

FIELD TRIPS

Background:

The Division supports quality educational field trips for students that are aligned with instructional programming, Alberta curriculum and school-related extracurricular activities.

The Division's expectation is the safest form of transportation of students to and from such activities is by Division-owned or contracted buses.

Definitions:

Co-curricular Field Trip:

is an activity or experience that complements what students are learning in school but is not necessary to demonstrate a curriculum outcome(s).

Day Field Trip:

is an off-site activity that does not involve an overnight stay at a destination.

Extended Field Trip:

involves students remaining overnight at a destination—provincially, nationally or internationally. Equity, costs, loss of instructional time for participating students and the impact on instruction for non-participating students shall all be considered.

Extracurricular Field Trip:

is an optional activity or experience that falls outside of what students are learning in school but is a valuable part of the school experience. These include, but are not limited to, sports teams, clubs, band trips, mountain ski trips, etc.

In-school Activity:

involves an external group providing an on-site activity.

Procedures:

1. Responsibility

1.1. Teacher shall:

- 1.1.1. ensure all co-curricular field trips have a curriculum focus;
- 1.1.2. adhere to the Division's field trip planning and approval processes;
- 1.1.3. plan for student safety using the [Safety Guidelines for Alberta Schools](#) and [Appendix 260-A: Risk Classification](#);
- 1.1.4. provide suitable levels of supervision;
- 1.1.5. have an emergency plan for all extended field trips;
- 1.1.6. utilize approved means for transporting students; and

- 1.1.7. obtain parent/guardian consent for student participation prior to any field trip.
 - 1.2. Principal shall:
 - 1.2.1. exercise due diligence and oversight of field trip planning, preparation and risk management;
 - 1.2.2. review field trip forms for accurateness and safety measures;
 - 1.2.3. require that all field trips are approved before information is shared with students and parents/guardians;
 - 1.2.4. ensure each parent/guardian completes and returns the appropriate field trip form, or
 - 1.2.4.1. where circumstances warrant, upon receipt of an email from the parent/guardian, approve student participation in a day field trip and keep that consent on file for two years as outlined in the [Records Retention Schedule](#) (Appendix 185-A);
 - 1.2.5. require that volunteer chaperones are properly vetted and authorized;
 - 1.2.6. deny a student's participation in a field trip if their behaviour or lack of skills may have a negative impact on the trip; and
 - 1.2.7. maintain on file, for two years as outlined in the [Records Retention Schedule](#) (Appendix 185-A), all relevant information for each field trip.
 - 1.3. Executive Director of Division Supports shall:
 - 1.3.1. provide advice and assistance to support principals in exercising due diligence and oversight of field trip planning, preparation and risk management; and
 - 1.3.2. in consultation with the Principal, provide final approval for extended field trips with a provincial destination.
 - 1.4. Superintendent shall:
 - 1.4.1. in consultation with the Executive Director of Division Supports, provide final approval for extended field trips with a national or international destination; and
 - 1.4.2. have the absolute right to deny a field trip request based on circumstances including risk to students, risk to staff or lack of alignment with curricular or instructional programs.
2. Categories
- 2.1. Student grade will be used to determine the appropriate level of field trip:
 - 2.1.1. Pre-kindergarten to Grade 3 are limited to local and provincial trips within 200 kilometres of their immediate community.
 - 2.1.2. Grades 4-6 are limited to local and provincial trips within 500 kilometres of their immediate community.
 - 2.1.3. Grades 7-9 are limited to local, provincial and national trips that do not exceed seven calendar days.
 - 2.1.4. Grades 10-12 are limited to local, provincial, national and international trips that do not exceed seven consecutive school days.

3. Fees

- 3.1. For a co-curricular field trip/activity, the parent/guardian shall pay the fee to participate. If the Secretary-Treasurer has already approved a school fee waiver for a family, the Principal has discretion to waive that student's field trip fee.
- 3.2. For an extracurricular field trip/activity, the parent/guardian shall pay the fee to participate, and fees shall not be waived.

4. Approval

4.1. General:

- 4.1.1. Only field trips that have been approved by the Principal as meeting Division procedures for planning, preparation and risk management shall operate under the name of the school.
- 4.1.2. Parents/guardians are not permitted to independently organize field trips in the name of a school. A lead teacher is required in planning, organizing and supervising all school field trips.
- 4.1.3. Access to school or Division resources for field trips shall only be provided to participants on Principal-approved field trips.
- 4.1.4. Field trips organized by external organizations that involve Division students shall not involve Division staff.
- 4.1.5. National and international field trips shall be arranged through a pre-authorized travel or tour company. Exceptions require approval of the Superintendent.

4.2. In-school activity:

- 4.2.1. Involves an external group providing an on-site activity that may necessitate students wear special apparel or equipment, require volunteers, entail a degree of risk and/or have an activity fee.
- 4.2.2. The teacher shall initiate the approval process by completing the applicable [In-School Activity Form](#) (Form 260-4) and submitting it to the Principal. Once approved, the finalized form shall be sent to the parent/guardian to provide consent for their child's participation.

4.3. Day field trips:

- 4.3.1. The teacher shall initiate the approval process by completing the applicable [Day Field Trip Form](#) (Form 260-1) and submitting it to the Principal. Once approved, the finalized form shall be sent to the parent/guardian to provide consent for their child's participation.
- 4.3.2. Information for all day trips of a similar nature (for example, swimming lessons, athletic competitions, off-site PE or DPA activities) may be submitted to the Principal for approval on one form that notes all the planned activity dates/days.
- 4.3.3. As confirmation of bus arrival and drop-off times, the trip supervisor shall provide a copy of the applicable [Day Field Trip Form](#) (Form 260-1) to the bus driver before departure. The form shall remain on the bus for the duration of the trip.

4.4. Extended field trips:

- 4.4.1. The teacher shall initiate the approval process by completing the appropriate [extended field trip form](#)—Local/Provincial Field Trip Form (Form 260-2) or National/International Field Trip Form (Form 260-3)—and submitting it to the Principal. The Principal may consult with the Executive Director of Division Supports before proceeding with an extended field trip. Once approved by the Principal, Executive Director of Division Supports and Superintendent (if required), the finalized form shall be sent to the parent/guardian to provide consent for their child’s participation.
- 4.4.2. A field trip emergency plan is embedded within the extended field trip forms and its completion is required for all such trips.
- 4.4.3. To ensure the safety of students and accompanying personnel, areas selected for co-curricular and extracurricular travel shall be ones in which:
 - 4.4.3.1. There is a history of political stability for at least five years and no indication political turmoil may erupt within the next 12 months. Related travel information and advisories are available on the [Government of Canada](#) website.
 - 4.4.3.2. The risk in other areas (for example, health, transportation, geographical features) is not substantially greater than those that would be experienced by students travelling within Alberta.
- 4.4.4. The Principal shall monitor the [Government of Canada](#) website and inform the Executive Director of Division Supports if travel advisories are issued for the destination(s) of the extended field trip.
 - 4.4.4.1. The Superintendent has the absolute right to cancel a field trip if the destination(s) or travel route(s) is not deemed safe.
 - 4.4.4.2. Trip cancellation insurance is required for all participants. The field trip organizer shall ensure all available insurances are considered (for example, accident, medical, interruption, kidnap, ransom).
 - 4.4.4.3. Prior to the trip, the Principal shall request an increase in purchase card limit(s) for the trip supervisor(s), sufficient to cover any unanticipated costs that might arise out of an emergent situation (for example, transportation, accommodation, sustenance).
- 4.4.5. In the event a pre-qualified outside travel or tour company is used for an extended field trip, all arrangements must be made through the Principal. A request or reservation with a tour company made by a parent, guardian or student will not be honoured.

- 4.4.5.1. Any bonus or reward achieved from a tour or travel company shall be reported to the Principal and shall become the property of the school, not of the individual organizer or supervisor.
 - 4.4.6. Deadlines for final documentation presented to the Executive Director of Division Supports are:
 - 4.4.6.1. Provincial - two weeks;
 - 4.4.6.2. National - four weeks; and
 - 4.4.6.3. International - six months.
 - 4.4.7. In some circumstances, field trip organizers may be required to meet with the Superintendent to discuss curricular alignment, risks, emergency plans and supervision.
- 5. Insurance Considerations
 - 5.1. Chartered bus companies shall have a minimum of \$5,000,000 commercial general liability and \$20,000,000 automobile liability. Exceptions require approval of the Superintendent.
 - 5.2. Depending on the activity, the vendor may be required to provide a certificate of insurance and contract for review by Purchasing and Contract Services.
 - 5.3. If the field trip entails a chartered bus, travel operator or venue with a moderate to high-risk activity, the vendor must be an EIPS-approved vendor.
 - 5.4. A list of approved charter companies, travel operators and field trip venues can be found at [PCS Directory of Vendors/Suppliers](#).
- 6. Risks and Safety Precautions
 - 6.1. The trip supervisor shall ensure all field trip activities adhere to the guidelines listed in the [Safety Guidelines for Alberta Schools](#). The activities shall be documented on the relevant [field trip form](#)—Day Field Trip Form (Form 260-1), Local/Provincial Field Trip Form (Form 260-2) or National/International Field Trip Form (Form 260-3).
- 7. High-Risk Activities
 - 7.1. Recognizing the potential for increased risk in any educational opportunity away from the regular school setting, every field trip in the Division shall have as its prime consideration the safety of participants. No activity that is identified as being high risk within [Appendix 260-A: Risk Classification](#) shall be approved unless:
 - 7.1.1. qualified or certified instructors will be present;
 - 7.1.2. all regulations and expectations will be regularly reviewed with students;
 - 7.1.3. strict behaviour guidelines and student monitoring will be maintained;
 - 7.1.4. approved safety equipment appropriate to the activity will be used; and
 - 7.1.5. parent/guardian consent has been provided on the relevant [field trip form](#)—Day Field Trip Form (Form 260-1), Local/Provincial Field Trip Form (Form 260-2) or National/International Field Trip Form (Form 260-3).
- 8. Supervision
 - 8.1. Although other adults can be authorized by the Principal as a field trip chaperone, a teacher supervisor shall be present on all field trips.

- 8.2. Any extended field trip involving more than one gender shall have at least one male and one female supervisor.
- 8.3. National and international field trips shall have a minimum of two supervisors who are Division employees.
- 8.4. Field trips shall be supervised according to what is reasonable under the circumstances regarding the:
 - 8.4.1. number of student participants;
 - 8.4.2. age of the students;
 - 8.4.3. nature of the activity;
 - 8.4.4. location of the trip; and
 - 8.4.5. other relevant considerations.
- 8.5. The following supervision ratios shall apply, except in the circumstances outlined in section 8.6:
 - 8.5.1. a minimum of one supervisor for every 10 elementary students;
 - 8.5.2. a minimum of one supervisor for every 15 secondary students; and
 - 8.5.3. any specific supervisory requirements for the activity as outlined in the [Safety Guidelines for Alberta Schools](#).
- 8.6. Where the off-site activity is a regular and natural extension of an activity-based course (for example, physical education, recreational fitness, daily physical activity), supervision levels will be determined by the teacher in charge with due consideration of:
 - 8.6.1. the age of the students;
 - 8.6.2. the activity's level of risk; and
 - 8.6.3. any specific supervisory requirements for the activity as outlined in the [Safety Guidelines for Alberta Schools](#).
- 8.7. Volunteers or parents/guardians who accompany students on field trip activities are responsible to the teacher in charge.
- 8.8. As per [Administrative Procedure 490: Volunteers in Schools](#), the Principal shall ensure all volunteers complete the [Confidentiality Undertaking and Declaration for Volunteers](#) (Form 490-2).
- 8.9. The Principal shall ensure volunteers who are expected to spend an extended period of time with a student(s) and/or in an unsupervised setting provide a copy of a current Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check. The [Request to Waive Fees for Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Check](#) (Form 490-3) shall be provided to volunteers.
 - 8.9.1. A current Criminal Record and Vulnerable Sector Check is one that is less than 12 months old.
- 8.10. For all extended field trips, the [Chaperones for Extended Field Trips Form](#) (Form 260-6) must also be completed.
- 8.11. Prior to the trip, the supervisor shall ensure volunteers, parents/guardians and staff are aware of their specific roles.
- 8.12. The use of alcohol or recreational cannabis products by any student or adult participating in a field trip is strictly prohibited. The use can result in an individual

being sent home early from a field trip at their own expense as well as school consequences.

9. Medical Care and Emergencies

- 9.1. As per [Administrative Procedure 316: Medication/Personal Care](#), any required medication, with the exception of emergency medication such as EpiPens or inhalers, shall be given to the supervisor at the beginning of the trip. The [Child/Student Medication/Personal Care Management - Parent/Guardian Consent Form](#) (Form 316-1) and [Child/Student Medication Management Plan](#) (Form 316-2) listing the medication, dosage, special-care instructions and any known allergies shall be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and kept with the supervisor for the duration of the field trip.
- 9.2. The supervisor shall be in possession of the students' emergency phone contact numbers and appropriate medical and emergency information. The supervisor in charge shall ensure all supervisors have a copy of the [Individual Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan](#) (Form 316-4).
- 9.3. A [Child/Student Medication Management Plan](#) (Form 316-2) shall be kept by the supervisor during the field trip and returned to the Principal at the conclusion of the trip.
- 9.4. At least one supervisor—staff member, volunteer or someone on-site at the facility—shall have Emergency First Aid training for each field trip. Standard First Aid may be deemed necessary for activities that are considered higher risk or involve a significant number of students and staff.
- 9.5. Teachers shall ensure a first aid kit is available and a plan exists to deal with emergencies.
- 9.6. In the event of an unplanned incident or emergency, the supervisor or Principal shall notify the Division Emergency Hotline. The supervisor in charge shall be responsible for emergent decisions requiring a change in transportation or activity.

10. Transportation

10.1. Field Trips

- 10.1.1. The Principal shall approve all transportation related to co-curricular and extracurricular field trips.
- 10.1.2. Parents/guardians shall be notified of the mode of transportation on the relevant [field trip form](#)—Day Field Trip Form (Form 260-1), Local/Provincial Field Trip Form (Form 260-2) or National/International Field Trip Form (Form 260-3).
- 10.1.3. Normally, the school shall provide busing or arrange for authorized volunteer drivers, and it is expected that all students shall be transported to and from the field trip in this manner. Where extenuating circumstances warrant that a child needs to access alternative transportation to that provided by the school, the parent/guardian shall complete the [Field Trip Transportation Consent](#) (Form 260-5). Principal approval is required.

- 10.1.4. Any field trip involving extended highway travel shall require transportation by a Division-owned or contracted bus. A parent/guardian cannot transport their own child. Where extenuating circumstances warrant that a child needs to access alternative transportation to that provided by the school, the parent/guardian shall complete the [Field Trip Transportation Consent](#) (Form 260-5). Principal approval is required.
- 10.1.5. When travelling nationally or internationally, schools must use tour companies that are pre-qualified and meet Division standards. A list of approved travel operators can be found at [PCS Directory of Vendors/Suppliers](#).
- 10.1.6. All volunteer drivers shall:
 - 10.1.6.1. be a minimum of 18 year of age and not a student;
 - 10.1.6.2. hold an unrestricted Alberta driver's licence;
 - 10.1.6.3. have appropriate insurance; and
 - 10.1.6.4. complete the [Automobile Driver Authorization and Consent](#) (Form 555-1).
- 10.2. Athletic/After-Hours Extracurricular Trips
 - 10.2.1. The Principal shall approve all transportation related to athletic/after-hours extracurricular trips.
 - 10.2.2. Parents/guardians shall be notified of the mode of transportation on the relevant [field trip form](#)—Day Field Trip Form (Form 260-1), Local/Provincial Field Trip Form (Form 260-2) or National/International Field Trip Form (Form 260-3).
 - 10.2.3. For localized athletic/after-hours extracurricular trips where the school is not providing busing or arranging for authorized volunteer drivers, the coach(es)/supervisor(s) shall confirm:
 - 10.2.3.1. every student has transportation to the activity;
 - 10.2.3.2. every student has transportation from the activity; and
 - 10.2.3.3. all students are accounted for as having departed the venue after the activity.
 - 10.2.4. Any athletic/after-hours extracurricular trip involving extended highway travel shall require transportation by a Division-owned or contracted bus. A parent/guardian cannot transport their own child. Where extenuating circumstances warrant that a child needs to access alternative trip transportation to that provided by the school, the parent/guardian shall complete the [Field Trip Transportation Consent](#) (Form 260-5). Principal approval is required.
 - 10.2.5. All volunteer drivers shall:
 - 10.2.5.1. be a minimum of 18 year of age and not a student;
 - 10.2.5.2. hold an unrestricted Alberta driver's licence;
 - 10.2.5.3. have appropriate insurance; and
 - 10.2.5.4. complete the [Automobile Driver Authorization and Consent](#) (Form 555-1).

11. Parent/Guardian Consent

- 11.1. Before a student can participate in a field trip, parent/guardian consent is required on the relevant [field trip form](#)—Day Field Trip Form (Form 260-1), Local/Provincial Field Trip Form (Form 260-2) or National/International Field Trip Form (Form 260-3).
- 11.2. If required, the [Child/Student Medication/Personal Care Management - Parent/Guardian Consent](#) (Form 316-1) and [Child/Student Medication Management Plan](#) (Form 316-2)—listing the medication, dosage, special-care instructions and any known allergies—shall be completed and signed by the parent/guardian before a student is allowed to attend a field trip.
- 11.3. A student shall not be penalized for participation or non-participation in any authorized field trip.

Reference:

Section 1, 11, 31, 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222 *Education Act*

Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12

Safety Guidelines for Alberta Schools

Safety Guidelines for Secondary Inter-School Athletics in Alberta

[Appendix 260-A: Risk Classification](#)