

POLICY

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 53
(Okanagan Similkameen)

FIELD TRIPS

Reference: E-4
Revised: November 24, 2010

FIELD TRIPS

The Board recognizes the educational value of many activities that take place outside the classroom and encourages student participation in such activities.

All such activities must be well planned and supervised, have demonstrable educational value, proper advance preparation, informed parental consent, adequate supervision and a high standard of care.

While there is a risk factor involved in all activities, the Board will not approve field trips that have a high level of risk. A list of prohibited field trips may be found in Appendix A – page 1.

The Board recognizes that safety for all students and staff is a primary requirement.

The type of trip, the location of the trip and the level of activity must be matched to the qualifications and abilities of the lead teacher, supervisors, and/or instructors.

The Youth Safe Outdoors Manual is approved for use as a resource for schools to help ensure safe off-site activities for students. Consultation is to take place as is appropriate with the Superintendent (designate).

Field trips generally will fall under the following categories:

1. Extra Curricular Activity Field Trips

These comprise all voluntary activities that take place after school hours or on weekends under the sponsorship and/or instruction of a teacher, including athletic activities and fine arts presentations. Such activities may involve travel away from the school for purposes of competition.

2. General Field Trips

These comprise activities that take place as extensions of the classroom learning situation and involve trips away from the school for as little as one period or as long as several days.

3. Moderate Risk Field Trips

These comprise field trips where the risk tolerance is deemed greater than low when using the Qualification Check List (Appendix C).

4. Out-Of-Province/Country Educational Travel Field Trips

These comprise travel to other provinces within Canada or to foreign countries for the purpose of broadening students' understanding of other cultures and of helping them to see their relationship in the world as a Canadian.

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5. Commercial or Interest-Based Excursions

The Board will not assume any responsibility for commercial or interest-based field trips or excursions that have not been approved or endorsed by the Board and that are either provided by companies specializing in student travel, or for trips that provide an excursion for students based on a common interest.

Employees may, as individuals, participate in student package tours or interest-based excursions provided it is made clear to parents and students that the employee is taking part on a personal basis and that neither school nor the Board is involved.

The principal shall ensure that any advertising of or recruiting for these trips, which may occur within the school, must clearly indicate there is no Board approval or endorsement of the excursion.

Exemptions

Career Preparation, Career Education, Career Apprenticeship Programs and Career Co-op Programs trips where individual students travel to attend a place of work are not normally considered field trips.

Approval

1. Principals may approve the following:
 - single day trips (within B.C.)
 - B.C. trips involving school athletic teams involved in league play, playoffs, provincials and exhibition tournaments including those involving overnight stays.
2. The Superintendent (designate) may approve all other B.C. trips up to three days duration as well as single day trips to the USA.
3. The Board may approve B.C. trips exceeding three days and all trips out-of-province/country. (except as noted in 2. Above)
4. For student trips involving travel out-of-province/country, approval in principle from the Board of Trustees must be obtained at least four months in advance and prior to holding meetings with parents. This request is to be submitted in writing with important details as requested in consultation with the Superintendent (designate).
5. All field trip proposals requiring Superintendent or Board approval must include the "Application for Field Trips" (Appendix B), the "Field Trips Qualifications Checklist" (Appendix C), and all required documentation. Application for student trips, other than out-of-province/country, requiring Board approval must be submitted three months in advance.

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1. In all cases, the financial liability of the Board shall be limited to budget allocation.
2. General parental consent may be obtained in writing at the beginning of the year, to cover whenever their son/daughter leaves the school grounds for an activity such as library visits, runs to the park, community visits, etc. Whenever possible, dates and times should be included for these types of day trips.
3. Informed parental consent, in writing, must be obtained for all trips beyond regular school hours, for all trips involving transportation, and for all overnight activities.
4. All field trips must be planned with reasonable foreknowledge of the area to which the group will be going.
5. Principals will submit to the Superintendent by September 30th and by February 15th a list of all anticipated outdoor education trips for each term/semester.
6. The Board must be adequately indemnified against all liability concerned with the trips undertaken under #3, Out-of-Province Educational Travel, (e.g. - medical coverage, loss of money, failure to travel due to sickness, etc. (U.S. medical coverage is essential).
7. The Board may request a report from the lead teacher following a field trip.
8. All students travelling to foreign countries, including the USA, on day or overnight trips, must have individual medical coverage.
9. All students travelling to foreign countries, including the U.S.A., must have a valid passport and a signed letter from the parent(s)/guardian(s) giving their son/daughter permission to travel with the school group.
10. It is required that the lead teacher check with the borders or customs to determine what specific travel documents may be required.
11. All students travelling to foreign countries may also be required to have an individual visa, and/or other specific documents as required by each country. Group visas are not acceptable.
12. Foreign students must have passports/visas for all out-of-Canada trips.
13. Student travel to countries that are or subsequently become identified through travel safety warnings by the Government of Canada shall not occur during the period of such warning unless the Board of Education specifically approves such travel during this period.
14. Funds deposited for travel may be at risk if travel plans require cancellation or postponement. The financial failure of a travel agency may also result in loss of funds. Travel arrangements shall be made with travel agents that allow trip postponement/cancellation in the event of a travel safety threat. When travel agents are used for any travel, they must be covered by the travel Assurance Fund recognized by a provincial or federal government agency.

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15. Students shall conform to the school code of conduct while on school activities.
16. Students will not normally be excluded from a field trip because of an inability to pay. The Board hardship policy would apply.
17. Signed consent forms and accident reports for any students that are injured on a Field trip must be kept for 2 years after the completion of a trip or until a student reaches 19 years of age.
18. Staff, volunteers, and chaperones are not allowed to bring their own children on any field trip unless the child is from the school and grade participating in the trip. An exception may be made for school athletic teams participating in league play, playoffs, and exhibition tournaments including those involving overnight stays. With the approval of the principal, a coach may be accompanied by his/her child if an additional chaperone is provided for the trip.

CHAPERONE REQUIREMENTS FOR TRIPS INVOLVING AN OVERNIGHT STAY

These requirements for chaperones will apply for all overnight trips:

1. Chaperones must be adults approved by the principal who must have a valid criminal record check completed. See Appendix E for sample letter to potential chaperones.
2. There will be a minimum of two chaperones, including the lead teacher or adult.
3. At least one female chaperone will be required if any female student is a participant; likewise, at least one male chaperone will be required if any male student is a participant.

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School Provisions - Field Trips General

1. The principal of a school shall review the merits of each field trip prior to approving it. Additionally, he/she shall ensure that staff in charge are aware of district and school policies and monitor their adherence. The principal and/or lead teacher shall provide assurance that the criteria established by the Board within these regulations have been met by completing the "Application for Field Trips" and/or providing the school office with the required documentation.
2. The principal of each school shall formulate written procedures for field trips, after consulting with the teachers, as permitted under district policy to include:
 - 2.1 fundraising.
 - 2.2 planning, including educational activities prior, during and after field trips.
 - 2.3 an informed parental consent. (Appendix D)
 - 2.4 the Field Trips Qualifications Checklist completed in advance of the trip. (Appendix C)
 - 2.5 risk management and emergency response plans.
 - 2.6 preparation and maintenance of appropriate first-aid supplies.
 - 2.7 selection and preparation of chaperones as per this policy.
 - 2.8 preparation of checklist/records including telephone numbers/medical numbers of all students and adults travelling on field trips with copies for the school and the sponsoring teacher for each field trip.
 - 2.9 preparation of the district and school emergency checklist with copies for the school office and the sponsoring teacher for each field trip.
 - 2.10 dealing with inappropriate student conduct.
 - 2.11 treating/evaluating ill or injured students.
 - 2.12 ensuring that a lead teacher is assigned to students for each field trip.
 - 2.13 ensuring suitable accommodation
 - 2.14 ensuring suitable transportation
 - 2.15 assignment of teachers on call.
 - 2.16 the goals and objectives/PLOs of the trip must be available as part of the planning process.
3. The lead teacher for out-of-province/country trips, overnight trips, and for trips where additional precautions are necessary, shall meet with parents/guardians well in advance of the proposed trip. Where parents/guardians do not avail themselves of this opportunity, the student shall not be permitted to attend the field trip until this requirement has been met. Regular ski trips of one day duration to local mountains or P.E. activities are excluded.

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4. Field trips must be attended by at least one teacher for every thirty (30) students except in cases as outlined in #5. Additionally, chaperones shall be included to ensure a student-adult ratio of ten to one (10-1) except for specific activities which are required for a course, such as visiting local sites and business establishments, P.E. activities, etc., or for extra-curricular team activities where groups may be slightly larger than ten (10), in which case only a teacher is required.
5. The principal may approve a non-teaching staff member as the lead for a daytime low-risk field trip of 15 students or less. In these cases, there must be a second chaperone when more than 4 students participate and a third chaperone when more than 10 students participate. The principal shall provide assurance that the criteria established by the Board within these regulations have been met by completing the "Application for Field Trips" and/or providing the school office the required documents. The principal shall also ensure that the parents have signed informed permission slips, which advises the parents of who the field trip leader will be.
6. Teachers and students shall make provisions for missed course work because of participation in curricular or extra-curricular trips. Additionally, students must take responsibility for completing work/assignments missed as the result of a field trip.
7. Except for local specific activities which are required for a course, such as excursions to business establishments and local sites, P.E. activities etc., lead teachers must carry a copy of:
 - 7.1 the district field trip policy and regulations,
 - 7.2 the school policy/school checklist and,
 - 7.3 a copy of the district emergency procedures.
8. All transportation arrangements must be approved in advance by an administrator or designate as required by the policy and regulations on "Transportation of Students".
9. In the event of a student's serious violation of the school code, the administration of the school or the district shall be contacted before the lead teacher takes action relating to the student. A student shall not be asked to return home on his or her own unless specific arrangements are made by the administrator, nor shall the action taken by a teacher deprive a student of appropriate supervision.

Additional Safety Provisions - Field Trips (General Checklist – see Appendix F)

1. A first aid safety kit must accompany all school field trips except for trips within the immediate vicinity of the school.
2. Whenever possible, an adult trained in first-aid shall accompany students on field trips.
3. Suitable safety helmets must be worn by all participants involved in bicycle, skateboarding and rollerblading activities.
4. Safety vests and/or red or yellow pinnies must be worn by all participants involved in bicycle excursions.

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5. Students involved in school skating activities must wear approved safety helmets.
6. Participants involved in school skiing activities, downhill/snowboarding/tobogganing/tubing etc must wear approved safety helmets.
7. Appropriate attire must be ensured by the lead teacher for all students suitable for the field trip prior to leaving.
8. Specialty skills, such as canoeing, for which certifying agencies exist, may only be instructed by certified instructors (teachers or other certified adults under the supervision of the lead teacher) up to the level and under the conditions provided for in the certification.
9. Specialty skills for which no certifying agency exists may only be instructed by trained and experienced instructors (teachers or other trained and experienced adults under the supervision of the lead teacher) as determined by the principal.

Moderate Risk Field Trips

The Principal of each school will follow these written procedures for field trips where the tolerance of risk is deemed greater than low (in addition to the School Provisions – Field Trips). These may include, but are not limited to, the following activities: snowboarding, some skiing trips, rock climbing, swimming, camping, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, winter activities, and some outdoor education activities:

1. A meeting with parents must take place prior to the trip. Students are not permitted to attend any of these activities unless their parent/legal guardian has attended a meeting in person.
2. Prior to the trip a Parent Consent for Field Trips form (Appendix D) must be signed by the parent and received by the teacher in charge.
3. The Field Trip Qualifications Checklist must be completed and signed by the lead teacher in consultation with the Principal well in advance of the trip. (Appendix C)
4. Trained/certified instructors must be in place. The number and certification/training level will be determined by the risk level of the activity.
5. A detailed emergency response plan must be in place.
6. Specialty skills, such as rock climbing, swimming, canoeing, kayaking, for which certifying agencies exist, may only be instructed by certified instructors (teachers or other certified adults under the supervision of the lead teacher) up to the level and under the conditions provided for this certification.
7. Lead teacher/instructor must have prior knowledge and understanding of the area being used for the activities.

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8. Students must have pre-educational training and safety instruction prior to the field trip, both at the school and at the activity areas.

High Risk Field Trips

The board will not permit high risk activities such as: parachuting, hang gliding, water skiing, solos, ski jumping/aerials, rafting, high level white water activities, etc. (Appendix A)

Ski Trip/Winter Activity Provisions (General checklist see Appendix G)

1. Two adults, one of whom must be a teacher, must be responsible for each bus, except where a minibus is used in which case the teacher driver shall be responsible. Where the driver of a minibus is not a teacher, a teacher must ride with students in the minibus. Students must only embark or disembark at school or on the ski hill except where the principal has made specific other arrangements. Where the principal has made arrangements to permit enroute embarking and disembarking, appropriate contact shall be made with school authorities to ensure suitable attendance records are maintained by all parties.
2. Attendance must be taken on the bus before the bus leaves the school. A copy of the attendance must be available in the school office and carried on the trip by the lead teacher.
3. Once the buses arrive at the mountain, students must remain on the buses until ski personnel are ready for them. Supervising teachers must not dismiss the students until mountain personnel complete their instructions and group presentation. The teachers in charge of the ski activity shall be responsible for coordinating with mountain personnel.
4. Supervisors/chaperones shall provide designated "on hill" supervision.
 - Move around different slopes at set times designated by lead teacher.
 - Each supervisor/chaperone shall have responsibility for a specific group of students, and shall take attendance at noon time or designated times during the day.
 - Supervisors/chaperones will actively monitor and enforce areas of use on the hill, i.e. out of bounds areas, and ensure that runs are appropriate for the level of the skier.
5. At the end of the day, students shall return to the same bus on which they arrived. Attendance must be taken before the buses leave the ski area. No student shall return to the school on a different vehicle, private or otherwise, except for emergencies, in which case the supervising teacher shall determine the new travelling arrangement. Additionally, where a parent/guardian has provided written authorization for different travel arrangements, a lead teacher may permit alternate arrangements if he/she determines the request to be appropriate. All records must reflect this arrangement.
6. The lead teacher must check with the mountain personnel for messages or complaints before allowing the buses to leave.

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7. Once all students are present, the lead teacher shall give approval for the buses to return to the school.
8. Students must receive educational training and safety instruction prior to any ski trip/winter activity. Students must be assessed for their ability at the mountain, and they must participate in a lesson consistent with their ability level. (See Moderate Risk Field Trips.)