

# FIELD TRIPS

## Background

The Division recognizes that field trips that occur off the school site can be an effective means of providing students with learning opportunities beyond those which can be offered within the school. The community can be viewed as being an extension of the school, and therefore, the Division endorses educational field trips during school hours when such field studies have educational value and complement the school curriculum.

The Division endorses field trips that have clear educational value, that support the mission of the Division, and enhance student learning as described in the program of studies, particular to the grade level of the student.

## Definitions

**Field Trip** - means an approved school activity that occurs outside of school property. This definition includes Division sponsored student exchange programs, classes, programs extracurricular activities **and education travel** that occur outside of school property. It excludes, work study and work experience programs.

**Local Field Trip** – means any field trip occurring within the City of Medicine Hat and the surrounding areas but not occurring any farther than 20 km from the nearest city limit. Includes Local Trip and Day Trip.

**Provincial Field Trip** – means any field trip that occurs within the Province of Alberta outside the City of Medicine Hat. Includes Day or Overnight Trip.

**Canadian Field Trip** – means any field trip that occurs outside Alberta within Canada.

**International Field Trip** – means any field trip that occurs in whole or in part outside of Canada.

**Teacher(s) in charge/Lead Teacher** - means the Teacher(s) responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of an excursion or field trip.

**Parent** – means a person defined as “parent” pursuant to Section 1 (1) (q) and 1 (2) of the School Act.

**Volunteer** – means a person defined as a parent or any other person who is not employed by the school division and who agrees to attend the field trip to support and help.

**High Risk** – activities characterized by greater potential for injuries with severe consequences, person-to-person and person-to-person equipment contact, uniqueness of equipment used, speed of action, protective equipment used, specialized supervision required and training required



**Supervisor** – means any person employed by the school division and who agrees to attend the field trip to support and help or work with identified students.

## PROCEDURES

1. All Division policies and administrative procedures are deemed to be in effect during all field trips.

## PURPOSE

2. The purpose of an educational field trip is to enable students to participate in quality off-site educational experiences that:
  - 2.1. Are at the heart of the educational process;
  - 2.2. Are connected to the Guide to Education, Program of Studies, Curriculum and Learning Outcomes and;
  - 2.3. Are relevant, flexible, responsive, affordable and accessible.
3. Off-site activities must demonstrate the key understandings that:
  - 3.1. Learning requires purposeful involvement;
  - 3.2. Interpersonal relationships are essential to the learning process;
  - 3.3. Clear expectations and relevant feedback are needed; and
  - 3.4. Diversity is valued within a responsive environment
4. Field trips must take place within a context of:
  - 4.1. Attention to the safety and security of students;
  - 4.2. Attention to risk assessment of field trip activities; and
  - 4.3. Protection of students, staff and volunteers and the Board.
5. Field trips may be supported in part or in whole by parents or guardians of eligible students, but no eligible students may be denied participation on the basis of inability to pay. This provision does not apply to voluntary trips.
6. Field trips are expected to be affordable for students, and assistance is available for students who are unable to pay the costs due to financial need. Assistance will be provided by the school, club or team that is sponsoring the trip. This does not apply to voluntary trips.

## APPROVAL

7. No field trip shall be undertaken without prior written authorization.



## LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL TRIPS

7.1. The Principal has *final approval* for Local and Provincial Field Trips.

7.1.1. In all cases, the Teacher in Charge must consult with and obtain the preliminary approval of the Principal before proceeding to plan a field trip.

7.1.1.1. A Local [Field Trip Form 260-1A](#) must be made by the Teacher in Charge to the Principal at least two weeks prior to the planned/anticipated date of departure.

7.1.2. A Provincial [Field Trip Form 260-2A](#) must be made by the Teacher in Charge to the Principal at least one month prior to the planned/anticipated date of departure.

## CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

7.2. In all cases, the Teacher in Charge must consult with and obtain the preliminary approval of the Principal before proceeding to plan a field trip.

7.3. Teacher in Charge submits [Field Trip Form 260-3A](#) to the Principal for initial approval, at least six months prior to the trip;

7.4. Principal submits [Field Trip Form 260-3A](#) to the Superintendent of Schools/Field Trip Assessment Committee, at least six months prior to the trip, for secondary review.

7.5. Superintendent submits to the Board of Trustees for final approval ;

7.6. International field trips shall only be approved for high school students when:

7.6.1. The field trip has a curricular link to a course that students participating in the field trip are enrolled in during the same school calendar year or in special circumstances where high schools offer International field trips every second year, provided the requisite course was completed in the previous year.

7.6.2. The field trip is required in order to attend an athletic competition, fine arts competition or fine arts performance.

7.6.3. The field trip is required in order for students to provide Catholic service learning.

7.7. Information from the Government of Canada advice and advisories travel web page will be considered when determining if approval is granted for an international trip.



- 7.8.** Should circumstances develop that raise concerns related to student health or safety, a field trip may be cancelled by the Superintendent/Board in consultation with the Field Trip Assessment Committee, and the division will not be responsible for any reimbursement of lost funds which are not covered by travel insurance.
- 7.9.** All participants taking part in an International field trip shall obtain and be responsible for the cost of medical insurance for the duration of the field trip.
- 7.10.** As well, all participants taking part in International field trips and Canadian field trips using a commercial carrier must purchase group cancellation/travel insurance.

**8. Student travel limitations:**

- 8.1.** Early Learning – Grade 6 students may only travel within Alberta including Fort Walsh or Cypress Hills, Saskatchewan which will be considered Provincial Trips.
- 8.2.** Grades 7 – 9 students may only travel within Canada.
- 8.3.** Grade 10 – 12 will have access to local, provincial and international trips.
- 8.4.** Any exception to the above must be approved by the Superintendent in consultation with the Field Trip Assessment Committee.

## **TEACHER IN CHARGE**

**9. The Teacher in charge must:**

- 9.1.** Consult with and obtain the approval of the Principal before planning for the field trip may proceed.
- 9.2.** Be designated teacher in charge and be present on the trip.
- 9.3.** Submit an educational assessment for the Principal's approval that:
  - 9.3.1.** Ensures that all requisite field trip documentation is provided to the Principal within the required time frames;
  - 9.3.2.** Includes a statement of purposes that explicitly defines instructional objectives;
  - 9.3.3.** Outlines the lead up and follow up activities, as required;
  - 9.3.4.** Provides a safety assessment of the activity; wherever possible or reasonable, have visited the location of the field trip prior to the trip and be familiar with the seasonal conditions at the time of the activity.



- 9.4. Have the training, experience and knowledge appropriate for leading the trip or have the assistance of a guide with the training, knowledge and experience needed.
- 9.5. Select appropriate volunteers for the trip and provide volunteers with direction as to the requirements of the trip and their responsibilities prior to departure; see [Administrative Procedure 490 – Volunteers](#).
- 9.6. Use guides when appropriate or as directed.
- 9.7. Ensure that appropriate document is filed with the Principal and accompanies the Teacher in charge on the trip.
- 9.8. Advise students regarding trip hazards and appropriate safety procedures, including required vaccinations.
- 9.9. Comply with all [Board Policies](#) and [Administrative Procedures](#) while on the trip.
- 9.10. Without delay advise the Principal of any accidents, problems, unusual incidents, “close calls”, unsafe situations or any other situation which the Principal should be reasonably advised. After having verbally advised the Principal, the lead Teacher shall, within a reasonable timeframe, provide the Principal with a written report detailing the situation and steps taken to resolve the issue.
- 9.11. For trips outside complete [Form AP 260-5 Emergency Contact List Form](#). A completed copy will accompany the Teacher in Charge on the trip; a copy will be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools.

## THE PRINCIPAL

### 10. The Principal must:

- 10.1. Review the field trip application;
- 10.2. Be satisfied that the Teacher in charge understands the policies and procedures defining the Teachers’ responsibilities and duty of care;
- 10.3. Be satisfied that the current safety guidelines have been met or exceeded;
- 10.4. Be satisfied that the students, Teachers, staff, volunteers and parents or guardians will receive the appropriate information about the trip;
- 10.5. Be satisfied that arrangements are in place for covering all the financial matters, including refund procedures, contingency funds and an accounting for all expenditures;
- 10.6. Consult with the Teachers in charges before recommending final approval;
- 10.7. Ensure that the Teacher in charge completes a preliminary risk assessment for any trip.



- 10.8. Principals must ensure that eligibility criteria are established for all field trips. Eligibility criteria can include previous behavior.
- 10.9. Be the final authority for Local and Provincial field trips.

## **FIELD TRIP ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE (CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL ONLY)**

### **11. Field Trip Assessment Committee:**

- 11.1. Provides a secondary review of the proposed Canadian or International field trip, including:
  - 11.1.1. Review of [Field Trip Form 260-3A](#);
  - 11.1.2. Review supporting documentation;
  - 11.1.3. Review of [Parent Consent Form 260-3B](#);
  - 11.1.4. Providing assistance to the Principal or lead teacher as may be required
- 11.2. The Field Trip Assessment Committee upon completing their review will forward the application to the Board for approval.

## **SUPERVISION**

### **12. The minimum acceptable standard of supervision for field trips is:**

- 12.1. For students in Early Learning, Kindergarten, one adult to 5 students;
- 12.2. For students in Grades 1 – 3, one adult to 8 students;
- 12.3. For students in Grades 4 – 9, one adult to 10 students; and
- 12.4. For students in Grades 10 – 12, one adult to 15 students;
- 12.5. High Risk, Provincial, Canadian and International Trips, one adult to 10 students;
- 12.6. Skiing and Snowboarding trips, one adult to 10 students;
- 12.7. Exceptions to the above will apply to school team sports and clubs where the ratio shall be one adult to 15 participants.
- 12.8. Deviation from these standards with permission of the Principal are acceptable for low risk trips based on the following being considered:
  - Age of students;
  - Nature of the activity;
  - Risk of the activity;
  - Size of the group;
  - Participation of special needs students;
  - Unique or particular circumstances of the venue (crowded, expansive etc);



- Experience of the supervisor(s) relative to the activity;
  - Other safety concerns.
- 12.9.** On high risk trips acceptable standards may only be changed with the approval of the Superintendent.
- 12.10.** If a field trip involves being away on a Sunday plans should be made, if at all possible, to ensure that field trip participants attend Mass.
- 12.11.** Employees or Students are not permitted to consume alcohol.
- 12.12.** Parents and Students in (grades 7–12) will be required to sign a [Code of Conduct Agreement 260-4](#) for trips outside Alberta.
- 13.** For field trips outside of the Province of Alberta, the minimum acceptable standard of supervision is two adult supervisors.
- 14.** Where field trips include overnight stays and the student group includes male and female students, supervision of the group must include both male and female supervisors.
- 15.** Additional supervision by certificated staff and/or volunteers from the school must be considered for field trips involving:
- Increased risks;
    - Large numbers of students;
    - Participation of students with special needs;
    - Crowded venues;
    - Trips which are new to the school.
- 16.** All supervision must be provided by individuals who are over the age of 18 and who meet the requirements of [Administrative Procedure 490 Volunteers](#).

## TRANSPORTATION

- 17.** Transportation of students on field trips must comply with Division Policy and Procedure.
- 17.1.** Commercial transportation shall be used whenever possible.
- 17.1.1.** Only properly licensed and insured commercial transportation vehicles and drivers shall be used.
- 17.1.2.** Schools are advised to use carriers under contract to the Division.
- 17.1.3.** If a school wishes to use a carrier not contracted with the Division, the carrier must have an Operating Authority Certificate from the Motor Transport Board and a Certificate of Insurance coverage evidencing auto liability coverage of not less than twenty (20) million dollars.



- 17.2. The Principal must ensure that a staff member, student or volunteer driving a vehicle that is not Division-owned is properly licensed and insured.
- 17.3. The Division has insurance coverage that provides for indemnification in the event of bodily injury or property damage to third parties as the result of an automobile accident for which the staff member, student or volunteer is legally responsible. However, the primary liability protection for the staff member, student or volunteer driving a vehicle that is not Division owned is provided by his/her own liability policy. The minimum liability coverage is required to be two (2) million dollars. (Reference: [Administrative Procedure 552](#)).
- 17.4. Schools are required to retain copies of the driver's license and insurance pink slip information. The Driver Information form attached to [Administrative Procedure 552 Student Transportation Private Vehicles](#) may be used as a record.
- 17.5. Student drivers shall not, under any circumstances, be used for a division transportation purposes whatsoever, including field trip transportation.
- 17.6. Air transportation other than on commercial carriers will not be authorized.

## CONSENT

- 18. In order to ensure informed **consent**, parents shall be provided with the following information *in writing* for [Local](#), [Provincial](#) and [Canadian/International](#) field trips:
  - 18.1. Purpose and educational goal of the field trip;
  - 18.2. The name of the Teacher in charge and a contact telephone number;
  - 18.3. The date;
  - 18.4. The destination, and where necessary, a map of the area;
  - 18.5. General nature of activitie(s) and detailed itinerary for out of Province trips;
  - 18.6. Departure and return times;
  - 18.7. Mode of transportation;
  - 18.8. Financial arrangements;
  - 18.9. Safety precautions;
  - 18.10. Level of supervision;
  - 18.11. The date of the parent meeting(s); if required;
  - 18.12. Any unusual factors such as rigorous physical activity, water related activities or water sports;
  - 18.13. Any special risks associated with the activity;
  - 18.14. A reminder that parents or guardians must inform the Teacher in charge about any relevant medical conditions of the student;





- 18.15.** Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;
- 18.16.** The need for additional medical coverage for out-of-province and out-of-country trips;
- 18.17.** Other relevant information about the trip which may influence the parent's or guardians' decision to withhold permission.
- 19.** When a parent meeting has been called for a trip:
- 19.1.** The Teacher in charge must keep a record of attendance at the parent meeting and;
- 19.2.** The student's parent or guardian must attend the parent meeting to discuss the field trip and the rules of conduct expected of students. If emergent reasons prevent the parent from attending the meeting the parent must make arrangements to meet the Teacher, at a time convenient to the Teacher, to speak about the trip.
- 20.** One permission form is acceptable for a series of walking activities in the neighborhood of the school. Permission forms are not necessary for Daily Physical Activity walks or walking to church.
- 21.** One permission form is acceptable for a series of off-site activities such as performing arts, swimming lessons, physical education classes, outdoor education classes or athletics as long as the permission form includes a schedule of all activities and meets requirements of the Superintendent.
- 22.** Each student participating in an off-site activity must:
- 22.1.** Comply with the rules of the school and the requirements of the schools code of conduct;
- 22.2.** Comply with the rules of the activity venue;
- 22.3.** Fulfill all preparatory requirements at an appropriate level of performance;
- 22.4.** Dress appropriately according to the type of off-site activity;
- 22.5.** Cooperate fully with everyone authorized by the Board to provide education programs and other services;
- 22.6.** Participate in a responsible and cooperative manner during the trip;
- 22.7.** Account to the Teacher in charge for their conduct;
- 22.8.** Respect the rights of others; and
- 22.9.** Carry out all follow up procedures in an appropriate manner.



23. 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. Children of Volunteers may be allowed to participate with permission of the Principal.

## VOLUNTEER

24. Volunteers:

24.1. Volunteers must:

24.1.1. Comply with the requirements of [Administrative Procedure 490 Volunteers](#);

24.1.2. Have qualifications appropriate to the off-site activity; and

24.1.3. Complete the appropriate trip forms;

24.2. Volunteers are expected to know the details of the off-site activity and their specific duties and authority prior to departure.

24.3. Volunteers must support and follow the school code of conduct and;

24.3.1. Report any inappropriate conduct to the Teacher in charge;

24.3.2. Adhere to the schedule of itinerary;

24.3.3. Dress appropriately according to the type of off-site activity;

24.3.4. Fulfill their duties for the duration of the off-site activity, including evenings and weekends.

## ACTIVITIES

25. The following off-site activities are ***not permitted***:

25.1. Off-site activities that require travel time that would be too long for the age of the students involved;

25.2. Off-site activities that require inordinate expenses or excessive absence from school or;

25.3. Off-site activities that are hazardous or prohibited activities.

- Aerial gymnastics
- auto racing
- boxing
- bobsledding
- demolition derbies
- dunk tanks
- hang gliding
- ice climbing
- motorcycling of any nature
- paintball, laser tag games or war games
- rodeos
- trampolining
- gladiator style events
- bicycle motocross (bmx)
- bungee jumping
- caving (spelunking)
- drag racing
- extreme sports
- horse jumping
- hot air balloon rides (tethered and untethered)
- mountain scrambling and technical mountaineering
- rifle ranges or other activities involving firearms
- skydiving
- winter biathlon with firearms
- Luge
- Mountain climbing
- Racing of watercraft
- Scuba diving
- White-water rafting
- Fencing



**26.** The following off-site activities ***are permitted with proper pre-authorization*** of the Superintendent of Schools:

- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Mountain biking
- Open water swimming
- Rock climbing
- Wall climbing
- Hiking on the west coast trail
- Tobogganing, tubing, crazy carpet and sledding

The activities listed in Sections 27 are not meant to be exhaustive in terms of all available field trips and possible field trip activities. High Risk activities not listed in either section will be considered on a case by case basis by the Field Trip Assessment Committee.

### **OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES IN REMOTE OR WILDERNESS AREAS**

**27.** In a remote or wilderness area, the Teacher in charge must:

- 27.1.** Have visited the location of the off-site activity prior to the trip and be familiar with the proposed route and seasonal conditions at the time of the trip;
- 27.2.** Use professional guides when appropriate or as directed;
- 27.3.** Establish and communicate class safety and emergency procedures to all participants;
- 27.4.** Ensure that appropriate communication devices are taken on the trip;
- 27.5.** Ensure constant communication within the group and access to external communication as needed;
- 27.6.** Be familiar with the nearest accessible medical station and telephone service;
- 27.7.** Notify Local area authorities, such as policy forestry or park officials about the proposed activity and location or route to be used;
- 27.8.** Contact Local authorities for information regarding environmental conditions, seasonal wildlife concerns and trail conditions; the parent/guardian must be informed of the present environmental conditions, the seasonal wildlife concerns and trail conditions;
- 27.9.** Establish procedures so that contact can be made with the Principal via police, forestry or park officials or other persons in the area;
- 27.10.** Obtain camping permits, fire permits, fishing and other licenses and area use permission where required; and;
- 27.11.** Ensure that one supervisor is qualified in emergency first aid and CPR.
- 27.12.** The parent/guardian must be informed of any all activities undertaken.



## **WATER ACTIVITIES**

**28.** Each trip that includes water-related activities must have a safety assessment, unless the trip is on an approved activities list.

**28.1.** All participants involved in sailing or boating activities must:

- 28.1.1.** Have swimming skills commensurate with the activity and;
- 28.1.2.** Wear a Transport Canada approved lifejacket or personal floatation device.

**28.2.** For activities involving canoeing, sailing, and power craft, the activity must meet or exceed safety guidelines.

**28.3.** When canoe trips take place on lakes or rivers, the Teacher in charge must have visited the site prior to the trip, and be familiar with the proposed route and the seasonal conditions at the time of the trip.

**28.4.** Adequate instruction and demonstration must be given to all participants involved before allowing the participants to undertake any water-related activity. Depending on the location the recommended supervisor to student ratio for canoeing, sailing and power craft activities may range from 1- 5 to 1- 10.

## **29. SWIMMING ACTIVITY**

**29.1.** Students attending off-site activities may not swim unless there is a lifeguard on duty.

**29.2.** If the facility operator does not provide a lifeguard at a swimming activity, students may swim if the school provides a lifeguard with current certification in National Lifeguard Service, Standard First Aid and a CPR Basic Rescuer for every fifty (50) participants using the swimming pool.

**29.3.** Students are permitted to swim in unsupervised hotel swimming pools as long as a Teacher or parent supervisor is present.

## **30. SKIING AND SNOWBOARD ACTIVITY**

**30.1.** Downhill skiing and snowboarding are acceptable activities for students provided the following conditions have been met:

- 30.1.1.** Conditioning activities have occurred in physical education classes, or as part of a fitness program leading up to the skiing or snowboarding activity.
- 30.1.2.** Skiing or snowboarding are part of a well-balanced yearly program and reflect the schools commitment to a quality physical education program and;
- 30.1.3.** For students in grade 6 and under the activity includes a minimum one mandatory lesson at the beginning of each day on a ski hill.



- 30.2.** Prior to the skiing or snowboarding trip, the Teacher in charge must have visited or contacted the ski resort recently and be familiar with seasonal conditions at the time of the activity;
  - 30.2.1.** Make contact with the ski resort operator in order to arrange the student identification and controls procedures and;
  - 30.2.2.** Understand the ski resort's emergency protocol.
- 30.3.** Upon arrival at the ski resort, the Teacher in charge must:
  - 30.3.1.** Divide students into levels of ability as described by the parent or guardians signed acknowledgment of the student's skier or snowboarder's classification;
  - 30.3.2.** Assist the ski resort staff with grouping students for their lessons;
  - 30.3.3.** 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;
  - 30.3.4.** Assist the ski resort staff with controlling student access to slopes or trails.
- 30.4.** At the conclusion of the K-6 mandatory lesson:
  - 30.4.1.** The ski resort instructor will identify the level of ability of the students, and assign appropriate ski or snowboarding slopes or trails; and
  - 30.4.2.** Students will begin supervised skiing and snowboarding on the assigned slopes or trails;
- 30.5.** During the supervised ski time, students are expected to ski in pairs or groups of three or four.
- 30.6.** A minimum supervision ratio for skiing and snowboarding is one adult to 10 students, including at least one adult supervisor in the ski lodge.
- 30.7.** Supervision of ski slopes must be carried out by supervisors/volunteers on the hill, at the base and in the lodge on a constant rotation.
- 30.8.** All participants in skiing and snowboarding activities must:
  - 30.8.1.** Wear a CSA approved Ski/Snowboard helmet and;
  - 30.8.2.** Ski or snowboard only on designated open runs within the ski area.

## **31. SKATING**

- 31.1.** All participants are required to wear CSA approved Skating/Hockey helmets when participating in a skating activity.



RESOURCES: [Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools](#)

FIELD TRIP FORMS are accessible in the [Division Intranet](#)

AP 260 – 1A [Field Trip Local Application Form](#)

Includes: Local Field Trip  
Day Trip

AP 260 – 1B [Field Trip Local Parent Consent Form](#)

Includes: Local Field Trip  
Day Trip

AP 260 – 2A [Field Trip Provincial Outside of City within Alberta Application Form](#)

Includes: Day Trip-Outside City Limits-within Alberta  
Overnight Trip

AP 260 – 2B [Field Trip Provincial Outside of City within Alberta Parent Consent Form](#)

Includes: Day Trip-Outside City Limits-within Alberta  
Overnight Trip

AP 260 – 3A [Field Trip Canadian and International outside Alberta Application Form](#)

Includes: Canadian Field Trip  
International Field Trip

AP 260 – 3B [Field Trip Canadian and International outside Alberta Parent Consent Form](#)

Includes: Canadian Field Trip  
International Field Trip

AP 260 - 4 [Field Trip Code of Conduct Agreement Form](#)

Includes: Field Trips outside Alberta, Canadian and International  
Grades 7 - 12

AP 260 – 5 [Emergency Contact List Form](#)

Includes: Field Trips Canadian and International

