Should alternate transportation be arranged, Novice (“N”) drivers will not be used to drive students.

School Organized Transportation by Bus

Whenever the school and sponsoring teacher are involved in arranging student travel transportation it must be in accordance with this section of these regulations. Student transportation shall be subject to the following conditions:

- Normally, travel to school sponsored instructional and student activity field trips will be by certified school bus or charter bus driven a qualified driver.
- Where the administrative officer decides the number of students involved or the distance traveled does not warrant the provision of a bus, or where a bus is not available, private transportation may be used, provided that the regulations stipulated under the ‘School Organized Transportation by Private Vehicle’ section of this administrative procedure.
- Whenever practicable, trips will be arranged so that Mission Public School buses can be used.
- Only Mission Public School drivers will be used on district owned buses.
- The transportation supervisor shall be responsible to make all necessary scheduling arrangements for district-owned buses or charter buses.
- Road conditions, weather reports, distances involved, duration of the trip and overall safety factors shall be considered by the transportation supervisor, who will make the final choice as to the type of bus transportation used.
- Where bus charters are to be used, the transportation supervisor will ensure they have a valid School Bus Permit from the Motor Vehicle Branch.
- Request for the use of district owned buses or of charter buses to transport students on field trips or student trips, must be approved by the school principal and submitted to the transportation supervisor through a NetFacilities Transportation Request at least two weeks before the event.
- Cancellation of transportation requests shall be by request to the transportation supervisor normally 48 hours before the scheduled trip departure.
- At least one member of the teaching staff must be present in each bus to provide prime responsibility for the supervision of students to and from the activity.
- The school field trip supervisor must provide a complete manifest of riders to the bus driver. A copy must be left at the school office.

School Organized Transportation by Private Vehicle

Volunteer drivers must complete a [Volunteer Driver](#) form and undergo a Criminal Records Check in accordance with the [Criminal Record Checks Administrative Procedure #105](#). Where school or charter buses are not used to transport students, travel by private vehicle may be used subject to the following conditions:

- Travel by private vehicle is limited to local trips and must not be beyond east of Hope, west of Vancouver, south of the border and north of Horseshoe Bay.
- For small groups such as teams and alternate programs of up to 30 students travelling within Abbotsford, Agassiz, Maple Ridge and Mission and participating in low risk activities.
- All equipment must not be transported within the passenger component of the vehicle.
- The administrative officer is designated as the supervisor for school authorized instructional and student activity transportation and must ensure that the [Volunteer Driver](#) form is signed and understood by each volunteer driver.
- A volunteer driver must possess a valid class 5 BC driver's license, be at least nineteen (19) years of age, and have provided a criminal record search.
- Category "N" (Novice) drivers and student drivers will not be used as volunteer drivers.
- No vehicle can carry more than 10 passengers including the driver and all occupants must use seatbelts.
- 15 passenger vans are not permitted to be used.
- Effective July 1, 2008, a booster seat must be used when transporting students who weigh between 18 and 36 kg (40 to 80 lbs) and are less than 145cm (4'9" tall). The provision of the child safety seat is the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian. A student who weighs less than 18 kg (40lbs) must be transported in a CSA approved child safety seat. The provision of the child safety seat is the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian.
- A passenger list must be left with the school office.
- School personnel who transport students by private vehicle must meet the above criteria.
- Special third party Comprehensive Liability insurance is provided by the district that increases the personal liability coverage of a volunteer driver's vehicle. The special insurance is applicable only for travel directly to and from an event.
- Road conditions, weather reports, and overall safety factors shall be considered by the administrative officer, who will make the final decision as to whether travel by private vehicle will be cancelled.
- Parents or guardians *must* provide authorization, for their children to travel with a volunteer driver (see [Field Trip or Off Site Activity Parent / Guardian Consent Form](#) under the Consent and Acknowledgement of Risk section).

Parent / Student Organized Transportation

Where participation on student activity field trips (school athletic teams) is voluntary, the school or sponsoring teacher may place responsibility for transportation to and from an event with the parents and students in accordance with the following:

- The school or sponsoring teacher must not be involved in arranging transportation.
- Parents and students must be informed in writing that it is their responsibility to get to and from an activity and that the school and sponsoring teacher are not responsible for student transportation.
- Parents and students must be informed that, since they are not acting as volunteer drivers for the school, they will not be covered by the school district's third party Comprehensive General Liability Insurance program.
- Student drivers may provide transportation and must comply with their driving license restrictions. It is recommended that:
 - The student driver and one passenger must be direct participants in the activity to which they are travelling.

- Student drivers may only transport students to approved senior secondary school activities and grade 11 and 12 level physical education courses, excluding all ski trips.
- Travel is restricted to east of Hope, west of Vancouver, south of the border and north of Horseshoe Bay.

Exemption to this procedure may be granted by the superintendent or designate.

Date Adopted: May 2001

Date Amended: September 2009

Definitions:

- *Low Risk – no greater than participants would face in everyday life and can be carried out with minimal planning and preparation.*
- *Inherent Risk – risk that cannot be removed without changing the nature and value of the activity.*

Cross Reference: [Criminal Record Checks Administrative Procedure #105](#)
[District Code of Conduct Policy #19](#)
[Safety Procedures for Employees Working Alone Administrative Procedure #112](#)