

OFF-SITE TRIPS, EXCURSIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Background

Learning experiences gained outside the school can complement and enhance classroom instruction and can provide a supplementary means for accomplishing both general and specific curriculum objectives. The Division recognizes the educational value of well-planned local, provincial, national and international excursions and to this end endorses the conducting of off-site activities involving students, teachers, parents and other volunteers making field trips into the community and natural environments, subject to this Administrative Procedure.

Procedures

1. This Administrative Procedure applies to all school sanctioned activities of a curricular or extracurricular nature in which students are off the school site except Work Experience education pursuant to Administrative Procedure 216 – Off-Campus Education.
2. Off-site activities must relate to the educational process, be connected to the Guide to Education, Program of Studies, curriculum and learning outcomes.
3. Off-site activities will be conducted under the auspices of the school and a teacher-in-charge, who is responsible for the planning, coordination and implementation of the activity and who will be designated by the Principal for each such activity.
4. The Principal shall ensure adequate preparation and supervision for all off-site activities. While such supervision shall always include teachers or community volunteer coaches approved by the Principal for a sports team, a Principal may authorize persons other than teachers or coaches to provide additional supervision or instruction when warranted by the nature of the specific activity.
 - 4.1 A teacher-leader must always be in charge to provide oversight and planning. The teacher-in-charge must ensure that the activity is conducted in accordance with the approved plan and that supervision is available at all times and that assistant supervisors are prepared to deal with any emergencies that may arise.
 - 4.2 The supervisory arrangements will depend on the age, maturity, needs and ability levels of the students, the inherent risk of the activity and the circumstances of the particular activity.
 - 4.3 For high-risk activities, competent instruction and supervision in these activities are mandatory. Competence may be established by virtue of a certificate from a governing body for an activity, or where certificates are not issued, competence may be that recognized by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity.

- 4.4 The teacher-in-charge is responsible for acquiring sufficient awareness of and information about the proposed site(s) of the activity to make a safety assessment for the activity as detailed in Administrative Procedure 260 Appendix D – Safety Assessment.
 - 4.5 The teacher-in-charge shall ensure that training, preparation, orientation and expectations of all student participants and supervisors are provided.
 - 4.6 Supervision shall include individuals suitably trained in first aid and an appropriately equipped portable first aid kit must be accessible.
 - 4.7 When necessary and whenever overnight accommodation is involved, activities involving students of Differing sexes shall have male and female supervisors present.
 - 4.7.1 Decisions made about sleeping arrangements for transgender or gender-diverse students on overnight trips shall be carefully and respectfully decided on a case-by-case basis. Because sleep spaces can vary a lot, depending on the location of the trip, there is no one-size-fits all solution.
 - 4.8 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.
 - 4.9 The teacher-in-charge shall be responsible for carrying a list of student participants including telephone contact numbers, Alberta Health Care numbers, medication and medi-alert needs.
5. Off-site activities must take place within a context of attention to the safety and security of students, to risk assessment of the activities, and to protection of students, staff, parents, other volunteers and the Division.
 6. The Principal must give or secure approval for all off-site activities in accordance with the procedures established by this Administrative Procedure.
 - 6.1 The Principal may approve off-site activities of a duration of two (2) school days or less within the boundaries of Zone 1 (as defined by the Alberta School Boards Association) and the British Columbia "Peace Block" communities of Dawson Creek, Ft. St. John, Chetwynd and Hudson Hope.
 - 6.2 Activities outside this area or of a duration greater than two (2) school days must be approved by the Superintendent or designate.
 7. Parent permission must be obtained for off-site activities, and in seeking this permission parents or guardians must be informed in writing of the following information about the activity:
 - 7.1 The purpose and educational objectives of the activity.
 - 7.2 The name of the teacher-in-charge and a contact telephone number.
 - 7.3 The name(s) of other supervisor(s).
 - 7.4 The date(s).
 - 7.5 The destination and, where necessary, a map of the area.
 - 7.6 A detailed itinerary, setting out the general nature and number of activities and the dates and times and venues of each.

- 7.7 Departure and return times.
 - 7.8 Mode(s) of transportation.
 - 7.9 Financial arrangements.
 - 7.10 Safety precautions.
 - 7.11 Level of direct and if applicable, indirect supervision.
 - 7.12 The date of a parent information meeting about the activity, if planned.
 - 7.13 Method of communication (e.g. satellite phone, etc.).
 - 7.14 Any inherent risks and consequences associated with the activity ("inherent risk" refers to the hazard, danger, chance of injury, damage or loss that exists in something as a natural and inseparable quality or characteristic of that thing). Safety precautions for dealing with risk situations.
 - 7.15 The need for any special equipment, clothing, food or personal items.
 - 7.16 A reminder that parents or guardians must inform the teacher-in-charge about any relevant medical conditions of the student.
 - 7.17 Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances.
 - 7.18 The need for additional medical insurance coverage, if applicable.
 - 7.19 Any other relevant information about the activity, which may influence the parent's or guardian's decision to withhold permission (e.g., a controversial museum exhibit).
8. Notwithstanding section 7, parent permission is not required for an off-site activity when the following conditions are met:
 - 8.1 The destination of the activity is within nine hundred metres (900 m) walking distance of the school,
 - 8.2 Transportation is accomplished by walking,
 - 8.3 The activity is not a high-risk or prohibited activity (Appendix A and C); and
 - 8.4 The Principal has notified parents in writing at the start of the school year that the school will be utilizing this exclusion provision.
 9. Each student participating in an off-site activity must comply with the school's and the Division's codes of conduct and remains subject to the discipline policies of the school and the Division.
 10. Where transportation is required for an off-site activity, this shall be arranged in compliance with the Division's policies and procedures on transportation.
 11. Off-site activities are not permitted that require travel time too long for the age of the students involved, that require inordinate expense or excessive absence from school, or that are prohibited activities as listed in Administrative Procedure 260 Appendix A – Prohibited Activities.

12. Activities planned during summer vacation that would otherwise be off-site activities but which are not directly sponsored by a school or the Division for instructional purposes are outside the school year and therefore are the total and full responsibility of the planners, tour agencies and transportation agencies involved. They may not purport to be school-sanctioned activities and if any school personnel are involved; this must be made clear to the participants at the commencement of planning such activities.
13. The use of alcohol or illegal drugs by all participants, including staff members and volunteers is strictly prohibited during off-site activities, and applies to all off-site activities regardless of the circumstances, the age of the participants or local laws, customs, and culture.
14. The Superintendent or designate, is delegated the responsibility and authority to establish administrative measures, including checklists, forms, disclosure letters and reports as may be required to provide reasonable control and direction of the operation of this Administrative Procedure.
15. The following criteria will be used in determining the approval of a proposed activity:
 - 15.1 Expressed educational value of the activity,
 - 15.2 Evidence of good planning, detailed itinerary and appropriateness of activities,
 - 15.3 Evidence that appropriate insurance is in place or arranged,
 - 15.4 Suitability of proposed supervision,
 - 15.5 Suitability of proposed travel and accommodation arrangements,
 - 15.6 Appropriate financial plan identifying proposed sources of funding,
 - 15.7 Evidence of written approval from parents or guardians,
 - 15.8 Appropriateness of plans for non-participants,
 - 15.9 Impact on the regular program of the school caused by student and staff absences.
16. Proposed activities that require approval by the Superintendent or designate shall be submitted at least two (2) weeks prior to the date of the activity for provincial and national excursions and at least three (3) months prior to any final confirmation or booking date for international travel.
 - 16.1 In exceptional circumstances, the Superintendent or designate may waive these time requirements.
 - 16.2 Such approval requests shall provide a written proposal signed by the Principal, which includes educational goals, organizational details, financing information, and confirmation of compliance with the risk assessment and parent permission requirements of this Administrative Procedure.
17. No commitment shall be made to students, parents, transportation authorities, travel agents, etc. until at least approval in principle has been received for the proposed activity from the appropriate approving authority, either the Principal or the Superintendent or designate.
18. Parental consent is for the purpose of notifying parents concerning the details of the proposed activity and to have the parents indicate whether their permission is given for their child to participate.

- 18.1 It is not to be regarded as a release from liability.
 - 18.2 Students not participating in an off-site activity shall be accommodated in an appropriate manner by the school.
19. In the case of high-risk activities, in addition to parental permission, an additional waiver of liability may also be required for a student's participation depending on the activity and/or the requirements of the hosting facility.
20. The Principal will keep a record of each off-site activity, which will include:
- 20.1 Parent Information and Approval for Off-Site Activities (Form 260-1),
 - 20.2 Waivers of liability (if required),
 - 20.3 All information provided to parents,
 - 20.4 List of participating students,
 - 20.5 List teacher-in-charge and supervisors,
 - 20.6 Injury and unusual incident reports.
21. For activities that involve more than one (1) trip off-site and inter-school sports, a single parental permission will suffice if the information to the parent includes a schedule of all the activities and provides the details of each event.
22. The safety assessment for off-site activities shall consider the requirements of Administrative Procedure 311 – Student Safety, particularly with respect to the Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools and the Safety Guidelines for Secondary Inter School Athletics in Alberta. Other safety related considerations are provided in Administrative Procedure 260 Appendix B – Safety Considerations. The standards set out in the relevant procedures must be met or exceeded for all off-site activities as are reasonable under the circumstances.
23. High-risk activities are those characterized by greater potential for injuries with severe consequences, person-to-person and person-to-equipment contact, uniqueness of equipment used, speed of action, protective equipment used, specialized supervision required, and training required; and include those activities identified in Administrative Procedure Appendix C – High Risk Activities.
24. When an off-site activity includes students from two (2) or more schools, the Principal of each school involved must jointly approve the participation of their students and all the students are accountable to the teacher-in-charge.
25. A student may not participate in an off-site activity unless the student is enrolled in a sponsoring or participating school and is part of the class or group taking part in the activity.

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Reference: Section 1, 11, 31, 32, 33, 52, 53, 196, 197, 222 Education Act
Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12
Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools
Safety Guidelines for Secondary Inter-School Athletics in Alberta
Physical Education Safety Guidelines