



Field Trip Policy Saplings Nature School August 2022

Rationale

For the purposes of this policy, an educational field trip is a direct extension of the curriculum involving a teacher and students outside of the school setting. Such trips should stimulate student interest and inquiry and should provide opportunities for intellectual, cultural, and social development.

Policy

The Board expects field trips to be organized in a manner that avoids unnecessary risk, mitigates risk, and addresses the safety and well being of the students.

At all times, staff, students, and volunteer supervisors are expected to act as ambassadors of the school.

The Board considers risk assessment to be a major consideration in approving field trips. It is the role of the teacher and the Head of School to ensure that activities are programmed appropriately.

Further, the school has a significant duty to communicate clearly and specifically to parents the activities associated with the trip and the level of risk that can normally be expected in each activity. It then rests with the parents to decide whether their child will participate.

Procedures

The Head of School is charged with ensuring that all school field trips are appropriately planned, authorized, organized, and supervised.

All field trips are governed by this policy and may be approved only after giving due consideration to factors and procedures identified in this policy.

The following field trip documentation related to approval, planning, communication, and written informed consent are to be retained on file at the school as a record of the trip, and kept on file until the end of the following school year.

- Field trip risk assessments and approval
- Detailed itinerary for the field trip
- Informed consent documents signed by parents or legal guardians
- Student roster and home/emergency contact telephone numbers
- List of supervisors accompanying the teacher
- Emergency communication protocol and list of appropriate phone numbers

In addition to collecting and retaining the information listed above, the school shall also develop, contextually appropriate to each trip, a communication protocol for school/parent/guardian communications in the case that an emergency develops on the trip or at the school/home while the participants are away. The lead teacher is expected to deal with emergencies on a school trip in the same way they would as if they were at the school. The lead teacher,

or a supervisor as directed, is to contact emergency services as required and is to inform the Program Director, Head of School, and school administrator as soon as possible of the emergency and the support required. The Head of School or school administrator will contact parents if required (i.e. a student is injured). The lead teacher will assign staff to stay with any injured parties and accompany them to hospital if necessary.

All relevant emergency contact information shall be organized in such a way as to be able to access and share it in accordance with school policies.

Relevant information should be kept in a way that it is also available to be shared (preferably proactively) with the Ministry of Education/Inspector of Independent Schools in the event that a school trip emergency develops.

General Guidelines for Organizing Field Trips

The following guidelines should be observed when planning field trips:

- The safety, security, supervision, and well being of students must be the prime consideration when planning a trip
- Head of School must ensure that suitably qualified employees and approved volunteers are selected for supervisory responsibilities
- Arrangements must be made for students not participating in the trip and for the instruction of classes normally taught by educators who will accompany students on the trip
- The educator and school office must have a student roster list including home and emergency contact information for all participants
- At least one supervising adult will have a cellular phone or another radio communication device available for emergency use
- The educator must carry or have access to a first aid kit during the field trip
- The school or its staff is not responsible for any losses which may arise from cancellation or alteration of a supplementary or optional field trip itinerary
- Fund-raising activities for a supplementary or optional field trip must be presented to the Head of School and approved by the Board
- Supplementary or optional field trips will operate at no additional cost to the school
- The cost of educator(s)-on-call shall be included in the cost of a supplementary or optional field trip
- Related expenses of the supervisor(s) may be included in the total cost of a supplementary or optional field trip
- Revenues and expenditures for the field trip are to be accounted for in a budget statement.

Informed Consent

The written informed consent of parents/guardians is required for participation of students in all field trips. A full description of the field trip must be provided to parents/guardians in writing and must address:

- How the field trip supplements the educational program
- Notice that the field trip is optional, and that arrangements will be made for students who are not participating
- Description of supervisors: educators, staff members, and other adult volunteers, along with contact information
- Transportation arrangements
- Itinerary consisting of date(s), departure and return times and schedule of planned activities
- Description of planned activities and levels of direct and indirect supervision
- Description of inherent risks and potential consequences
- Assessment of student skills and abilities as pertaining to the field trip activity (if applicable)
- Behavioural expectations of students plus rules and regulations

- Emergency Planning/Cancellation of Trip information, including cancellation provisions, collection/disclosure of student medical and personal information, first-aid arrangements, and the Emergency Communication and Return Plan
- Description of budget consisting of revenue (cost to student) and expenditures (cost of trip) (optional trips only)
- Parent/guardian responsibility to determine whether the student may participate in the field trip
- Student Awareness of Risk and Responsibility Form completed by student (if applicable).

A written informed consent form for the field trip must be obtained with a parent/guardian signature.

A written informed consent form must state that the parent/guardian has been alerted to the increased risk and consequences of injury inherent in the activity and accepts responsibility for the consequences of that risk should they freely choose to have the student participate.

A Pre-Trip parent/student scheduled information meeting is mandatory for all high-risk day activities. An administrator must be present at the meeting to discuss expected behaviour.

Prior to the field trip, students will be alerted to the expectations, risks, safety precautions, and responsibilities associated with the proposed field trip. Students will agree to act in a safe and responsible manner according to the school's Student Code of Conduct.

The Head of School may design a permission form to obtain written informed consent of the parent/guardian for the season or school term for repetitive or scheduled activities such as interscholastic games, walking field trips, or activities associated with a specific course.

In exceptional circumstances, the Head of School may accept informed parental/guardian consent given orally for participation in a field trip involving low-risk activities.

Supervision of Students

Vigilant supervision of students is mandatory during all school field trips.

Volunteer supervisors must be screened by the Head of School or designate for suitability in providing supervision, and advised of the expectations for their role.

Student conduct is governed by the school's Student Code of Conduct.

The Head of School must be satisfied that the teacher and other supervisors will provide adequate supervision and competent instruction, and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities in order to mitigate potential risks and address the safety of students and supervisors.

Supervision Ratios

The minimum acceptable standard of supervision for all student field studies, unless specifically required and adjusted by the Head of School, is:

Grades K - 3 1 supervisor / 10 students

Grades 4 - 7 1 supervisor / 12 students

Additional supervision is required when:

- (a) the field study is an overnight activity. There must be at least two (2) supervisors, no matter the size or age of the group.
- (b) students are using water craft. The supervision must have a ratio of minimum 1/6 for elementary students
- (c) there is an increased risk;

- (d) there is participation of students with special needs;
- (e) there are crowded venues.

Other Safety and Health Concerns

The Head of School must be aware of students with medical and/or legal alerts who are participating in the field trip.

The teacher(s) supervising the trip must ensure that students with medical conditions which require medications will continue to have access to those medications throughout the field trip should they be required. Teachers must bring along required medicines in order to support the student in the same way as if they were at school. Additionally, a copy of the school's health plan, for any student who has one, shall be brought along on the trip.

The teacher is to ensure students with legal alerts are kept safe in the same way as if they were at the school.

In cases where buses are used for field trips, a bus evacuation drill shall be undertaken at the start of the bus portion of the travel. That is, before the bus transports staff or students, an evacuation drill shall be carried out.

Activities with Increased Risk

For increased risk activities, competent instruction and vigilant supervision is mandatory. Competence may be established by virtue of a certificate from a governing body, such as a Canoeing Instructor's Certificate from Canoe Sport B.C. In areas where certificates are not issued, competency may be recognized by the leader's peers by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity. The Head of School must be satisfied that the teacher will provide adequate supervision, competent instruction, and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities.

For Transportation To and From Field Trips

Most field trips will use public transit or be within walking distance of the school. Parents may be given the option to drop off or pick up their student at the field trip location. In cases where cars are used to transport students, only students older than 12 will be allowed to sit in the front seat. If the child weighs more than 18 kg (40 lbs), they should use a booster seat. After they reach nine years old or 145 cm (4'9") tall, they can transition to using a seat belt. The following documentation must be on file in the school:

- Drivers \$2,000,000.00 Insurance Liability
- Criminal Record Check
- Valid Driver's Licence
- Driver Abstract

Driver Abstracts must be reviewed by the Head of School, those drivers with unsafe driving records will not be permitted to act as Volunteer Drivers.

Communication Management on Field Trips

If an emergency occurs on a field trip, follow the following procedures:

- Determine the nature of the emergency and the number of students, staff and volunteers affected.
- Apply first aid procedures, while delegating a 911 call by a responsible person (preferably another staff member).
- Advise Head of School and/or Program Director of the incident, who will then contact parents if necessary.
- Document all events noting time, date, location, severity of injuries, names of injured persons, witnesses, emergency personnel. Provide a complete written report to the Head of School as soon as possible.

- The Head of School or Program Director will create a reunification plan when necessary and communicate this plan to staff on the field trip.
- The Head of School or Program Director are the designated persons who are the only ones responsible for communications with the media.

Student Safety Communication Protocols

In the event of a student safety incident (a serious act of violence or threat-making behaviours that impact students or a school community), please refer to the Student Safety Communications Protocol flowchart, which can be found on the [Erase website](#) in the secure login area (“Tools for Schools”). See below for a summary of the information provided in the Protocol:

If an independent school requires immediate critical incident response support, trauma-recovery support for staff, social media monitoring/digital threat assessment support, VTRA assistance, assistance with media and parent communications, connect with Safer Schools Together directly by email or by phone: **604-560-2285 / 1-855-677-3720**

It is essential to notify the Ministry about incidents if there is media involvement (or strong potential of media involvement), high profile investigations or emerging issues/trends of concern, using this email or phone number **(778-974-6388)**

Please also use these contact details when requesting information (i.e. Erase training questions, templates and resources).