

# Administrative Procedure 260

## Instructional Programs and Materials

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### FIELD TRIPS

#### BACKGROUND

The Charter Board recognizes that field trips offer meaningful and varied educational experiences to students. The Charter Board also believes that travel for the purpose of an academic, athletic or cultural activity or exchange enriches school life.

The Charter Board's commitment to providing a safe, effective and caring learning environment extends to include school activities which take place off school property.

The Superintendent and Principal are jointly responsible for the administration of this administrative procedure.

#### PROCEDURES

##### 1. General

- 1.1 The Principal is responsible for developing and implementing school policy and procedures to govern field trips.
- 1.2 In this administrative procedure and these guidelines, "field trip" means an authorized school activity which occurs outside the boundaries of the school, excluding off-campus courses and work-study programs.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this administrative procedure, three categories of field trips are recognized as follows:
  - 1.3.1 Same Day, In-Province Field Trips
  - 1.3.2 Overnight or Out-of-Province Field Trips and Outdoor Education Programs; and
  - 1.3.3 International Travel
- 1.4 Refer to Procedure 12 for a description of prohibited activities.
  - 1.4.1 Field trips shall not involve participation in any activities which are excluded from general liability coverage by the Charter Board's insurance broker.
- 1.5 No student will be denied educational field trip opportunities of three (3) or fewer days' duration due to financial hardship.
- 1.6 A program of instruction will be given to students who do not participate in a field trip due to reasonable circumstances.
- 1.7 Participation in a field trip shall not be a prerequisite for the successful completion of any required course of study.
- 1.8 Students are expected to comply with the Student Code of Conduct. If a student is unwilling or is unable to follow instructions or accept supervision, that student should not be permitted to go, or to continue on that field trip.
- 1.9 The Charter Board will not compensate its staff or agents by means of salary or time off in lieu for any field trips which are conducted outside the regular instructional day (e.g. evenings, weekends, holidays).
- 1.10 The Charter Board's liability coverage for its students, staff and volunteer supervisors extends to approved field trips.
- 1.11 The following guidelines apply to each field trip unless otherwise noted:

- 1.11.1 Prior approval from the Principal must be obtained;
- 1.11.2 A teacher shall be designated as the teacher-leader in charge;
- 1.11.3 Prior written parental permission must be obtained for participating students (refer to procedures 6, 7, and 8 for timelines for requesting consent); and
- 1.11.4 Parents are expected to provide their children with appropriate protection from the elements and for the setting. Examples are the use of sunscreen, wearing of hats, and having the proper attire and appropriate footwear.

## 2. Informed Consent and Parental Permission

- 2.1 In order to ensure informed consent, parents shall be provided with the following information, in writing, prior to the date of each proposed field trip:
  - 2.1.1 purpose or educational goal of the field trip;
  - 2.1.2 proposed itinerary;
  - 2.1.3 description of the activities or events proposed;
  - 2.1.4 safety precautions in place to deal with activities involving risk;
  - 2.1.5 notification regarding the need for any special clothing, protective equipment, lunches or snacks;
  - 2.1.6 emergency procedures to be followed in the event of an injury, illness or unusual circumstances;
  - 2.1.7 method(s) of transportation to be used;
  - 2.1.8 supervisory arrangements;
  - 2.1.9 cost to the student, if any;
  - 2.1.10 the right of the parent to deny his/her child's participation;
  - 2.1.11 the responsibility of the parent to advise the teacher-leader of any special medical and/or dietary considerations;
  - 2.1.12 the responsibility of the parent to advise the teacher-leader of any prescribed or other medication the student will or may need to have administered or self-administered during the field trip; and
  - 2.1.13 whenever applicable, notice that high-risk activities carry inherent risks, and that accidents and/or unanticipated risks could result in physical or emotional injury, paralysis or death.
- 2.2 The nature of each field trip will dictate the detail required on the consent form (e.g. a one (1) day indoor field trip within Calgary city limits requires less detailed explanation than an Outdoor Education program or an International field trip).
- 2.3 The consent form will be distinct from forms designed to request parental assistance with supervision and/or transportation.
- 2.4 Written parental permission must be given on the specific consent form provided.
- 2.5 One "blanket" parental permission will be sufficient for:
  - 2.5.1 school activities involving more than one (1) trip outside the school such as swimming lessons, outdoor education classes or inter-school sports provided the consent form includes a schedule of all activities. Should any of the activities be high risk, separate parental permission must be obtained; and
  - 2.5.2 scheduled and unscheduled walking field trips in the vicinity of the school.

- 2.6 For field trips outside the city of Calgary, parental permission shall include consent from parents authorizing supervisors to arrange for necessary medical treatment.
- 2.7 Supervisors shall not deviate in a material way to the proposed itinerary once parental permission has been received.

### 3. Preparation and Supervision

- 3.1 The Principal shall ensure adequate preparation and supervision. In addition to teachers, the Principal may authorize other persons to provide additional supervision or instruction as warranted by the nature of the specific field trip. Specific requirements include:
- 3.1.1 a teacher-leader must always be in charge;
- 3.1.2 the teacher-leader must ensure that adequate supervision is available at all times and that supervisors are prepared to deal with any emergencies that may arise;
- 3.1.3 teaching and learning assistants normally assigned to an individual special needs student are not considered in supervisory ratios unless agreed to by the Teacher and Principal;
- 3.1.4 other than walking field trips in the vicinity of the school, the minimum supervision ratio shall be one (1) adult for every ten (10) students;
- 3.1.5 specific supervisory arrangements will depend upon:
- the age, maturity and ability levels of the students;
  - the inherent risk of the activity; and
  - the circumstances of the particular activity;
- 3.1.6 competent instruction and supervision of high-risk activities is mandatory. Competence may be demonstrated by a certificate from a governing body for activities such as skiing, swimming and canoeing. In other areas, competency may be recognized by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity;
- 3.1.7 the teacher-leader is responsible for being familiar with and conducting a safety assessment of the site of the proposed field trip;
- 3.1.8 the teacher-leader is responsible to ensure that training, preparation, orientation and expectations are provided to all student participants and supervisors;
- 3.1.9 supervision must include individuals suitably trained in first aid;
- 3.1.10 first aid certification appropriate to the nature of the trip is required and an appropriately equipped first aid kit must be accessible;
- 3.1.11 when necessary, field trips involving students of both genders shall have supervisors of both genders;
- 3.1.12 contingency plans must be in place in the event of cancellation, adverse weather and road conditions or other conditions that may require a change to the original itinerary;
- 3.1.13 in the event written authorization is provided for the pickup of a student at the end of or during a field trip, the teacher-leader is responsible to ensure the student is left under the direct supervision of the parent or another adult authorized by the parent; and
- 3.1.14 the teacher-leader is responsible for carrying:
- list of student participants;

- phone contact numbers;
  - Alberta Health Care numbers;
  - information regarding medical and medication needs of students (including the emergency care plan for students with severe allergies); and
  - cell phone, if available and appropriate.
- 3.2 When necessary, the Principal is expected to seek advice and assistance from experts in planning field trips and in assessing risk:
- 3.2.1 The recommendations contained in Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools shall be met or exceeded; and
- 3.2.2 Consultation with the Charter Board's insurance broker is mandatory for any high-risk activity or unique activity and/or any field trips outside Alberta.
- 3.3 Under appropriate circumstances, special considerations may need to be made for students with identified severe allergies. Factors to consider include but are not limited to:
- 3.3.1 ensuring an adequate number of injectors is available;
- 3.3.2 a vehicle should be available for emergencies at all times; or availability of emergency transport and distance to emergency medical facility;
- 3.3.3 emergency care plan should be reviewed with the parents and supervisors beforehand;
- 3.3.4 assign a buddy who will inform a supervisor if the allergic student is not feeling well;
- 3.3.5 student susceptible to anaphylaxis must have written authorization to eat or drink anything that has not been brought from home;
- 3.3.6 request a list of ingredients if foods are ordered from commercial sources;
- 3.3.7 avoid including student susceptible to anaphylaxis in clean-up activities; and
- 3.3.8 if risk factors are too great to control, the student may be unable to participate in the field trip. The parent(s) should be involved in this decision.
- 3.4 Similarly, special considerations may need to be made for students with other severe medical conditions.

#### 4. Records

- 4.1 The school office shall maintain a calendar of field trips in order that staff and parents may have immediate access to information.
- 4.2 The teacher-leader must notify the school office of any changes to participants, field trip departure, arrival times or locations of activities and secure the approval of the principal, when appropriate.
- 4.3 The school shall keep a record of each field trip including the following:
- 4.3.1 principal authorization;
- 4.3.2 purpose or educational goal of the field trip;
- 4.3.3 safety assessment;
- 4.3.4 parent consent;
- 4.3.5 information provided to parents;

- 4.3.6 list of participating students;
- 4.3.7 list of supervisors; and
- 4.3.8 injury and unusual incident reports.

5. Transportation

- 5.1 Transportation arrangements must be made in accordance with the Charter Board's Student Transportation Off-Campus policy.
- 5.2 Any agency involved in travel arrangements shall be an ACTA member (Alliance of Canadian Travel Association).

6. Same Day, In-Province Field Trips

- 6.1 The Principal shall consent to all same day, in-province field trips prior to making commitments to students and parents. Include all information that will be provided to parents.
- 6.2 Adequate notice must be provided to parents. In most circumstances, two (2) weeks is suggested.
- 6.3 Written parental permission must be received prior to departure.

7. Overnight or Out-of-Province Field Trips and Outdoor Education Programs

- 7.1 The Principal shall ensure that parents are encouraged and given the opportunity for input and planning into the field trip. A high level of parental support for the trip should be demonstrated.
- 7.2 The Superintendent shall consent to all overnight or out-of-province field trips and Outdoor Education programs prior to making commitments to students and parents. Include all information that will be provided to parents.
- 7.3 Adequate notice must be provided to parents. In most circumstances, three (3) months is suggested.
- 7.4 Written parental permission must be received prior to departure.
- 7.5 Participation in this category of field trip is normally limited to students in Grade 5 and above.
- 7.6 Normally, the following specific supervisory requirements should be followed:
  - 7.6.1 The ratio of students to adults shall not exceed 10:1;
  - 7.6.2 The ratio of paid staff to volunteers shall not exceed 1:2; and
  - 7.6.3 Mixed groups shall include supervisors of both genders.
- 7.7 Students must be covered by extended health coverage through their parent(s) place of employment or by Student Accident Insurance.

8. International Travel

- 8.1 The Principal shall ensure that parents are encouraged and given the opportunity for input and planning into the field trip. A high level of parental support for the trip should be demonstrated.
- 8.2 The approval of the Charter Board is required for all international travel prior to making commitments to students, parents and travel agencies. Include all information that has been provided to parents along with confirmation of coverage from the insurer.
- 8.3 Adequate notice must be provided to parents. In most circumstances, a minimum of five (5) months is required.
- 8.4 Written parental permission must be received prior to departure.

- 8.5 Participation in this category of field trip is normally limited to students in Grade 9 and above.
- 8.6 Normally, field trips should be scheduled to coincide with vacation periods.
- 8.7 To ensure the safety of students and supervisors, areas selected for international travel should:
  - 8.7.1 have a history of political stability for at least five (5) years and no indications that political turmoil may erupt within the next twelve(12) months; and
  - 8.7.2 experience risk in other areas (e.g. health, transportation, geographic features) that is not substantially greater than would be experienced by students travelling in Alberta.
- 8.8 Normally, the following specific supervisory requirements should be followed:
  - 8.8.1 The ratio of students to adults shall not exceed 10:1;
  - 8.8.2 The ratio of paid staff to volunteers shall not exceed 1:2; and
  - 8.8.3 Mixed groups shall include supervisors of both genders.
- 8.9 Students must be covered by extended health coverage through their parent(s) place of employment or by Student Accident Insurance.

9. Funding

- 9.1 Field trips may be funded wholly or in part from the school's budget, funds raised in accordance with Charter Board or school policy, program grants or direct contributions made by individual students and/or parents.
- 9.2 The Charter Board does not assume any liability or responsibility for spending of a personal nature made by a student, parent or supervisor in preparation for or during a field trip.
- 9.3 In the event of a cancellation of or alteration to a field trip the following guidelines apply:
  - 9.3.1 The Charter Board will not, as a general rule, reimburse participants for losses incurred;
  - 9.3.2 If the Charter Board is reimbursed for some or all of the costs, it will share equitably with all participants (including itself) in proportion to the losses incurred and amounts paid.
  - 9.3.3 There will be no reimbursement for personal expenses.

10. Private Trips

- 10.1 Private trips are those that are not approved in accordance with this policy.
- 10.2 The Charter Board and the school are not sponsors nor are connected in any way with a private trip and neither assumes any responsibility or liability whatsoever for the trip.
- 10.3 No advertisements or promotions are allowed within the school or on school property.
- 10.4 The organizers of a private trip must obtain approval of the Manager, Facilities in order to rent the school facility for any purpose related to a private trip.
- 10.5 Classroom time and material resources of the school shall not be used to organize or promote a private trip.

11. Volunteers

- 11.1 Refer to AP-555 Volunteers.

12. Prohibited Activities

- 12.1 Active student participation in the following field trip activities are prohibited:
  - 12.1.1 activities using firearms including winter biathlon, American gladiator style events, boxing, paintball, laser tag games or war games;
  - 12.1.2 automobile, motorcycling and bicycle motocross (BMX) (racing, drag racing, demolition derbies, motocross, off-road all-terrain vehicles and go-carting);
  - 12.1.3 extreme sports (bungee jumping, mountain scrambling and technical mountaineering, ice climbing and caving/spelunking);
  - 12.1.4 hand gliding, paragliding, parachuting ski-diving, hot air balloon rides (tethered and untethered);
  - 12.1.5 open water scuba diving;
  - 12.1.6 aerial gymnastics;
  - 12.1.7 activities involving dunk tanks;
  - 12.1.8 rodeos, mechanical bull riding or other mechanical rodeo events, horse jumping;
  - 12.1.9 operation and racing of motorized watercraft;
  - 12.1.10 tobogganing, tubing, crazy carpeting, bobsledding and sledding; and trampolining.
- 12.2 Other activities such as off-site activities in remote or wilderness areas, water activities, swimming, and skiing, are permitted, as long as they meet the conditions and requirements regarding the safety and security of the students, staff and volunteers, including appropriate planning to manage the risks.
- 12.3 All field trip activities are subject to approval by the Principal or Superintendent.

**Cross Reference:** Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools  
 AP-170 Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy  
 AP-136 Occupational Health and Safety  
 AP-546 Risk Management  
 AP-316 Administration of Medication or Medical Treatment  
 AP-319 Severe Allergies  
 AP-555 Volunteers  
 Safety Oriented Guidelines for Outdoor Education Leadership and Programming  
 (The Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation)

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