

## **EDUCATIONAL FIELD STUDIES**

### **Background**

The District encourages field studies for groups of students, to provide supplemental opportunities which enhance learning in curriculum and to expand on athletic, cultural, musical, linguistic, or other educational endeavours. The District further believes that in planning for any learning experience including field trips, consideration must be given to student safety, curricular relevance and the appropriateness of the activity to the student's educational program. In all cases it is necessary for adult supervising staff to have the requisite skills and experience to provide safe and appropriate field trip experiences.

### **Procedures**

1. The purpose of field studies is to enable students to participate in quality off-site educational studies that:
  - 1.1. Are an integral part of the educational process;
  - 1.2. Are closely connected to curriculum and prescribed learning outcomes; and
  - 1.3. Are relevant, effective, affordable and accessible.
2. A field study is to be an extension of a school program that involves a clearly defined class or group; such as, a Grade 7 division, second language learners, band or athletic team.
3. It is of paramount importance that student field studies are selected, planned, organized and conducted in the context of:
  - 3.1. The educational outcomes for the student participants;
  - 3.2. The safety and security of all participants;
  - 3.3. Risk assessment and management of off-site activities; and
  - 3.4. Protection of students, staff, volunteers and the District.
4. Eligibility criteria to participate in field studies must be established. No eligible student may be denied access to participate in a day field study held during instructional hours due to financial hardship.
  - 4.1 A Principal may exclude any student from the activity if the Principal determines the student does not meet the eligibility criteria.
5. The District may charge fees for the expenses such as transportation, accommodation, meals, entrance fees and equipment rentals for optional supplementary field studies. Efforts to minimize costs to students/parents is to be evident in all field trip planning. Students/parents are also to be advised of Administrative Procedure 506 - Financial Hardship with respect to field studies costs.

6. All details of fund-raising activities and requirements for the proposed field study must be communicated clearly to students and parents and agreed upon at the outset of the field trip planning process.
7. Student field studies are to generally involve low risk activities.
8. Field studies are to occur as close to the District as is reasonable without compromising the quality of the learning experience.
9. All details of proposed field studies must be clearly communicated to students and parents.
10. Field studies are not to seriously interfere with the education of students who remain at school nor the students who are participating on the field study. This includes the class(es) that a teacher may miss as a result of sponsoring a field study.
11. School sponsored field studies are considered to be school program activities and as such are subject to both the procedures of the school and to all Board policies and administrative procedures. When other agencies (e.g., Rotary, Government of Canada) contact schools regarding opportunities for students to participate in activities sponsored by their organizations, parents are to be made aware that such activities are not school field studies.
12. All District employees responsible for planning and authorizing field studies are to be knowledgeable of the category definitions for field studies.

#### 12.1. Category 1: Same Day Field Studies

- 12.1.1. These may last up to a full day. Destinations and activities are determined by learning outcomes; examples of such field studies are visits to museums, law courts, art galleries, nature parks, etc.
- 12.1.2. Local neighbourhood excursions that are based on a *specific* class activity/learning outcome, such as a grade 3 class going to the local park to collect leaves for an art project, or a grade 11 Physical Education class jogging in the local neighbourhood, are not considered field studies. However, teachers must always ensure that the Principal is aware of such neighbourhood learning activities when they are occurring.

#### 12.2. Category 2:

##### 12.2.1. Overnight Field Studies

These may last for one or more days and take place within the province of British Columbia. Such excursions require an additional level of approval by the Director of Instruction using REQ-015 *Request for Overnight/High-Risk Field Studies* form.

##### 12.2.2. Outside Lower Mainland Field Studies

Excursions outside the Lower-Mainland require Director of Instruction approval because of the extensive travel required. Field studies that extend beyond the Lower-Mainland, even if lasting only one day, are classified as Category 2.

- 12.2.2.1. The Lower-Mainland includes two [Regional Districts](#): [Metro Vancouver](#) and the [Fraser Valley Regional District](#). Metro Vancouver is bordered on the west by the [Strait of Georgia](#), to the north by the [Squamish-Lillooet Regional District](#), on the east by the Fraser Valley Regional District, and to the south by [Whatcom County, Washington](#) in the [United States](#). The Fraser Valley Regional District lies east of Metro Vancouver, comprises the cities of [Abbotsford](#) and [Chilliwack](#), the districts of [Mission](#), [Kent](#), and [Hope](#), and the village of [Harrison Hot Springs](#).

### 12.3. Category 3: Higher Risk Outdoor Field Studies

These are outdoor education-based field studies that may last up to a full day, or may last for two days or more, and entail a level of risk that is higher than activities in which students are normally engaged in at school. These would typically be:

- 12.3.1. Outdoor School Programs: where an outdoor setting is important, and it becomes the classroom. Examples include Outdoor Education and Physical Education Activities.
- 12.3.2. Outdoor Pursuits: refers to activities related to self-propelled travel on land, water and snow or ice (e.g. hiking, kayaking, skiing). The definition of outdoor pursuit includes higher risk activities, such as skiing, and extended wilderness travel. Outdoor pursuits are typically of a higher care nature and as such these environments require some more specialized awareness, planning, instruction and leadership. Outdoor pursuit does not include local ice area activities, such as skating, hockey or curling.

### 12.4 Category 4: Out of Province (Canada) and Cross-Border (USA)

These field studies involve travel outside of British Columbia, but within Canada or the continental United States, and last typically 5 instructional days, such as cultural and linguistic exchanges where students travel outside B.C. to be immersed in the language and culture of another area.

### 12.5 Category 5: International (Extended Off-Continent Field Studies)

These comprise travel to countries or regions outside of Canada or the continental United States for the purpose of broadening students' understanding of other cultures and of helping them to see their relationship in the world as a Canadian. These field studies last typically for 5-14 days, with no more than 5 days being instructional days.

12.5.1 Category Field Studies will only be considered for students in grades 10-12.

13. Field Studies may be deemed to be inappropriate by the Principal. Inappropriate field studies are characterized as those involving:

- 13.1. Activities that have significant risk for serious injury;
- 13.2. Dangers that cannot be overlooked regardless of their attention of risk and planning (such as supervision ratios, equipment, instruction and supervisors/ instructors experience and training);

- 13.3. Not age or developmentally appropriate for students, individually or as a group;
  - 13.4. Involve travel time that is excessive for the age of the children;
  - 13.5. Involve excessive absence from the school for both students and teachers;
  - 13.6. Incur inordinate expense or excessive absence from school;
  - 13.7. Include travel to areas where Foreign Affairs Canada has published a travel advisory;
  - 13.8. A failure to comply with Board policies or administrative procedures of the District.
14. Excursions During the Non-Instructional Year (school closure in June to school opening in September)
- 14.1. Excursions planned for the non-instructional period of the year (typically the months of July and August) will be supported as school-sponsored excursions provided all requisite field studies policies, procedures, and approval processes have been followed.
  - 14.2. Teachers, or other District employees, who participate in a supervisory role during non-instructional year excursions do so by choice, without salary compensation or the expectation of time in lieu. Liability insurance coverage under the School Protection Plan does extend to any District employee or volunteer acting in a supervisory capacity during the non-instructional year provided the excursion is a school-sponsored field study and all requisite field studies policies have been followed.
15. Responsibilities
- 15.1. Parent Responsibility: Parents are responsible to determine whether their child may participate in a student field study. In order to provide informed consent, comprehensive student field study information that clearly describes the educational benefits and safety risks must be communicated to parents.
  - 15.2. Student Responsibility: Students participating in a field study are responsible to comply with the school rules, Student Code of Conduct, Board policies and administrative procedures, fulfill the preparatory requirements and cooperate with all supervisors.
  - 15.3. Educator-in-Charge Responsibility: The Educator-in-Charge is responsible to:
    - 15.3.1. Ensure the field study is appropriately planned, authorized and organized;
    - 15.3.2. Ensure parents have been provided with comprehensive student information that clearly describes the educational benefits and safety risks of the field study, and safety plans;
    - 15.3.3. Exercise supervision on a full-time basis;
    - 15.3.4. Ensure detailed contact and trip information is left with the Principal; and communicated to parents
    - 15.3.5. Take whatever precautions are necessary to ensure the proper conduct, appropriate behaviour and safety of students.
  - 15.4. Field Study Supervisor Responsibilities: Supervisors (teachers, volunteers, contracted instructors) are responsible to supervise students 24 hours per day, to serve as role models to students, to act as ambassadors of the District and to conduct themselves accordingly, and within the expectations of, the District's *Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students*. No alcohol or non-prescription drugs are to be consumed

while on, or before, supervising students as supervisors must be capable of reasoned judgment in case of an unexpected emergency at all times during the field study. This expectation includes international locations where the cultural norms may vary.

## 16. Authority

- 16.1. Each Principal has primary responsibility and authority to approve student field studies, as per section 20, and ensure planned field studies prescribe to Board policies and District Administrative Procedures.
- 16.2. The Superintendent has responsibility and authority to establish District practices and standards for the conduct of students during field studies; and provide approval for specified trip categories.

## 17. Curriculum Objectives

- 17.1. Student field studies are to be directly related to the curriculum and undertaken only to provide superior and/or supplemental opportunities for learning beyond that which are available in the classroom.
- 17.2. Specific educational objectives for the learning experience are to be clearly in mind prior to planning the field study and subsequently, all activities are to be directed to achieve these ends.
- 17.3. Students are to be exposed to a sequential and expanding pattern of field studies as they progress through their school years.
- 17.4. Evaluation of field studies is recommended to occur at two levels:
  - 17.4.1. Student learning evaluation, when applicable, in order to determine if educational objectives have been met.
  - 17.4.2. The field study as a whole, to ascertain the quality of the total experience and to share the conclusions with other appropriate members of staff.

## 18. Eligibility and Access

- 18.1. Eligibility criteria must be established to define the students who may participate in field study. Eligibility criteria may include definition by grade, class, subject, team or other characteristics related to the delivery of an education program. Eligibility criteria may also include school code of conduct expectations.
- 18.2. Parents may, in whole or in part, financially support supplemental field studies, and will be advised of the District's financial hardship procedures. As outlined in Administrative Procedure 506 - Financial Hardship, no fees shall be charged for field studies during instructional hours where attendance is mandatory and/or assessment will take place (i.e. field studies for swimming or hiking need to meet the criteria of Administrative Procedure 505). Information about the District financial hardship procedures must be included on the parent consent form.

## 19. Planning for Approval

- 19.1. Preliminary Approval: Educators-in-Charge will obtain the preliminary approval of the Principal for field studies before communication with parents and students, before making commitments with service providers, and before commencing fundraising.

- 19.2. Educational Rationale: Educators-in-Charge will submit an educational rationale for the Principal's approval that explicitly describes how the field study is expected to provide significant educational value related to the school program and curriculum.
- 19.3. School-Wide Impact: Before approving a student field study, the Principal must consider the school-wide effect arising from the absence of Educators-in-Charge and students, and the financial impact of fundraising on the total school community.
- 19.4. Policy/Procedure Adherence: The Educator-in-Charge will plan the field study in compliance of Board policies, administrative procedures and the District Field Studies Planning Resources located on the VSB Field Studies staff HUB. Before approving the field study, the Principal will ensure that the Educator-in-Charge has planned the excursion in compliance of applicable Board policies, administrative procedures, and the resources.

## 20. Approval Process

Field studies approval is dependent on the adherence to Board policies and administrative procedures. No field study activity may proceed unless it has received the appropriate approval, as defined by the applicable field study category.

### 20.1. Category 1: Day Field Studies

#### 20.1.1. Approval of the Principal

### 20.2. Category 2: Overnight and Outside the Lower- Mainland Field Studies

20.2.1. Approval of the Principal. Signed approval of the Principal must be sought before the field studies plan is presented to or communicated with students and parents and before any funds are collected.

20.2.2. Approval of the Director of Instruction, or District designate no less than 3 weeks before trip commences using REQ-SC-015 OHRA *Request for Outdoor/Higher-Risk Activity Field Studies Approval* form.

### 20.3. Category 3: Higher Risk Outdoor Field Studies

20.3.1. Approval of the Principal. Signed approval of the Principal must be sought before the proposed field studies plan is presented to or communicated with students and parents and before any funds are collected. Final approval resides with the Director of Instruction.

20.3.2. Approval of the Director of Instruction no less than 3 weeks before trip commences using REQ-SC-015 OHRA *Request for Outdoor/Higher-Risk Activity Field Studies Approval* form.

### 20.4. Category 4: Out of Province (Canada) and Cross-Border (USA)

20.4.1. Approval of the Principal. Signed approval of the Principal must be sought before the proposed field studies plan is presented to or communicated with students and parents and before any funds are collected. Final approval resides with the Director of Instruction.

20.4.2. Approval of the Director of Instruction, no less than 6 weeks before trip commences using REQ-SC-015 OHRA *Request for Outdoor/Higher-Risk Activity Field Studies Approval* form.

20.4.3. Approval is dependent on the use of a VSB approved 3<sup>rd</sup> party educational travel provider.

20.5. Category 5: International (United States and Extended Off-Continent Field Studies)

20.5.1. Subject to additional approval requirements as outlined in Appendix 260A

20.6. Obtaining Director of Instruction Approval: District Request for Field Trip Form

20.6.1. To secure the approval of the Director of Instruction for Category 2, 3, 4 REQ-SC-015 must be submitted with the appropriate attachments via the VSB Field Studies Application portal. All required uploads must be submitted, including a detailed VSB Safety Plan, the parent information letter, parent consent form, acknowledgement of risk forms from the service provider and proposed trip itinerary. A full disclosure of risks/risk mitigations must be included in these documents. Appendix 260A outlines additional approval requirements for Category 5 field studies.

21. Parental Communication and Authorization

21.1. In all cases, parents must be informed, and provide consent when students are to be absent from school premises through a customized school-based field studies parent consent form.

21.2. The information conveyed to parents through the school-based field studies consent form must appropriately disclose all details of the field studies and provide information on the District's financial hardship procedure.

21.3. An annual consent may be appropriate for a series of common activities. For example, a basketball team travelling to a series of local tournaments, or an elementary class partaking in regular nature walking trips in the local neighbourhood may be covered by one consent form.

21.3.1 An annual consent (i.e. one form for the whole year) provides the parent the opportunity to list the activities from which the student is to be excluded, but the onus of responsibility is on the Educator-in-Charge to see that the student does not participate in those activities for the remainder of the school year.

21.4. Contents of Parent Permission and Consent Forms

21.4.1. Educational Rationale and Curricular Objectives:

Description of the educational purpose and learning objectives of the field study.

21.4.2. Trip Details:

Full disclosure of all activities to be undertaken during the duration of the field study. Supervision, student accommodation, emergency contact information and travel arrangements must also be disclosed through the trip consent form.

21.4.3. Known Risks:

The parent consent form must clearly outline all potential known risks of the field study to ensure informed consent is being obtained from the parent.

21.4.4. Safety Plan:

Consent forms must provide indication to parents that an appropriate safety plan is in place, and the particulars of the safety plan is to be made available to parents for higher-risk outdoor pursuits.

21.4.5. Behaviour Expectations

- 21.4.5.1. All students participating in field studies are expected to comply with the school's expectation for students and the school's code of conduct, cooperate fully with all supervisors of a field study, and participate in a responsible and cooperative manner at all times during the field study.
- 21.4.5.2. Both parents and students are to be advised of behavioural expectations for any field study. This includes specific consequences for serious behavioural breaches. For example, if a student will be sent home, at parent expense, from a field study this consequence must be communicated on the parent consent form. Consent forms are to be used to outline student conduct expectations and consequences or, at minimum, must require parent acknowledgment that their child has been informed that they are to abide by the rules and regulations of the field study.
- 21.4.5.3. For overnight field studies teachers are to consider having students, especially those in the senior grades, sign a field study specific behaviour contract.

#### 21.4.6. Medical Consent

- 21.4.6.1. A specific parent emergency medical consent form must be collected in addition to the school-based parent consent form for all Category 2, 3, 4, and 5 field studies. Medical information about each participant on the field study is also to be obtained.

#### 21.4.7 Waivers

- 21.4.7.1 School-based parent consent forms are not considered waivers that release teachers from legal responsibility.
- 21.4.7.2 Legally, parents cannot waive the rights of a minor (the student). As such, the District discourages the use of industries/commercial enterprises that require parents to sign student waivers/indemnification agreements as a condition of participation in field studies. An industry/commercial enterprise may request signed informed consent/acknowledgment of risk of the parent, in addition to the signed informed consent obtained through the school-based parent consent form.
- 21.4.7.3 If an industry or commercial enterprise insists on a waiver of liability the Educator-in-Charge must, consult with the Principal, and consider whether the proposed activity and the risks associated with the activity are to be pursued. This can be accomplished through completing a *Risk Assessment for Waiver*. If the activity is an exceptional opportunity that the Educator-in-Charge and Principal wish to pursue following the risk assessment, the approval of the Director of Instruction is required.

### 21.5 Passport Verification Form

Completion of the passport verification process by the Educator in Charge is required for all students travelling out of the country (Category 4 and 5). The Passport Verification Form must be submitted to the Director of Instruction. Copies of student passports are not required by the District. Category 5 excursions are addressed in Appendix 260A.

## 21.6 Group Travel Medical, Interruption and Cancellation Insurance

Required insurance is secured and confirmation is provided as part of application for approval (as required).

## 22 Supervision

22.1 Field studies planning and preparation must include a supervision plan with consideration of special supervision risk factors affecting the ratio of students to supervisors, needs for specialized skills and qualifications, and the need for female and male supervisors, and students with special needs. The degree of supervision depends on:

22.1.1 The age and maturity of the student

22.1.2 The needs of the students

22.1.3 The inherent danger of the activity

22.1.4 The circumstances of the particular activity (e.g., a trip to the museum would not need as many supervisors as a higher risk outdoor trip).

22.2 The Educator-in-Charge is responsible for vigilant supervision of students at all times and must always be in charge although the Educator-in-Charge may be assisted by volunteer supervisors. Volunteer supervisors must be selected, oriented and supervised to effectively perform their roles in accordance with AP 490A *Volunteer Guidelines*. All supervisors must be knowledgeable of and abide by the *District's Guidelines for Adults Interacting with Students* as per AP 490A.

22.3 The Educator-In-Charge must ensure that supervision is provided at all times and the volunteer supervisors are informed and competent to deal with emergencies that might arise.

22.4 The minimum acceptable standard of supervision for all student field studies, unless specifically required and adjusted by the Principal, or involving Category 3 (Higher Risk Outdoor activities) activities are:

Grade	Category 1 <i>Day Studies</i>	Category 2* <i>Outside Lower-Mainland</i>	Category 3 <i>Higher-Risk</i>	Category 4* <i>Out of Province and Cross-Border (Canada &amp; USA)</i>
K-3	2 supervisors per class	1 supervisor for 8 students	N/A	N/A
4-7	1 supervisor per class, with additional	1 supervisor for	Activity Dependent	1 supervisor for

	supervision support required dependent on the activity.	10 students		10 students
8-12	1 supervisor per class	1 supervisor for 15 students	Activity Dependent	1 supervisor for 10 students

22.5 The Appendix outlines supervision ratios for Category 5 field studies.

22.6 Additional supervision is required when:

22.6.1 There is an increased risk (see Category 3 requirements).

22.6.2 There is participation of students with special needs.

22.6.3 There are crowded venues.

22.7 Additional supervision requirements will be determined by the Educator-In-Charge of planning the field study and agreed to by the Principal. This will be done prior to initiating the required field study approval process.

22.8 Gender Specifications for Supervision

22.8.1 For all overnight excursions, it is recommended that there be at least two (2) supervisors, no matter the size or age of the group, and the gender of the accompanying supervisors must be reflective of the students gender identity attending the excursion. For example, overnight excursions with both male and female participants must include both a male and female adult supervisor. Students who identify as gender non-binary will communicate to staff prior to departure the supervisor(s) with whom they feel most comfortable dealing with.

22.8.2 For all higher-risk outdoor pursuits (Category 3), and day field studies where travel extends beyond the Lower-Mainland (Category 2) it is recommended that supervision and adult supervisors follow the criteria outlined in 22.8.1, but it is not required.

23 Specific Guidelines for Category 3 Field Studies

23.1 Category 3 based field studies entail a level of risk that is higher than activities in which students are normally engaged in at school and must prescribe to the additional following expectations.

23.2 The same planning and preparation criteria as outlined in this Administrative Procedure apply to higher-risk outdoor pursuits. The fact that higher-risk pursuits are more extensive means that other additional factors must be considered, and Educators-in-Charge must consider whether they have the capacity to provide for the safety of their students within the context of the activity.

23.3 Supervision for Higher-Risk (Category 3) Field Studies

23.3.1 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.

- 23.3.2 The Principal and Director of Instruction must be satisfied that the Educator-in-Charge will provide adequate supervision, competent instruction, and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities, and that supervision meets the level of competence required for the activity.
- 23.3.3 Situational factors must be considered when determining the appropriate number of supervisors for a higher-risk activity. Generally, outdoor pursuits include risks that mandate more supervisors than a regular field studies excursion. In determining the appropriate number of supervisors required for an outdoor pursuit, assess:
  - 23.3.3.1 Industry standards for supervision (the ratios set by specific industries/ organizations that govern the outdoor pursuit/activity);
  - 23.3.3.2 Leadership factors (knowledge, skills, experience of the supervisors);
  - 23.3.3.3 Student factors (age, grade, knowledge, fitness, skill, experience, behaviour, social needs); and
  - 23.3.3.4 Trip factors (nature of activity, nature of environment, duration of outing, season, communication capacity, time/distance from emergency response).
- 23.3.4 Appropriate supervision of a higher-risk outdoor pursuit must take into account the ability to maintain adequate supervision during the execution of a safety plan/emergency response plan.
- 23.3.5 In approving a higher-risk outdoor pursuit trip proposal, the Principal must be satisfied that the Educator-in-Charge will provide adequate supervision and competent instruction and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities. As such, it is imperative that those Educators who involve themselves in higher-risk outdoor pursuits have the required certification and/or competence.
- 23.3.6 In planning Category 3 excursions Educators in Charge, teachers and Principals are encouraged to access *Youth Safe Outdoors*. *Youth Safe Outdoors* is a reference guide that articulates recommended safety practices of relevance to teaching/leading off-site student experiences, outdoor pursuits/aquatics, and travel excursions. It has been developed in alignment with site-specific safety guidelines and practices to help reduce the potential for injury. *Youth Safe Outdoors* includes detailed risk mitigation strategies to support teacher planning, implementation and to support ensuring teacher and student readiness and program suitability.

## 24 Risk Mitigation

A paramount consideration on selecting, planning, organizing and conducting student field studies is to minimize risk to everyone as all field studies entail some added element of risk. Risk cannot be eliminated; but it can be managed. Careful consideration of the management of risks is an expectation of all staff involved in student field studies.

- 24.1 Student field studies involve different degrees of risk and accordingly call for different levels of duty of care, parent communication and parent consent.

- 24.2 When planning field studies, opportunities within the District are not to be overlooked. All other factors being equal, local field studies may eliminate many of the negative factors and risks often associated with travel outside the community.
- 24.3 In order to minimize risk and maximize safety, the following measures apply:
- 24.3.1 Student group characteristics of age, developmental level, area of study, skills and self-discipline are to be considered in selecting appropriate field studies.
  - 24.3.2 Parent information is to be provided on field study opportunities to enable them to decline those which they believe may be inappropriate for their child or exceed their risk tolerance.
  - 24.3.3 Parental permission is to include the opportunity for parents to advise of their child's unique medical, dietary and other special considerations.
  - 24.3.4 Safety assessment must be addressed before plans are finalized for all new field studies. This will vary from informal information gathering on routine or repeat field studies to systematic review of more complex field studies.
  - 24.3.5 Specialized resources needed are to be identified and incorporated into the program. These resources may include:
    - 24.3.5.1 Safety equipment;
    - 24.3.5.2 First aid kit and cellphone/SAT phone;
    - 24.3.5.3 Qualified instructors; and/or
    - 24.3.5.4 Guides familiar with the area.
  - 24.3.6 Students with diverse needs must be provided with appropriate safety equipment both for their transportation and their participation in activities.
  - 24.3.7 Preparatory instruction of students will include both the development of physical skills and the self-discipline to participate.
  - 24.3.8 Parent meetings may be organized both to provide parents with risk assessment information and to have parental reinforcement of school expectations.
  - 24.3.9 Supervision plan is established.
  - 24.3.10 Volunteers are selected, orientated and supervised.
  - 24.3.11 Transportation is planned to be safe and volunteer drivers are selected, orientated and supervised.
  - 24.3.12 Critical incident response plans/ safety plans are developed before travel in order to respond to emergent situations.
  - 24.3.13 Emergency contact/health forms are accessible during the course of the field study.

## 25 Safety Protocols

- 25.1 A safety assessment must be conducted for all off-site activities. A safety plan/emergency response plan must be included in the planning process for all field studies. Supervisors must be aware of any potential student medical problems, e.g.

bee sting allergies. Students with emergency alert situations will be under the direct supervision of a supervisor.

25.2 For field studies that are safety sensitive (i.e. Category 3) the Educator-in-Charge must organize for:

25.2.1 A first aid kit appropriate to the needs of the students/nature of the event

25.2.2 A chain of notification in the event of an emergency. This chain must include the parents, the Principal, and the area Director of Instruction.

25.2.3 A means of emergency communication is to be available

25.2.4 A supervision plan that supports both the injured student and the remaining students participating in the activity

25.3 For any student injured on a field study, the SPP Incident Report form must be completed as soon as practicable. A copy of the form and the signed school-based parent consent form must be forwarded to the Secretary Treasurer's Office.

#### 25.4 Safety Equipment

25.4.1 Safety helmets must be worn by all students involved in cycling, downhill skiing, snowboarding, rock climbing, skateboarding, rollerblading, and whitewater activities. Helmets are strongly recommended for ice skating.

25.4.2 For boating activities, including aquatic paddling, students must be wearing Ministry of Transport (M.O.T.) Approved Lifejackets or Type I Approved Personal Flotation Devices or be following the specific rules for competition (e.g. rowing).

#### 25.5 Safety Protocols for Ski Activities

25.5.1 The Educator-in-Charge must ensure suitable attendance records are maintained and shared with supervisors. Additionally, a cell phone or communication device for supervisors is to be available for use throughout the trip.

25.5.2 Attendance must be taken prior to the departure and made available to the Principal.

25.5.3 Upon arrival, all students must remain together while mountain personnel provide instructions, lessons and designate appropriate ski areas based on skill level observed. The Educator-in-Charge of the ski/snowboard activity shall be responsible for coordinating with on-hill resort personnel/instructors.

25.5.4 Supervisors shall provide designated "on hill" minimum supervisory ratios of 1:6 for elementary and 1:10 for secondary students. Supervisors may include mountain staff when students are involved in a prescribed ski/snowboard program

25.5.5 Supervision shall involve movement around different slopes at set times designated by the Educator-in-Charge.

25.5.6 Each supervisor shall have responsibility for a specific group of students and shall take attendance at designated times throughout the day.

- 25.5.7 Supervisors will actively monitor and enforce areas of use on the hill re: out-of-bounds areas, and ensure runs are appropriate for the level of the skier.
- 25.5.8 Attendance must be taken before departing from the ski area.
- 25.5.9 The Educator-in-Charge must check with mountain personnel for messages or complaints about on hill infractions before leaving the site.

## 25.6 Safety Protocols for Swimming Activities

- 25.6.1 In planning swimming activities schools work with an aquatic service provider, such as a community pool or camp that provides Life Guards. Aquatic best practice calls for at least one certified Life Guard minimum for every 25 swimmers in such facilities
- 25.6.2 Where working with a service provider, the Educator in Charge remains responsible for coordinating the activity, ensuring informed parental/guardian consent, securing sufficient numbers of assistants to help supervise the activity, and working with the service provider facility.
- 25.6.3 Parents/guardians should identify the student's approximate aquatic skill level to facilitate securing sufficient numbers of Lifeguards, supervisors and/or instructors as part of the informed consent process.
- 25.6.4 Before being permitted to swim in water above their chest height without a PFD the students must be given a survival swim test, or an endurance test. As outlined in *Youth Safe Outdoors* the survival swim test consists of a roll into deep water, treading water for 1 minute and swimming 50m using any method. The endurance test only includes the 50m swim. Whichever test is used, it will generally be conducted by venue staff and can be used to channel students into appropriate level swimming lessons. If the swim is a recreational outing, the successful students can be given an identifying mark on their arm, or an identification tag or ribbon. Those not taking or passing the test may also be given a marker (of different colour or design to distinguish them to lifeguards and supervisors).
- 25.6.5 Unless in a structured swimming class (i.e., small group with designated instructor) all non-swimmers or weak swimmers should wear a PFD when in or near the water or they must be restricted to a well-marked shallow area (less than chest height).
- 25.6.6 All rules and regulations of the swimming area, diving area, swing ropes, pool slides, waterslides, hot tubs/steam rooms/saunas, change rooms and/or other related facilities in the aquatic must be presented to the students and followed. This rule review may be done by the venue staff and the Educator in Charge is to confirm arrangements.
- 25.6.7 Supervision of Swimming
  - 25.6.7.1 Change/locker rooms must be appropriately supervised in consideration of the age and maturity of students.
  - 25.6.7.2 For recreational swimming in an exclusive use context, a head counting system should be used at regular intervals, particularly with larger groups;

- 25.6.7.3 For recreational swimming, students should swim with a buddy of comparable swimming ability and should buddy up quickly on command. Students should know the consequences of not swimming with their buddy (e.g., a 5-minute time out on deck).
- 25.6.7.4 Generally, when students aged eight or older are in the water, and especially with larger groups, some adult supervisors should remain out of the water and position themselves so that the students are in clear sight (i.e., supervisors distributed around swimming area and standing at or near the waterline).
- 25.6.7.5 When students under age eight are in the water, instructors/supervisors (not Lifeguards) must be in the water with them.
- 25.6.7.6 Supervision ratio is supported by certified Lifeguard(s) as per the number/ratio determined by the Facility Manager for supervision of the particular facility and bather load.
- 25.6.7.7 The suggested minimum supervisor to student ratios for are:
  - K – 3 (1:6 / 2:12)
  - 4 – 7 (1:10 / 2:20)
  - 8 – 12 (1:15 / 2:30)
 Adjust supervision ratio if/as necessary due to the presence of any special considerations.

## 25.7 Additional Protocols for Higher Risk Aquatic Swimming Activities

Many school groups find themselves with opportunities to take advantage of one or more aquatic environments that differ from aquatic service providers outlined in 25.6. Some examples may include swimming in a hotel pool while on a band trip, swimming at a beach, swimming in a lake at the end of the day while on a canoe trip, or an aquatic context that relies upon Lifesavers and other supervisory systems versus certified, qualified Lifeguards (National Lifeguard Service - NLS) to support the group.

25.7.1 Higher Risk Swimming Activities include hotel swimming pools, open water (lake or ocean) and remote contexts. An activity that involves swimming or wading in a river, lake or ocean at a site that is not designated swimming area, must be treated as a higher care activity.

25.7.2 Students are appropriately supervised (considering age, maturity and context). In addition the supervision guidelines in 25 are applied. Higher Risk aquatic activities are not supported for K-3.

25.7.3 The teacher/leader must be competent to organize the swimming activity; to demonstrate, instruct and supervise it; and to effect rescue and emergency procedures as necessary, or to otherwise provide for any or all of these functions

and capacities (e.g., using a service provider, Lifeguard or Lifesaver). Where working with a service provider (e.g., hotel,), the Educator in Charge will be involved in coordinating the activity, ensuring informed parental/guardian consent, securing sufficient numbers of assistants to help supervise the activity, and working with the service provider to ensure the group's needs are met. A certified Lifesaver or comparably trained person is required to supervise the aquatic environment and group. In determining the number of Lifesavers needed, consider the size and configuration of the environment (e.g., number of pools, sight lines); group size, student grade/age, and swimming ability.

25.7.4 Those serving as Lifesavers must:

25.7.4.1 have CPR training (any level). Standard level first aid training is also recommended;

25.7.4.2 be trained in the facility operating and emergency procedures, or be able to develop appropriate safety and emergency plans for a site to be used for an incidental swimming activity;

25.7.4.3 have a Bronze Medallion, be a minimum of 16 year of age and be at least two years older than the students being supervised.

25.7.5 Parents/guardians must:

25.7.5.1 be notified of the supervisory arrangements

25.7.5.2 acknowledge awareness of the potential hazards associated with the swimming/wading/water park activity, and

25.7.5.3 consent to their child's participation.

25.7.5.4 Parents/guardians should identify the student's approximate aquatic skill level to facilitate securing sufficient numbers of lifesavers, supervisors and/or instructors.

25.7.6 Swimming, wading or other aquatic activities should never be allowed as an impromptu activity for which there is no safety or emergency plan and for which the parents/ guardians and principal or designate have not approved.

25.7.7 The swimming area must be clearly marked, free from hazards, roped off with floating devices or boundaries otherwise clear, and reasonably clean (i.e., not polluted).

25.7.8 Students must not dive head first from the pool edge (or other similar surface close to the water level), unless the water at that point has a minimum depth at least 2.5 meters.

25.7.9 Duration of swim should consider the type (age, skill level) of swimmers, temperature and condition of water, time of day, and objectives of the activity.

25.7.10 Swimming in moving rivers or streams should only be undertaken if the Lifesaver assesses the conditions and group and deems them sufficiently safe to proceed as per *Youth Safe Outdoors* guidelines.

25.7.11 Persons assuming Lifesaver responsibilities should be clearly visible and identifiable.

- 25.7.12 Where a particular off-site experience involves a water-based activity (e.g., canoeing), parents/guardians should be asked to verify the student's level of swimming training/skill.
- 25.7.13 No swimming after dark.
- 25.7.14 No distance swims in open water except where this is part of a specific planned swimming or triathlon program and informed parental/guardian consent has been secured. Appropriate rescue craft must be provided.
- 25.7.15 Students should know an emergency signal and response.
- 25.7.16 An emergency action plan should be in place specific to the activity and environment.

## 26. Field Study Finances

- 26.1 Funds for student field studies may be raised in the context of Administrative Procedure 520 - Fund-Raising.
- 26.2 Field studies must be planned with a due regard to economy in order to be affordable.
- 26.3 Financial arrangements for field studies are to be clearly communicated to parents including the use of "free" tickets and accruing travel benefits.
- 26.4 Revenues and expenditures in relation to student field studies are to be accounted for pursuant to the methodology described in District's *Guidelines and Procedures for Handling Monies* outlined by the Secretary Treasurer.
- 26.5 Before any personal contributions are accepted for field studies, contributors must be notified, in writing that the District is not responsible for any losses which may arise from cancellation.
- 26.6 Employee-On-Call expenses to replace staff absent on field studies may be factored into the study's financial planning.
- 26.7 Where parents are financially contributing to extended field studies, financial arrangements for staff and volunteer travel costs must be transparent, including the use of any "free" tickets and the accruing travel benefits earned from the group's travel.

## 27 Transportation

- 27.1 Where a group of students is transported by a single vehicle (bus), the Educator-in-Charge is to accompany the group. Where students are transported in several vehicles, the Educator-in-Charge will generally accompany the largest section of the group. Included in this group would be those students with exceptional needs which would be unfamiliar to volunteer supervisors.
- 27.2 A list of students assigned to each bus or vehicle must be completed and a copy filed at the school. The list is to be utilized to account for all students before beginning the return travel of a field study.

- 27.3 Where there is a travel advisory issued by authorities, the Educator-in-Charge will consult with the Principal before travelling.
- 27.4 Public Transportation: Public buses and trains (Translink) are adequately insured for the passenger limitations for which they are licensed.
- 27.5 Private Vehicles: Volunteer driver selection, orientation and supervision is addressed in Administrative Procedure 565 – Student Transportation in Private Vehicles.
- 27.6 Seat-belts: B.C. seat-belt legislation requires that: "drivers and passengers must properly use the seat-belts provided." It is also the responsibility of the driver to see that students aged six to sixteen properly use the seat-belts provided. The District advises that students are not to be transported in private vehicles, unless there is a seat-belt provided for each one, and where required a booster seat. No vehicle used for transporting students on field studies is ever to be overloaded.
- 27.7 Booster Seats: The B.C. Motor Vehicles Act requires the use of approved booster seats in vehicles for all children whose body weight is 18 – 36kg (40-80lbs) or until a height of 4'9" or age 9.
- 27.8 Buses: Non-District school buses may be utilized subject to the vendor having a school bus permit and liability insurance of at least \$10 million.
- 27.8.1 Principals considering buying or leasing a school bus and providing their own driver must be aware of the proper driver's license required for transporting passengers in the vehicle and requirements of the *Motor Carrier Act*. For insurance purposes, school-owned buses/vehicles must be registered in the name of the District and the insurance must be purchased through the District Office to ensure appropriate minimum coverage is met.
- 27.8.2 Societies associated with schools which provide school bus services are subject to the same requirements as other non-District school bus operators.
- 27.9 Vans: Educators-in-Charge contracting vans must be knowledgeable of applicable licensing and safety requirements. Any vehicle that has a seating capacity of more than ten persons including the driver is defined by the Motor Vehicles Act as a "bus". A "bus" used to transport students is required to have a Valid School Bus Permit and MUST carry Third Party Liability Limits of \$10,000,000. This will include volunteers' vehicles, rental vehicles and vehicles owned, leased or contracted by the District for student transportation. The driver of the vehicle must carry a class 2 or 4 license depending on the vehicle's seating capacity and the driver needs to complete a District volunteer driver's form.

Reference: Sections 17, 20, 22, 65, 75, 85 School Act  
Motor Carrier Act  
Motor Vehicles Act  
Collective Agreements

Adopted: November 1973

Revised: January 22, 1979; August 1, 1990; December 12, 1995; January 1999; October 5, 2009; September 24, 2018, February 5, 2020, June 2023