

FIELD TRIPS

Background

The Division recognizes that participation by students in special events such as outdoor activities, athletic competitions, music and drama festivals and student exchanges can significantly complement the educational program. The Division is committed to ensuring that a safe environment is provided to students, volunteers and staff while participating in field trips.

Guidelines

Field trips are expected to arise out of the curriculum and Program of Studies, out of scholastic or extra-curricular inter-school athletic programs, and programs that support school goals.

Any field trips or excursions that are not directly supported by the Division are the total responsibility of the tour agencies, planners and transportation agencies involved.

High risk activities are those activities described in the ["Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Alberta Schools"](#).

Definitions

"Field trip" means an approved school activity that occurs outside of school property either during regular school hours or outside of regular school hours. This definition includes classes, programs, athletic events and extracurricular activities but excludes work-study and work experience programs.

"Lead teacher" means the teacher or staff member responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of the field trip.

"Volunteer" means a parent or adult community member who provides support in the classroom or on a field trip but does not have direct authority over students. Volunteers must never be left alone with students.

"Chaperone" means a parent or other adult community member who accompanies staff members on a field trip for the purposes of providing assistance in the supervision of students. Chaperones may also assist in driving students to and from activities, in accordance with Administrative Procedure 352.

"Safety Guidelines" means the most current Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools. Division safety practices, policies and regulations supersede the Standards set out in the Safety Guidelines.

"Supervisor" means teacher, staff member or other trained personnel for the activity.

Procedures

A. Planning and Authorization

1. Division safety practices, policies and regulations supersede the standards set out in the Safety Guidelines.
2. No field trip shall be undertaken without prior authorization in writing from the:
 - 2.1 Principal for within city or town limits.
 - 2.2 Principal for within province field trips with a copy of the Principal's authorization to be forwarded to the Superintendent.
 - 2.3 Principal and Superintendent for out of the province and out of the country field trips, which must be obtained before any further planning and fundraising begins, and before any deposits are paid.
3. In all cases, the lead teacher must obtain permission from the Principal to pursue planning of any field trip. Upon receiving verbal permission, and for all field trips, the lead teacher will complete and submit "Part A" and "Part B" of the Division Field Trip Forms to the Principal. A risk assessment may also be required to be completed and submitted to the Principal for any and all activities related to the field trip that fall within the Amber Activities list included in Appendix A. The timelines for completing this application process are as follows:
 - 3.1 Within province field trip applications must be made by the lead teacher to the Principal at least one month prior to departure.
 - 3.2 For out of province trips requiring travel time of not more than eight hours by vehicle for athletic pursuits and performing arts that are low-risk and require planning similar to within province trips (i.e., basketball tournament, speech and debate club activity) applications must be made by the lead teacher to the Principal, and the Principal to the Superintendent, at least one month prior to departure.
 - 3.3 Out of province applications must be made by the lead teacher to the Principal and the Principal to the Superintendent at least 90 days prior to departure.
 - 3.4 Out of country field trip applications must be made by the lead teacher to the Principal and the Principal to the Superintendent at least 180 days prior to departure. In addition, out of country field trips may require a parent meeting with the Superintendent.
 - 3.4 Any trip that involves overnight accommodation will require a parent information meeting to review expectations of the trip, at least 30 days prior to the event. In the case of an out of country field trip, a parent information meeting with the Superintendent may also be required.
 - 3.5 For all field trips, except those that are within city or town limits, the Office of the Superintendent must be notified if cancelled.

B. Responsibilities of the Lead Teacher

1. Planning and organizing the field trip.

2. Ensuring that all safety considerations have been addressed for all students, ([Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools, p. 15](#)) including the following:
 - 2.1 Whether the activity is suitable to the age, cognitive ability and developmental maturity, skill level, previous experience of the students and teacher, weather conditions, facilities, and available equipment;
 - 2.2 Whether the participants have or will receive proper training in order to perform the activity safely;
 - 2.3 Supervision requirements;
 - 2.4 Consideration for students with exceptional needs.
3. Reviewing the Parental Permission Checklist and preparing the appropriate parental permission letter, based upon the Principal's signed approval of the checklist.
4. Ensuring that the activity of the field trip stays completely within the scope of the activities for which parents provided consent.
5. Ensuring that the return portion of the parental permission letter has been fully completed, signed, dated by the parent and including the parent's disclosure of any requirements for students with diverse learning needs or limitations that might affect the student's participation in the field trip or any planned activity.
6. Ensuring that the return portion of the parental permission letter stipulates the dates and name of the trip to which the parent consented.
7. Identifying and providing methods of addressing safety concerns.
8. Reviewing the Safety Guidelines, the scope of this procedure and the distribution of this information to all attending teachers.
9. Supervising arrangements and providing a list of participating teachers and volunteers/chaperones to the Principal prior to field trip departure.
10. Ensuring that volunteers/chaperones:
 - 10.1 Have qualifications appropriate to the off-site activity;
 - 10.2 Complete the appropriate trip form if applicable (Part C.1);
 - 10.3 Are provided with the details of the field trip and any planned activities, as well as their specific duties, responsibilities, and authority prior to departure; and
 - 10.4 Have provided the necessary documentation with respect to driver abstracts, liability insurance, and criminal records checks with vulnerable sector searches as outlined under section E, Responsibilities of Volunteers/Chaperones.

11. Completing and signing the Division Field Trip Form Part A and Part B plus the Risk Assessment form if applicable.
12. Submitting the Division Field Trip Form Part A and Part B plus the Risk Assessment form to the Principal in a completed manner and within the time frame specified in section A above.
13. Ensuring that all requisite field trip documentation is provided to the Principal.
14. Obtaining and maintaining a Field Trip Resource Kit.
15. Taking attendance counts at all points of departure on the field trip.
16. The lead teacher shall ensure that the return portion of the Parent Permission Letter has been fully completed, signed, dated and
 - 16.1 Original filed at the school, and
 - 16.2 Copy in Field Trip Resource Kit.
17. Advising the Principal of any problems, unusual incidents, “close calls” or unsafe situations as soon as is reasonably possible, and in any event, no later than one week after the field trip end date. (Refer to Administrative Procedure 312 – Accident and Incident Reporting.)

C. Responsibilities of the School Principal

1. The Principal is responsible for:
 - 1.1 Reviewing the completed Division Field Trip Forms and supporting information.
 - 1.2 Determining whether or not the field trip meets the definition of a field trip.
 - 1.3 Determining whether safety requirements and appropriate supervision levels have been met.
 - 1.4 Giving final approval with respect to volunteers/chaperones.
 - 1.5 Consulting with the Superintendent if there are either students or parent expectations related to the activity that must be addressed to sustain safety of students and expertise of instruction or supervision as specified through the criteria listed in section A of this procedure.
 - 1.6 Determining whether or not the activities of the trip are suitable to the age, mental and physical condition of the participants.
 - 1.7 Determining if field trip authorization is granted or not, based on at least the criteria contained in section F below, and notify the lead teacher accordingly.
 - 1.8 Ensuring that all risk assessments associated with the field trip have been approved by the Office of the Secretary-Treasurer prior to the date of the field trip.
 - 1.9 Making the final decision for within city and within province field trips.

D. Responsibilities of the Superintendent

1. Reviewing the Division Field Trip Forms, Part A, Part B and Part C, for out of the province and out of the country field trips.
2. Providing assistance and advice to the lead teacher and Principal regarding the safety or curriculum aspects of any proposed field trip.
3. Reviewing the continuing safety of participants on out of the province and out of the country field trips.
4. Approving out of the province and out of the country field trips.
5. Advising the Principal in writing of the rationale for non-approval of trips.
6. Retaining a record of trip details and approval forms on file.

E. Responsibilities of Volunteers / Chaperones

1. Volunteers/chaperones must:
 - 1.1 Support and follow the school code of conduct;
 - 1.2 Report any inappropriate conduct to the teacher in charge or division employee;
 - 1.3 Adhere to the schedule or itinerary;
 - 1.4 Dress appropriately according to the type of off-site activity
 - 1.5 For chaperones only, fulfill their duties for the duration of the off-site activity, including evenings and weekends.
 - 1.6 Chaperones only, must on an annual basis, provide a copy of a Police Information Check with vulnerable sector search and an Intervention Record Check.
 - 1.7 If the volunteer/chaperone will be transporting students by private vehicle, then on an annual basis the chaperone must provide a copy of a current 5-year driver's abstract as well as proof of liability insurance of at least \$2 million. A drivers' abstract with more than 7 demerit points will preclude a volunteer/chaperone from transporting students.
 - 1.8 If the chaperone is driving a division owned multi-activity bus, the chaperone must also be an approved driver as per Division regulations.

F. Criteria for Authorization

1. In evaluating, reviewing and determining whether or not authorization should be given for a particular field trip, the following criteria are to be considered:
 - 1.1 Curriculum appropriateness.
 - 1.2 Safety concerns.
 - 1.3 Precautions in place to deal with safety concerns.
 - 1.4 Age and grade appropriateness.
 - 1.5 Assessment of students' ability to perform expected tasks.

- 1.6 Venues.
- 1.7 Supervision levels.
- 1.8 Cost, budgeting and fundraising.
- 1.9 Supervisor selection and training.
- 1.10 Level of knowledge of lead teacher and supervisors regarding field trip activities, policies and safety guidelines.
- 1.11 Familiarity of lead teacher and supervisors with the venue, if applicable (for example, wilderness terrain).
- 1.12 Sufficiency of information to be provided to parents regarding field trip details.
- 1.13 Whether parent meetings are necessary; and if deemed necessary, ensure that these have or are scheduled to take place.
- 1.14 Additional required insurance coverage, if applicable.
- 1.15 Field trip itinerary and activities.
- 1.16 Transportation.
- 1.17 Accommodation.
- 1.18 Special clothing and equipment requirements and their availability.
- 1.19 Special medical requirements (for example, vaccinations).
- 1.20 Whether special expertise (for example, local guides) is required.
- 1.21 Security.
- 1.22 Emergency and communications arrangements.
- 1.23 Evacuation procedures, if applicable.
- 1.24 Whether special certification is required (for example, lifeguards, First Aid certification).
- 1.25 Any other relevant information as deemed appropriate.

G. Parent Permission

1. The lead teacher shall prepare a Parent Permission Letter based on the Parental Permission Checklist which takes into account (but is not limited to), such items as the following, as may be applicable, given the nature and complexity of the field trip:
 - 1.1 Date of letter.
 - 1.2 Clearly stated purpose/educational goals of the field trip.
 - 1.3 The destination and, where necessary, a map of the area.
 - 1.4 Proposed itinerary of the field trip including dates and times of departure and arrival.
 - 1.5 A general description of the nature and number of EACH planned activity or event.
 - 1.6 Arrangements for supervision of students.

- 1.7 Type of transportation to and from the site, as well as on site.
 - 1.8 Safety precautions.
 - 1.9 Special or unusual risks associated with the activity(ies).
 - 1.10 The need for special equipment or clothing to be provided by the parent/guardian.
 - 1.11 Parent/guardian contact number during the field trip.
 - 1.12 Name and contact telephone number of the lead teacher.
 - 1.13 Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances.
 - 1.14 Detailed cost of the field trip.
 - 1.15 Parent/guardian statement on student's medical condition including medication requirements.
 - 1.16 Parent/guardian authorization to have supervisors seek necessary medical treatments for students.
 - 1.17 Parent/guardian authorization for alternative transportation arrangements.
 - 1.18 Any other relevant information that could affect the decision to withhold field trip permission.
 - 1.19 Teacher(s) signature(s).
 - 1.20 Parent response.
2. The return portion of the Parent Permission Letter shall include the following:
 - 2.1 Parent authorization for the student to attend the field trip including the name of the field trip, date and type of transportation.
 - 2.2 Parent authorization for supervisors to seek necessary medical treatment.
 - 2.3 Parent disclosure of any medical conditions, including medication requirements, or limitations or other requirements for students with diverse learning needs.
 - 2.4 Emergency contact name and phone number of a parent(s).
 - 2.5 Parent authorization for alternative transportation arrangements, if required.
3. In exceptional circumstances, the lead teacher can accept verbal permission for a student to attend an in city/town field trip, provided that the parent has been properly informed of all matters contained in the Parent Permission Letter.
 - 3.1 In such circumstances a blank Parent Permission Letter shall be fully completed by school personnel and the date and particulars of such verbal permission shall be recorded thereon.
 - 3.2 The completed Parent Permission Letter shall be retained with other such letters.

4. One Parent Permission Letter may be provided to and signed by the parent and will be sufficient for like or repetitive field trips (such as athletic events, including sports team games and tournaments, swimming lessons, physical education classes and church attendances) provided that the Parent Permission Letter includes a schedule of all activities, destinations, and dates. In such circumstances, only one Division Field Trip Form need be submitted by the lead teacher.
5. One Parent Permission Letter may be provided to and signed by the parent and will be sufficient for like or repetitive field trips in town/city where parents are given general information regarding the activity and further information will be given in newsletters.
6. The Board reserves the right to cancel any and all student field trips for any reason. In the event that the Board cancels a trip, it will not be held financially responsible for any costs incurred to students, staff, parents or other participants. Further, if monies paid by parents are refunded to the Board in whole or in part, those monies will be returned to the parents.
7. The Board will provide trip cancellation insurance. However, this insurance does not cover all circumstances. In a case where the Board's insurance does not cover certain cancellations, the Board will not assume the costs associated with a trip that is either cancelled or interrupted.

H. Supervision

1. There shall be no unsupervised time for students on field trips. Supervisors are required to be on duty at all times.
2. In determining appropriate supervision levels, the following should be considered:
 - 2.1 Age of students.
 - 2.2 Gender of students
 - 2.3 Nature of the activity.
 - 2.4 Risk of the activity.
 - 2.5 Size of the group.
 - 2.6 Participation of special needs students.
 - 2.7 Crowded venues.
 - 2.8 Other safety concerns.
3. Supervision Levels

In all cases, the *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools* must be referenced when determining appropriate supervision levels.

 - 3.1 In town supervision levels will be dependent upon the points listed in section H.2 above. However, as a minimum, the following standards should be followed:

ECS	1 supervisor per 4 students
Grades 1-3	1 supervisor per 10 students
Grades 4-6	1 supervisor per 12 students
Grades 7-9	1 supervisor per 14 students
Grades 10-12	1 supervisor per 27 students

- 3.2 Out of town, but in province supervision shall consist of a ratio of at least 1 supervisor to 8 students.
- 3.3 Out of province and out of country supervision shall consist of a ratio of at least 1 supervisor to 8 students. However, where there are 8 or fewer students of both genders, there shall be at least one male supervisor and one female supervisor.
- 4. All field trip supervisors shall be:
 - 4.1 Over the age of eighteen (18) years; and
 - 4.2 Advised by the lead teacher as to the nature and requirements of the field trip and their responsibilities, prior to departure.
- 5. Same-gender supervisors must accompany each group on overnight field trips.

I. General

- 1. In cases where a change occurs:
 - 1.1 Where circumstances require a substantial change to the original field trip mode of transportation, supervision, cost, activities or venues, the Principal (for within the province field trips), and the Superintendent (for out of province and out of country field trips) must authorize such change and communicate such authorization to the lead teacher or Principal, as the case may be.
 - 1.2 The lead teacher will then communicate such changes to teachers, other staff members, volunteers, parents, and students.
 - 1.3 Where circumstances arise during a field trip, such as adverse weather or road conditions, and they necessitate a substantial change to any aspect of the planned itinerary, the Principal must be notified by the lead teacher and reasonable efforts will be made to advise parents accordingly.
 - 1.4 Where an out of province or out of country or overnight field trip is cancelled, the school will notify the Office of the Superintendent.

J. Documentation

- 1. Schools shall keep a record of field trip documentation for ten (10) school years from the end date of the field trip.
- 2. Field trip documentation shall include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - 2.1 Completed and approved Forms and attachments. The forms that must be completed for specific varieties of field trips are as follows:

- 2.1.1 In-city field trips – Forms Part A and Part B (retained at the school site).
- 2.1.2 In-province (outside city or town limits) – Forms Part A, Part B with copies of Forms A, B, the parental permission letter and Parental Permission Check list submitted to the Superintendent.
- 2.1.3 Out of the province or out of the country trips – Part A, Part B (including parent permission letter, Parental Permission Checklist), Part C, and Parts C.1 and C.2. submitted to the Superintendent.
- 2.2 Any information distributed to students, parents, teachers and volunteers about the trip.
- 2.3 Completed and returned portions of Parent Permission Letter.
- 2.4 A blank copy of Parent Permission Letter.
- 2.5 List of participating students.
- 2.6 List of participating supervisors, including volunteers.
- 2.7 Completed Accident Report Forms.
- 2.8 Copies of any correspondence, memorandums, receipts, booking confirmations, etc. relating to the field trip.
- 2.9 Attendance schedules for student and parent meetings.
- 2.10 Minutes or agendas of field trip meetings.

K. Field Trip Resource Kit

1. The Field Trip Resource Kit shall consist of, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - 1.1 A first aid kit unless first aid kits are otherwise readily available.
 - 1.2 A cell phone or other reliable means of communication, given the nature of the field trip.
 - 1.3 Emergency contact telephone numbers for all field trip participants (students, volunteers and teachers).
 - 1.4 Contact information for emergency authorities (such as medical, etc.) at the destination and any other locations visited.
 - 1.5 A complete set of Parent Permission Letters (including signed portion of Parental Consent Form).
 - 1.6 Blank Accident Report Forms.

L. Transportation

1. All participating students shall use the transportation that has been arranged for the field trip, unless other arrangements have been made between the parent and the lead teacher, in writing. In such cases, the parent takes on full responsibility.
2. Transportation to and from the designated meeting place for the start and finish of the field trip is the responsibility of the parent.

3. The Principal shall approve the mode of transportation for all field trips: commercial vehicle or carrier, school division vehicle, private vehicle or walking.
 - 3.1 The following steps should be used in determining the suitability of driving:
 - 3.1.1. An Alberta Motor Association (AMA) Road Report will confirm that all routes taken to the field trip are designated as being “fair” or “good”.
 - 3.1.2 An Environment Canada report will confirm that there are no adverse weather advisories in effect that would impact the route selected for travel in effect. Travel advisories include, but are not limited to wind warnings and storm warnings.
4. If a school wishes to use a carrier other than the City of Lethbridge or Southland Transportation Ltd., the carrier must have an Operating Authority Certificate from the Motor Transport Board and a Certificate of Insurance showing insurance coverage of not less than \$5 million.
5. For use of volunteer drivers and private vehicles, etc., refer to Administrative Procedure 352 – Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles.
6. Only commercial carriers shall be utilized to provide transportation by air.
7. Students shall not be drivers on field trips.
8. In exceptional circumstances only, the Superintendent may approve a change or deviation from these field trip regulations upon request by a Principal.
9. Links to required documentation are contained at the end of this administrative procedure.

M. Approval Summary

Field Trip Type	Timelines to complete application forms	Approval	Final Approval	Additional Notification/Consultation
Within City Limits	10 days	Principal	Principal	None
Within Province	30 days	Principal	Principal	Superintendent
Out of Province and not greater than 8 hours travel time by vehicle	30 days	Principal	Superintendent	Superintendent
Out of Province	90 days	Principal	Superintendent	Superintendent
Out of Country	180 days	Principal	Superintendent	Superintendent
Overnight Camping/outdoor pursuits	30 days	Principal	Superintendent	Superintendent

N. Required Documentation

1. "Division Field Trip Form" is completed for all field trips addressed within this procedure. (Otherwise referred to as "Part A")
2. "Parental Permission Checklist" is a list of information items that must be addressed in parent permission letters for all field trips. (Otherwise referred to as "Part B").
3. "Out of Province/Out of Country Field Trip Checklist" is a list of information and characteristics of field trips that must be addressed in order for final approval to occur for trips outside of Alberta. (Otherwise referred to as "Part C").
4. "Supervisor/Volunteer Supplementary Consent Form for Out of Province or International Field Trips" is the declaration provided by the supervisor, which acknowledges lack of insurance coverage in the event of circumstances arising out of terrorist activity (as defined in Section 83.01 of the *Criminal Code*). (Otherwise referred to as "Part C.1")
5. "Parent's Supplementary Consent Form for Out of Province or International Field Trips" is the declaration provided by the parent which acknowledges lack of insurance coverage in the event of circumstances arising out of a terrorist attack. (Otherwise referred to as "Part C.2").
6. "Risk Assessments for Activities" is an assessment provided by the staff member in charge, of the hazards or risks associated with the field trip activity(ies) and the safety precautions and contingency plans that will be in place. (Otherwise referred to as "Risk Assessment").