

TITLE: FIELD TRIPS – OVERNIGHT

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To ensure the safety of students, staff, volunteers and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board in matters relating to overnight field trips, which include at least one overnight stay, and remain within Canada.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Billeting** means the provision of board and lodging to District students in the homes of receiving students during a field trip or student group exchange.
- 2.2 **Board** means the Board of Trustees
- 2.3 **District** means the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.
- 2.4 **First Aid** means emergency help using readily available materials which is given to an injured or suddenly ill person. First aid is used to preserve life, prevent the injury or illness from becoming worse and to promote recovery.
- 2.5 **Lead Trip Supervisor** means a District employee, normally a teacher, who assumes responsibility for organizing a school trip and assumes responsibility during the field trip.
- 2.6 **Ontario Physical Health Education Association (Ophea)** means the not-for-profit organization which works in partnership with school boards, public health, government and non-government organizations, and private organizations to develop programs and services that support healthy, active school and communities.
- 2.7 **Ontario Physical Health Education Safety Guidelines** means the minimum standards for risk management practices for school boards to focus the attention of teachers, intramural supervisors and coaches on safe practices in every activity, in order to minimize the element of risk. (Ophea Safety Guidelines are accessible at: <http://safety.ophea.net/>).
- 2.8 **Overnight Field Trip** means an off-site curricular-based trip offered to students from the school which includes at least one overnight stay within Canada.

- 2.9 **Program Service Provider** means a business, organization or agency which provides a service and/or educational program to support or facilitate the planned itinerary or activities during a field trip or excursion.
- 2.10 **Student Group Exchange** refers to an educational tour where students are provided board and lodging in the homes of a receiving student and family. This procedure only applies to student exchanges organized by the District and are not independently organized by the student's parents/guardians.
- 2.11 **Trip Supervisor(s)** means other District employees or volunteers who may be assigned responsibilities as defined by the Lead Trip Supervisor in the organizing or execution of a field trip.
- 2.12 **Volunteer** means an unpaid individual who attends a field trip to assist the Lead Trip Supervisor in carrying out their duties.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

- 3.1 The School Superintendent is responsible for the authorization of all overnight trips.
- 3.2 The school principal is responsible for:
- a) ensuring that the proposed field trip will adhere to all District policies and procedures;
 - b) reviewing and approving OCDSB 639 Overnight Pre-trip Approval Plan;
 - c) ensuring that activities planned are age appropriate and suitably related to curricular expectations and learning outcomes;
 - d) the principal is responsible for ensuring that all fundraising conforms to Ministry guidelines and District policies and procedures, if required;
 - e) ensuring appropriate transportation and supervision have been arranged; and
 - f) ensuring that the Lead Trip Supervisor has access to a means of communication immediately prior to and throughout the international trip, where possible.
- 3.3 The Lead Trip Supervisor is responsible for:
- a) ensuring that the proposed school trip will adhere to all District policies and procedures;
 - b) completing OCDSB 639 Overnight Pre-trip Approval Plan to the school principal for review and approval before involving the parents or students in the planning process;
 - c) preparing OCDSB 905 Parental Consent for Overnight Trip Participation Form;
 - d) making the arrangements for the trip, including transportation;
 - e) ensuring adequate supervision on the trip;
 - f) monitoring the behaviour of all participants; and

- g) ensuring the security of personal information collected about students.
- 3.4 Trip Supervisors are responsible for assisting the Lead Trip Supervisor in carrying out the responsibilities that have been assigned for the duration of the trip.
- 3.5 Volunteers are responsible for:
 - a) assisting the staff, at the direction of the Lead Trip Supervisor, in carrying out the responsibilities they have been assigned for the duration of the trip; and
 - b) completing OCDSB Form 649 Field Trip Volunteer Acknowledgement and Disclaimer Waiver for approval by the school principal.
- 3.6 Parents/Guardians are responsible for:
 - a) completing and submitting all required consent forms;
 - b) informing staff of any special individual needs of their child(ren);
 - c) supplying any necessary medication, equipment or supporting documentation needed to accommodate those special needs; and
 - d) making themselves aware of all details of the itinerary, contact numbers and travel arrangements as provided by the Lead Trip Supervisor.
- 3.7 Students are responsible for following the District and School Codes of Conduct at all times during the trip.

4.0 PROCEDURE

General Planning

- 4.1 All overnight trips must have clearly stated, reasonable and attainable educational objectives which are curriculum related and/or may constitute part of an ongoing school activity.
- 4.2 All overnight trips must be approved in advance by the principal, and approved by the school superintendent at least twenty school days before departure, except for extenuating circumstances, such as competitions where advance notice is not possible.
- 4.3 Participation on a field trip is voluntary and requires written consent from the parent/guardian or, where a student is 18 years of age or older, the student's written consent.
- 4.4 Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that all overnight field trips are both equitable and accessible to encourage the participation of all eligible students.
- 4.5 Field trip costs are expected to be affordable to students and approved by the principal. Schools will make known the availability of and will provide financial assistance for students in need. Costs, including fundraising, will be reviewed annually with input from the school council.

Trip Planning

- 4.6 The Lead Trip Supervisor will submit OCDSB 639 Overnight Pre-trip Approval Plan to the principal for review and approval. This must be signed by the Lead Trip Supervisor, the principal and the Superintendent prior to any communication with students and parents. The form will indicate in general terms:
- a) the curricular focus, and description of the educational purpose, the type of trip, the destination, and the dates;
 - b) the school days affected;
 - c) the travel route, means of transportation, likely accommodation, proposed itinerary, tour operator or Program Service Provider (if applicable) and estimated cost per student;
 - d) the number of students, number of staff, number of volunteers and the adult/student ratio proposed; and
 - e) the inherent risk, including the OSBIE risk rating and identification of the first aid provider, if required based on the OBSIE risk rating; and
 - f) Ensure that the supervision requirements are appropriately met, as follows:

Grade	Field Trips	Special Education **
K-3	Not permitted	Not permitted
4-6	1 adult/8 students	1 adult/8 students
7-8	1 adult/10 students	1 adult/10 students
9-12	1 adult/ 15 students	1 adult/10 students
Both male and female supervisor (s) and/or volunteer(s) are required, unless student participants represent only one gender.		

** applies to system classes but excludes gifted program students (supervised according to their grade level)

- 4.7 Before approving a field trip the principal will be satisfied that:
- a) the Lead Trip Supervisor, Trip Supervisor(s), and volunteer(s) understand Board policies and procedures defining their responsibilities and liabilities;
 - b) the students, the Lead Trip Supervisor, Trip Supervisor(s), and volunteer(s) receive adequate information about the trip; and,

- c) arrangements are in place for covering all the safety, legal and financial obligations involved. This includes student safety plans and following Ophea guidelines for sports, where required.
- 4.8 When planning an overnight field trip, the Lead Trip Supervisor must make reasonable efforts to consider the following so that staff, parents/guardians and students are fully informed and able to meet the requirements for participation:
- a) timelines
 - i. respect timelines depending upon the nature of the educational tour, for approval, payment of deposits, final list of participants etc.;
 - ii. respect timelines to give notice to parents to complete any required documentation, financing, or special requirements; and
 - iii. allow sufficient time to select and secure appropriate staff and volunteers and to offer them any training that might be necessary.
 - b) itinerary development
 - i. ensure that the trip has clearly stated, reasonable and obtainable educational goals;
 - ii. ensure that planned activities are age-appropriate for all students on the trip;
 - iii. draft a daily itinerary based on curricular scope and number of days;
 - iv. confirm compliance with Ophea safety guidelines for physical activities;
 - v. determine whether any additional specialized training is required by accompanying staff, given the itinerary; and
 - vi. assign tasks and areas of responsibility to each trip supervisor, with the approval of the principal so that all points on the itinerary are adequately supervised.

Transportation

- 4.9 The Lead Trip Supervisor will arrange in advance any required transportation to be used throughout the trip, provide a list to the principal of all modes of transportation to be used throughout the trip and ensure designated adult supervision on any bus or van used during school trip activities from starting location to end location.
- 4.10 When staff, parents or volunteer(s) transport students, a form OCDSB 657 Authorization to Transport Students Participating in School Events must be completed and signed by the principal, the driver, and the owner if the driver does not own the vehicle; these forms are to be kept by the principal.
- 4.11 Where a Program Service Provider, travel company or educational exchange organization is being used, they must be registered under the *Travel Industry Act* (1990) and possess a valid registration number. The Lead Trip Supervisor must obtain proof of Program Service Provider or travel agency Certificate of Insurance indicating comprehensive general liability coverage and the name and contact details of the liaison person in Canada who is available both prior to and during the tour.
- 4.12 Details regarding all transportation to be used throughout the trip will be listed in OCDSB 905 Parental Consent for Overnight Trip Participation Form.

Accommodation

- 4.13 Accommodation must be arranged in advance and be appropriate to the nature of the trip, to the curricular activities planned and to the ages and needs of the students.
- 4.14 Room allocation for staff and students must adequately address supervision considerations, gender and special needs.
- 4.15 If billeting is being used, all efforts must be made to make suitable and compatible matches. Police reference checks will be obtained where possible, otherwise precautionary measures must be made to ensure the safety of students and the suitability of the host family. Every student must have continual phone access to a Trip Supervisor.

Insurance

- 4.16 The Lead Trip Supervisor must ensure that insurance requirements are met for all of the following categories:
 - a) trip cancellation;
 - b) accident;
 - c) medical; and
 - d) loss/damage to baggage or equipment.
- 4.17 The trip participants will pay costs for all extended medical insurance coverage. The entire group travelling is required to be covered by a comprehensive group insurance plan with the cost shared amongst all participants.

Risk Management and Safety Planning

- 4.18 The Superintendent of Instruction, Principal, and Lead Trip Supervisor will assess potential risks, and consider strategies to mitigate risk, as part of the pre-trip approval process.
- 4.19 The Lead Trip Supervisor will ensure that the Supervisor/Student ratio meets the requirements at all points during the trip. They will inform students and parents of safety requirements, expectations for appropriate student behavior, and standard emergency procedures.
- 4.20 All activities that include risk will be clearly indicated in OCDSB 905 Parental Consent for Overnight Trip Participation Form.

Budgeting and Financial Accountability

- 4.21 Reasonable efforts will be made to offer a trip that is affordable to students.
- 4.22 All fundraising and financial transactions will comply with all current OCDSB fundraising and funds management policies and procedures.

- 4.23 Where appropriate, depending on the nature of the overnight trip, the Lead Trip Supervisor will designate a trip supervisor to oversee a budget which will include, but not be limited to, a clearly articulated payment schedule if required, a complete OCDSB 906 Field Trip Cancellation and Refund Policy, and a schedule with anticipated revenues for any planned fundraising activities.

Communications Planning

- 4.24 All Trip Supervisors, and the principal or designate, will have access to all relevant contact and medical information throughout the trip.
- 4.25 There will be a local information number, accessible at any time, for parents/guardians and staff to use in an emergency situation.

Trip Promotion

- 4.26 An information package will be prepared with the trip itinerary, parental consent forms, costs, parental expectations, student expectations, the school Codes of Conduct, and all other required or relevant information that the Lead Trip Supervisors feel should be included.
- 4.27 The Lead Trip Supervisor will ensure that a signed agreement has been obtained from each parent/guardian to pay for an individual student to return in the case of an incident that involves a serious breach of Code of Conduct.

Pre-Trip Review Process

- 4.28 Supervision duty coverage and lesson plans will be available and complete for incoming occasional teachers.
- 4.29 The principal will ensure that every trip supervisor has a copy of the emergency information.

Supervision

- 4.30 The Lead Trip Supervisor is responsible for the supervision and safety of students at all times during a trip. An accurate attendance count must be taken by the supervisor(s) at all points of departure.
- 4.31 Supervisors must ensure that they have pertinent information and equipment in their possession at all times including but not limited to medical information, first aid kit, and home or other telephone numbers.
- 4.32 Supervisors assuming responsibility for supervising waterfront activities including swimming and canoeing must have, or be assisted by a person who has, qualifications as stated in the most recent/current Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines
- 4.33 Volunteers for overnight field trips must be approved in accordance with District Policy P.067.SCO: Volunteers, and District Procedure PR.555.SCO: Volunteers.
- 4.34 Prior to departure, all supervisors and accompanying volunteers are expected to know the details of the field trip, and their specific responsibilities.

- 4.35 Supervisors and volunteers are expected to support the school Code of Conduct and to report any inappropriate conduct to the Lead Trip Supervisor.
- 4.36 The Lead Trip Supervisor, Trip Supervisor(s) and volunteer(s) are expected to adhere to the schedule/itinerary.
- 4.37 All board policies and procedures apply to students, staff and volunteers for the duration of the trip.
- 4.38 When a student's behaviour on a trip is so disruptive and/or inappropriate as to cause the immediate cancellation of his/her participation in the trip, the student will be returned to school/home immediately, at the parents' expense. This decision will be at the discretion of the Lead Trip Supervisor, in consultation with the principal. The parent will be notified of this decision. The student should be accompanied by a staff member. In special circumstances, a student may be accompanied by another adult or returned to the school or home unaccompanied taking into consideration such factors as the student's age, maturity, distance to be travelled, the method of transportation, and with the parent's knowledge and consent.
- 4.39 All trip supervisors must understand their roles and responsibilities in an emergency and must ask for clarification if there is confusion.
- 4.40 All supervisors will regularly review security protocols with students as appropriate, such as staying in groups of at least three, staying in rooms at night, what to do if a student gets lost.
- 4.41 All supervisors will continue to reinforce student responsibilities and the boundaries of behaviour, particularly during unstructured time.
- 4.42 The Lead Trip Supervisor will document any breaches of the Code of Conduct or other serious incidents. Before imposing sanctions, s/he will discuss any issues with the school principal.

Post-Trip Review

- 4.43 If there are any issues arising from the trip that require immediate attention, the Lead Trip Supervisor will make the principal aware of them upon return. An OBSIE incident report will be completed, if required.
- 4.44 Where appropriate following an overnight trip, a meeting will be held of all trip supervisors and volunteers in order to discuss the successes and challenges of the trip. This will include evaluations of the itinerary and activities, the safety protocols, transportation and accommodation, stakeholder satisfaction, issues, concerns and recommendations. In such cases, a report will be written for the Principal by the Lead Trip Supervisor.
- 4.45 Trip expenses must be reconciled and any extra funds distributed to parents/guardians after all expenses have been accounted for by the Lead Trip Supervisor.

5.0 APPENDICES

(Please right-click on the links below to open appendices in new tabs)

- Appendix A – [Forms checklist and timelines Field Trips- Overnight](#)
- Appendix B – [Planning Activities/Considerations Checklist](#)
- Appendix C – [OCDSB 639 Overnight Pre-trip Approval Plan](#)
- Appendix D – [OCDSB 905 Parental Consent for Overnight Trip Participation Form](#)
- Appendix E – [OCDSB 906 Field Trip Cancellation and Refund Policy](#)
- Appendix F – [OCDSB 657 Authorization to Transport Students Participating in School Events](#)
- Appendix G – [OCDSB Form 649 Field Trip Volunteer Acknowledgement and Disclaimer Waiver](#)
- Appendix H – [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)

6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Board Policy P.029.SCO: Field Trips, Excursions, Educational Tours and Student Exchanges
- Board Policy P.032.SCO: Safe Schools
- Board Policy P.108.SCO: Care of Students with life threatening medical conditions
- Board Policy P.026.SCO: Student Suspension and Expulsion
- Board Policy P.034.SCO: Substance Abuse
- Board Policy P.067.SCO: Volunteers
- Board Policy P.036.SCO: Weapons
- Board Policy P.137.SCO: Concussion Management
- Board Procedure PR.547.SCO: Providing Emergency Medical Care for Students
- Board Procedure PR.548.SCO: Care of Students with life-threatening medical conditions
- Board Policy P.540.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools
- Board Procedure PR.521.SCO: Safe Schools
- Board Procedure PR.515.SCO: Student Suspension/Investigation/Possible Expulsion
- Board Procedure PR.523.SCO: Substance Abuse
- Board Procedure PR.555.SCO: Volunteers
- Board Procedure PR.525.SCO: Weapons
- Board Procedure: PR.561.SCO Concussion Management
- Board Procedure PR.673.SCO Field Trips--Day
- Board Procedure PR.683.SCO Field Trips--International