

PEACE WAPITI PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 76

POLICY HGCG – Off-Site Activities

Off-site activities away from the normal location of instruction, if well planned and delivered in a prudent manner, contribute substantially to the achievement of the Board’s educational goals.

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to facilitate compliance to policy and legislations for off-site activities.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Off-Site Activity**: an instructional activity trip including fine arts and sports but not including work experience, RAP or other programs under Alberta Education guidelines for off-campus activities.
2. **Local Off-Site Activity-A**: an off-site activity within walking distance of the school.
3. **Local Off-Site Activity-B**: an off-site activity within 80 kilometers of the school requiring vehicular transportation away from the school.
4. **Local Off-Site Activity-C**: an off-site activity within 80 kilometers of the school which includes a high risk activity such as swimming or skiing.
5. **Provincial Off-Site Activity**: an off-site activity within Alberta and Northeastern BC, including **any over-night off-site activities**.
6. **National Off-Site Activity**: an activity whose destination is outside of the regional area but within the borders of Canada.
7. **International Off-Site Activity**: an activity outside of the borders of Canada.
8. **Teacher-in-Charge**: the PWSD teacher responsible for the planning, coordination, implementation, supervision and follow-up of the off-site activity.
9. **Informed Parental Consent**: parental or guardian approval of a field trip indicating an understanding of potential risks related to the student’s involvement in the activities identified in the itinerary of the field trip.

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

For ALL off-site activities:

1. Field trips and excursions that are not directly sponsored by a school or the District are the total responsibility of the planners, tour agencies, and transportation agencies involved.
2. Unique circumstances at each school, such as multiple grade configurations, may warrant deviation from the policy and must receive prior approval by the superintendent or designate. Note that this applies only to Local Off-Site Activity-B,

Local Off-Site Activity-C and Provincial Off-Site Activity as outlined in the Definition section previously.

3. All requests for an off-site activity shall be in writing and submitted to the Principal and include detailed risk assessment and plans for managing the risk.
4. Prior to submitting a request for approval, the Principal will ensure that all guidelines and procedures of this policy are implemented and that the Teacher-in-Charge understands PWSB policies as they pertain to the off-site activities. The Teacher-in-Charge must fully understand all the applicable Peace Wapiti School Division Policies, particularly those dealing with fund raising, smoking and alcohol.
5. All approvals for off-site activities will be in writing.
6. For All Off-Site Activities the Board expects all off-site activities:
 - a) will arise out of the regular school program;
 - b) will be planned to minimize loss of regular instruction time;
 - c) will be conducted in accordance with school and Board policies;
 - d) may be shortened, canceled or terminated, at any time, if in the opinion of the Teacher-in-Charge, the Principal, or the Superintendent, the activity cannot proceed or be completed in a safe manner;
 - e) will be conducted in adherence to *Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools*.
 - f) will not involve the use of 15-passenger vans, except in the rare event that no other reasonable alternative is available.
7. Parents will be informed of their child's participation and of the right and responsibility of each parent to make the final decision regarding their own child's participation.
8. That in planning off-site activities, the teacher shall consider the educational value to be derived, community attitudes toward the proposed trip, safety and security of students, staff and volunteers and undertake appropriate planning to manage the risks.
9. Participation in off-site activities will be restricted as follows:
 - a) to local off-site activities for ECS to grade 3, none of which are deemed to be high risk with the exception of swimming;
 - b) to local and provincial off-site activities for grades 4-6;
 - c) to local, provincial and national off-site activities for grades 7-8;
 - d) to local, provincial, national and international off-site activities for grades 9-12.
10. The school retains the right to deny any student access to a particular activity.
11. The minimum supervision shall be provided as follows:
 - a) one teacher for his/her class on day off-site activities within the community and for ECS supervision will be provided by two supervisors per class;

- b) mixed student groups on overnight trips require male and female chaperones in the ratio of 1 adult for each 12 students in junior and senior high, and in the ratio of 1 adult for each 8 elementary students. The ratio applies to single gender groups as well;
- c) 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 activities such as skiing, swimming, and canoeing;
- d) one teacher shall be appointed as the designated Teacher-in-Charge of the off-site activity. This teacher is responsible to ensure:
 - i) he/she has the training and knowledge appropriate for leading the trip;
 - ii) appropriate volunteers for the off-site activities and provide these volunteers with direction as to the requirements of the trip and their responsibilities;
 - iii) criminal record checks will be completed for any volunteers involved in overnight off-site activities;
 - iv) appropriate service providers whose staff have additional qualifications, and training when appropriate;
 - v) appropriate documentation is filed with the school Principal;
 - vi) appropriate student information accompanies the teacher on the trip;
 - vii) he/she is aware of student health conditions and ensures appropriate medication accompanies the student on the trip;
 - viii) he/she has reviewed possible travel hazards preferably by personally making on-site visits to activities on the planned itinerary and discussed the appropriate safety procedures and emergency response plans where appropriate with supervisors;
 - ix) all students have appropriate transportation;
 - x) contingency plans are in place in the event of conditions that require a change to the original itinerary;
 - xi) “informed parental consent”, when required, is obtained and that parents are provided with the following information in writing:
 - (1) purpose or educational goal of the field trip;
 - (2) proposed itinerary;
 - (3) description of the activities or events proposed;
 - (4) safety precautions in place to deal with activities involving risk;
 - (5) emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;
 - (6) need for additional medical coverage for out-of-country trips;
 - (7) method of transportation to be used;

- (8) arrangements for supervision;
- (9) cost to the student.
- xii) the parent consent form and informed parental consent forms are obtained for high risk activities such as skiing or swimming and the parent confirms the child's skill level;
- xiii) sports trips should have a teacher as the Teacher-in-Charge, but a responsible adult approved by the Principal could be appointed if teachers are unavailable.

12. The following off-site activities are not permitted:

- a) aerial gymnastics, aviation or aircraft related activity requiring the use of non-commercial aircraft, American gladiator style events, auto racing, bicycle motocross, boxing or kick boxing, bungee jumping, caving, demolition derbies, extreme sports, activities involving hang gliding, parachuting, hot air balloon rides, ice or rock climbing, mechanical rodeo events, motorcycling, operating motorized water craft, parasailing, sky-diving, auto races, war games such as paint ball, trampolining and zip-lining;
- b) activities where safety measures have been deliberately removed;
- c) rodeos and activities using fire arms, without the support of the Superintendent. (However, Principals may approve informed parental consent forms that indicate students are in good standing for events such as the Alberta High School Rodeo Association.)

13. For Local Off-Site Activities-A and B the Board expects:

- a) requests for local off-site activities to be submitted for approval to the Principal;
- b) transportation costs for co-curricular field trips, organized sports activities and special events will be borne by the Board to the amount provided for in the site-based or school generated funds budget;
- c) a one-time blanket approval for scheduled sports events and unscheduled walking field trips in the neighborhood of the school will suffice for any off-site activity.

14. For Local Off-Site Activities-C the Board expects:

- a) requests for local off-site activities to be submitted for approval to the Principal;
- b) transportation costs for co-curricular field trips, organized sports activities and special events will be borne by the Board to the amount provided for in the site-based budget or school generated funds budget.

15. For Regional or Provincial Off-Site Activities the Board expects:

- a) requests for regional off-site activities to be submitted for approval to the Principal;
- b) competitions at the provincial level will be supported through the Co-op Pool's Provincial Competition Fund to the amount provided for in the Co-op budget,

- providing the team/group has won the right to attend the activity; otherwise the site-based budget or student shall bear the cost of the activity;
- c) travel using PWSO school buses must be organized so that buses will return to the region (80 km from PWSO) by 10 PM. (ie. If leaving from Edmonton, buses would need to leave by 5 PM to reasonably expect to get to within 80 km of PWSO by 10 PM.)

16. For National Off-Site Activities the Board expects:

- a) the request for national off-site activities will be submitted to the Superintendent for approval. The Board will be advised of all approvals in principle;
- b) trips must initially be approved in principle by the Superintendent before any local action, other than a single meeting/questionnaire to determine level of potential participation, involving students, parents or community is taken by the teaching staff. The Teacher-in-Charge shall submit the *Request Form for Approval in Principle for National or International Travel*;
- c) once approval in principle from the Superintendent is received, the teacher will submit a detailed application for final approval. The final application should be received by the Superintendent at least 4 months prior to departure. The Superintendent will review the detailed application.
- d) there will be no cost to the Board;
- e) the final application shall include a detailed plan outlining the following:
- i) objectives of the excursion;
 - ii) the number of school instructional days involved;
 - iii) involvement of Board or Board personnel (The Board should have no direct expense and inconvenience to other students and staff interruption must be minimized);
 - iv) destination and detailed itinerary including proposed time of departure and return as well as mode(s) of transportation and arrangements for lodging;
 - v) assessment of reliability of agents or agencies to be used to coordinate travel arrangements (including availability of travel cancellation insurance and appropriateness of training of guides or other provided support personnel);
 - vi) detailed budget including both sources and uses of funds and how revenue shortfalls or revenue excesses will be dealt with;
 - vii) the number and grades of students involved;
 - viii) provisions for supervision, e.g. teachers, parents, etc. and the preparedness of supervisors and plans for ensuring supervisory preparedness, including an understanding and acceptance of Board expectations for all activities. (Board expectations include need for at least one supervisor with valid first aid certification, supervisors understanding that they are on call to student health

- and safety around the clock, and are aware of applicable Board policies particularly those dealing with smoking and alcohol);
- ix) supervisors (both Board staff and volunteers) shall sign an understanding of responsibilities and expectations;
 - x) risk assessment of activities;
 - xi) emergency procedures including local contact.
- f) final travel plans shall be submitted to the Superintendent at least two weeks prior to the departure date when time permits.
- g) between 7 and 14 days prior to the departure date, the trip supervisor will confirm with the principal that the original risk assessment remains viable. Should the original risk assessment not be viable, the principal will consult with the Superintendent.

17. For International Off-Site Activities the Board expects:

- a) the request for international off-site activities will be submitted to the Superintendent who will in turn review and submit requests to the Board for approval;
- b) trips must initially be **approved in principle** by the Board before any local action, other than a single meeting/questionnaire to determine level of potential participation, involving students, parents or community is taken by the teaching staff. The Teacher-in-Charge shall submit the *Request Form for Approval in Principle for National or International Travel*;
- c) once approval in principle from the Board is received, the teacher will submit a detailed application for final approval. The final application should be received by the Superintendent at least 4 months prior to departure. The Superintendent will review the detailed application and then submit it to the Board for final approval.
- d) there will be at no cost to the Board
- e) the final application shall include a detailed plan outlining the following:
 - i) objectives of the excursion;
 - ii) the number of school instructional days involved;
 - iii) involvement of Board or Board personnel (The Board should have no direct expense and staff interruption must be minimized);
 - iv) destination and detailed itinerary including proposed time of departure and return as well as mode(s) of transportation and arrangements for lodging;
 - v) assessment of reliability of agents or agencies to be used to coordinate travel arrangements (including availability of travel cancellation insurance and appropriateness of training of guides or other provided support personnel);
 - vi) detailed budget including both sources and uses of funds and how revenue shortfalls or revenue excesses will be dealt with;

- vii) the number and grades of students involved;
 - viii) provisions for supervision, e.g. teachers, parents, etc. and the preparedness of supervisors and plans for ensuring supervisory preparedness, including an understanding and acceptance of Board expectations for all activities (Board expectations include need for at least one supervisor with valid first aid certification, supervisors understanding that they are on call to student health and safety all day every day of travel, and are aware of applicable Board policies particularly those dealing with smoking and alcohol);
 - ix) evidence that options for travel closer to the school have been explored and found to be insufficient to meet the objectives;
 - x) supervisors (both Board staff and volunteers) shall sign an understanding of responsibilities and expectations;
 - xi) risk assessment of activities;
 - xii) emergency procedures including local contact;
 - xiii) assessment of public infrastructure and general safety conditions of destination(s);
- f) parents must provide written evidence of current recommended vaccinations and of adequate medical and travel insurance for their children and sign informed parental consent forms.
- g) finalized travel plans shall be submitted to the Superintendent at least two weeks prior to the departure date.
- h) between 7 and 14 days prior to the departure date, the trip supervisor will confirm with the principal that the original risk assessment remains viable. As part of this confirmation, the trip supervisor will provide to the principal a copy of the travel advisory from the site www.voyage.gc.ca or another appropriate advisory approved by the Superintendent. If there are any significant changes to the travel advisory or to the original risk assessment up until the time of departure, the superintendent must be notified immediately.

REFERENCES

Cross References: links to

[IFCG – General Use of Tobacco](#)
[IFCI – Illegal Use of Drug and Alcohol by Students](#)
[IL_School Sponsored Fund Raising](#)
[JG_NonCurricularUseofSchoolFacilities.doc](#)
[Field Trip Procedure](#)

Legal Reference: School Act Section 45 (8) and 60 (2)(h)

Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools

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