



SO15 Out of Classroom Field Trips and Excursions

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Trip Category Details

Category I	Approval	Insurance	Timeline
Day Trips, In-province, departing and returning on the same day and not involving activities of increased inherent risk	Principal	Recommended	Two weeks prior to trip
Category II	Approval	Insurance	Timeline
Activities involving increased elements of inherent risk	Principal, and Superintendent of Education	In Province – Recommended	One Month prior to trip
All trips up to and including five (5) days within Ontario and all of Canada		Out of Province – Mandatory	One Month prior to trip
Swimming Activities including but not limited to: Public Pools, Lazy River, Camp/Campsites, Open Water			One month prior to trip
Canoeing and Kayaking			One month prior to trip
All skating trips			One month prior to Trip
Skiing, Snowboarding, Tubing Trips at participating Ontario Snow Resorts Association (OSRA) facilities			One month prior to Trip
Category III	Approval	Insurance	Timeline
All one-day trips to USA l)	Principal, Superintendent of Education and the Director of Education	Mandatory	One month prior to trip
All trips over five (5) days within Canada			Three months prior to trip
All overnight trips outside of Canada			Six months prior to trip
All trips involving air and/or marine travel			Six months prior to trip

1. SUPERVISION RATIO

Ratios for All Categories	
Grade	Supervisors: students
Kindergarten	1:8
Grades 1 – 8	1:10
Grades 9 - 12	1:15

- 1.1 Trip supervisors must include at least one certified teacher employed by the Board.
- 1.2 Staff and volunteer supervisors are not allowed to bring children who are not part of the trip.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of the teacher supervising the field trip and excursion that they understand and be familiar with the risks of the activity.
- 1.4 Trip Supervisors must be experienced in the activities being permitted. Trip Supervisors must receive written instructions on their supervisory duties from the teacher in charge and attend an orientation meeting at the venue.
- 1.5 Male and female chaperones are necessary for all overnight co-ed trips. Non-staff supervisors are considered to be volunteers and they must conform to the Board's Volunteer Procedure SO126 *and* complete the Volunteer Supervisors' Release and Indemnification Form, Appendix D.
- 1.6 The minimum supervision ratio should be exceeded to give special consideration to the physical, emotional, medical and behavioural needs of any students participating in the trip.
- 1.7 The ratio may be also exceeded when taking into consideration the nature of the activity including consideration of risks or as mandated by the facility, to improve student safety when deemed necessary.
- 1.8 Educational activities such as swimming, water sports and winter related activities involve increased elements of risk. On-site, "in the area" supervision is required for all water and ski/snowboarding activities. Please refer to the OPHEA Safety Guidelines.
- 1.9 Supervision Ratios must be met during any mode of transportation.
- 1.10 OPHEA Safety Guideline supervision ratios must be adhered to wherever they are lower than in this Policy.

2. PLANNING FOR INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE FIELD TRIPS

- 2.1 Consult with parents/guardians of young students as well as older students about any fears/anxieties or potential barriers on the trip. Don't presume full knowledge of a student's needs because of a disability.
- 2.2 Always inquire about the accessibility of the field trip location, including washrooms and lunch areas, ahead of time. Usually, this requires a simple phone call. Does the site have a calming/sensory space for students who might become overstimulated? Larger sites often have specific accessibility staff that can help.
- 2.3 Identify potential challenges and rehearse with the child ahead of time. Create a social story to make the trip as predictable as possible. Ensure that essential self-regulation tools (comfort objects, fidgets, weighted vests, special foods, quiet space) are available on the trip.
- 2.4 Check and double-check that accessible transportation has been confirmed. Contact the Manager of Transportation with any concerns around funding accessible transportation.

- 2.5 Ensure that any support staff requirements have been arranged (there is no admission cost for support workers who are required to assist a person with a disability). Contact your Teacher Consultant, Special Education with any concerns.
- 2.6 Make arrangements for any students who do not go on the trip. They should not be expected to stay at home. Field trips are meant to support curriculum expectations, trips should not exclude any students if there is no other way to access that curriculum expectation.
- 2.7 Promote the connection between all peers participating in field trips or any school special events. Ensure that students with a disability can participate in the activities.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the principal, appropriate Superintendent of Education, and Director of Education to administer this policy in accordance with the Out-of-Classroom Field Trips and Excursions Manual.
- 3.2 For trips requiring hotel accommodations and flights, the trip must be booked through an approved Trip and Excursion vendor following TICO Guidelines for School Trips. For Educational/Leadership conferences, overnight tournaments and OFSAA or regional qualifiers, a trip and tour operator is not required. These trips may be booked directly by the school.
- 3.3 All trips must occur between the first and last day of school.
- 3.4 It is the responsibility of the teacher and the principal when planning out-of-classroom experiences to follow and implement all Board policies and procedures within the appropriate timelines.
- 3.5 A student may be denied participation on a school trip based on a demonstrated inability to follow school behaviour guidelines.
- 3.6 Consideration must be given to the possibility that a student may have to return to the school or home prior to the completion of the trip.
- 3.7 Duties of non-teaching personnel, adult volunteers, and coaches will be assigned by the teacher in consultation with the principal and may include specific supervision responsibilities.
- 3.8 Learning expectations for the trip will be established early in the planning process.
- 3.9 The responsibility of the Trip Supervisor is to take reasonable steps to reduce the risks of injuries. This responsibility includes being prepared for emergencies and providing communication to parents/guardians as quickly as possible in the event of a health or safety concern for the student(s). Trip Supervisors must conform to OPHEA Safety Standards.
- 3.10 It is the responsibility of the teacher to hold an Orientation meeting for all overnight trips for parents/guardians/volunteers/supervisors, once approval has been given for an overnight field trip/excursion. Orientation meetings should include the nature of the activities planned, the foreseeable risks of engaging in the activity, supervisors and how many, rules and parameters to be aware of, and abilities of all students. Parents must confirm in writing that they have participated in the Orientation meeting.
- 3.11 Students are required to abide by the school and Board Code of Conduct while on field trips and excursions. Teachers are to ensure that the expectations for unstructured times are clearly communicated in the itinerary as well as expectations for curfew.
- 3.12 Principal, Superintendent, and Director of Education approval must be secured before any commitments, including fundraising for Category II and III trips, are made to

agents, organizers, parents, or students. Teacher to principal communication about the trip is continuous and on-going.

- 3.13 The principal or teacher shall accompany the students and shall act as head Trip Supervisor for all out-of-classroom activities.
- 3.14 For Category II or III trips, one supervisor must have their Emergency First Aid Training and CPR and as outlined by OPHEA and have a travel first aid kit readily available for the duration of the trip.
- 3.15 For all trips, an adequate emergency response plan must be determined in advance of the trip for all activities and must be communicated with all trip supervisors, i.e. lost student, medical emergency, behavioural issue.
- 3.16 For all trips, cancellation and resultant loss of funds, no matter what the cause, is the responsibility of the student, parent /guardian or their insurer.
- 3.17 If school trips or travel must be cancelled/postponed Grand Erie District School Board is not legally liable for any cancellation fees, penalties, loss deposits or forfeiture of any pre-paid costs incurred by students. This is the reason why parents/guardians are advised to purchase trip insurance.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES – WATER ACTIVITIES

- 4.1 These are in addition to Section "3. Responsibilities"
- 4.2 Residential pools and hotel pools are not permitted for swimming.
- 4.3 Swim tests are to be completed in advance of all trips involving water, unless the trip destination has non water related alternative programming.
- 4.4 Emergency procedures must be outlined to students prior to entering the water.
- 4.5 For natural sites please refer to OPHEA Safety Guidelines for Outdoor Education-Swimming. For canoeing and/kayaking please refer to OPHEA Safety Guidelines for Outdoor Education-Canoeing/Kayaking.
- 4.6 It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the supervision ratio and qualifications for lifeguards is followed as outlined in the OPHEA Safety Guidelines.
- 4.7 Standard safety equipment must be accessible at pool or water sites, e.g., signaling devices, reaching poles, spinal boards, throwing line(s), first aid kit.
- 4.8 SWIM TEST:
 - a. The principal or teacher must refer to the OPHEA Safety Guidelines to select the activity specific OPHEA swim test requirements for their trip/excursion.
 - b. The teacher must provide the activity specific OPHEA swim test requirements to the Head Guard conducting the test, along with the attendance sheet to record Pass/Fail status for each student. Swim Test results must be provided to the principal or teacher in charge.
 - c. For Excursions, students must complete the OPHEA swim test upon arrival for their scheduled swim. Students who do not pass the OPHEA swim test and are swimming at a public pool, must follow the Facility Swim Admission Standards. The principal must call the Public Pool Facility in advance to understand what the Facility's Swim Admission Standards are. For class trips not at a public pool, and where a student is not successful, they are not permitted to participate in the swimming. Where the trip is primarily a water trip and there are students who cannot participate, it is recommended that an alternative trip be planned that does not have a water focus.
 - d. For Category II or III school trips that include swimming, it is required that swim tests are conducted in advance; the only exception to this is for overnight camps where swim tests are conducted on site. Overnight camps where the swim test is performed on site must provide a supervised alternative program in the event that

there are students that do not successfully complete the test. Programming should be offered by the camp staff and information on the alternative programming is to be provided to the teacher in advance of the trip.

- e. The Head Instructor/Guard must be informed of any student having life-threatening allergies, a history of diabetes, asthma, heart conditions, convulsions, epilepsy, frequent ear infections, or a medical condition that may affect the student's safety in the water.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES – WINTER ACTIVITIES

- 5.1 These are in addition to Section "3. Responsibilities"
- 5.2 Review OSRA listing of member resorts to ensure that the resort is an approved OSRA member. Visit www.skiontario.ca.
- 5.3 For non-English/French speaking parents/guardians, refer to the OSBIE Ski Package and use of a multilingual cover page to ensure there is a clear understanding of the risks, safety rules and use of consent forms.
- 5.4 All trips that include ski/snowboarding must adhere to the OSBIE School Board/Snow Resort Safety Guidelines for Out-Of-School Trips for Winter Sports Education Programs.
- 5.5 CSA approved ski or snow board helmets are mandatory for snowboarding, downhill skiing, and tubing for all students, staff and volunteers. Skating/Hockey/Bicycle helmets are not an appropriate helmet for these activities.
- 5.6 An assessment of the students' abilities by a visual assessment of performance must be completed. For all non-skiers/snowboards and/or beginners must have lessons before permitted on trails.
- 5.7 All students, staff, and volunteers who are on a skating or hockey trip must wear a CSA approved hockey helmet while on the ice. Full-face masks are required for participation in hockey instructional program, games, or scrimmages. Bicycle or snowboarding helmets are not an appropriate helmet for skating or hockey activities

CSA Approved Hockey Helmets



Helmets Not Permitted



6. MULTIPLE EVENT TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

- 6.1 For short and/or multiple excursions within regular school hours, an Informed Consent Form may be obtained at the beginning of the school year or semester (i.e. Skating programs, health and physical education programs, construction projects or activities that fall within Category II as outlined in the Activity Risk Chart).
- 6.2 For short excursions within regular school hours, trip supervisors must follow classroom supervision ratios; have parental permission; consider age, ability and any required special supervision; consider transportation and number of students.

7. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 Extra-curricular activities are defined as:
 - a. All activities that take place outside of the instructional day
 - b. all student tryouts for team sports
 - c. any after school club or team
 - d. all organized activities during nutritional breaks
- 7.2 Occasional events such as fun days, play days, school dances, barbeques etc. held during the school day at the school site, where parents are informed through school newsletters or other communication channels, are exempt from SO15 Out of Classroom Field Trips and Excursions.

8. INSURANCE

- 8.1 *Students*
 - a. The Board does not provide insurance for students against any accidental death, disability, dismemberment or medical expenses that might occur as a result of an accident during school activities, including sporting events and trips.
 - b. Grand Erie District School Board requires that all parents/guardians declare whether or not they have accident insurance. The declaration form is sent home at the beginning of the school year and kept on file at the school.
 - c. The Board offers information on a protection plan that is made available to the parent/guardian to purchase for their students (Insure My Kids Protection Plan). This plan can be purchased throughout the year.
 - d. Student Accident Insurance is mandatory for Category II trips out of Province and Category III trips as they involve activities requiring special skill or increased inherent risks. All students travelling on board approved trips outside the province of Ontario are required to have individual insurance coverage regardless of the length of the trip, even if it is only a one-day trip. All students must have the appropriate travel insurance coverage that meets or exceeds the Insure My Kids Protection Plan offered to students.
 - e. Parents/guardians may purchase student accident insurance through Grand Erie District School Board approved Travel and Tour operators or provide private accident insurance coverage.
- 8.2 *Grand Erie District School Board Employees*
 - a. Employees are provided with Workplace Insurance benefits provided by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) while acting within the scope of their duties on behalf of the board. All employee accidents must be reported according to Procedure HR 121.
- 8.3 *Volunteers and Chaperones*
 - a. The Board does not provide insurance for volunteers or chaperones against any accidental death, disability, dismemberment or medical/dental expenses that might

occur as a result of accidents during their involvement in school activities, including sporting events and field trips.

- b. For all Category II trips out of Province or Category III trips, volunteers must obtain or provide proof of accident insurance before participating in school trips.

8.4 *Confirmation of Insurance*

- a. Proof of adequate commercial general liability insurance is required through a Certificate of Insurance from venues and service providers who are privately owned and operated independently, including and not limited to rock climbing, zip lining, summer camps, and family farms. Large established public venues, such as Canada's Wonderland, Rogers Centre, Royal Ontario Museum, Maid of the Mist, CN Tower, Canadian War Plane Heritage Museum, Toronto Zoo, and Ontario Science Centre would not be required to provide proof of insurance.
- b. Evidence of comprehensive general liability insurance in the amount of \$2 million dollars must be provided in advance of the trip.

9. TRANSPORTATION

- 9.1 Transportation methods (i.e. plane, marine, other) other than bussing or taxi through approved vendors, is beyond the approval level of both the principal and Superintendent for all Categories and requires approval of the Director.
- 9.2 For kindergarten and primary out of classroom trips, where transportation is required, students must travel by bus only.
- 9.3 Transportation must be appropriate to the age of the students. Provincial legislation regarding child car-seats must be followed.
- 9.4 Depending on the nature of the trip, evaluate the transportation needs taking into consideration the age of the participants, distance of the trip and required accommodations.
- 9.5 For all activities that take place outside of the school day, communication to parents/guardians must clearly outline all transportation responsibilities.
- 9.6 For extra-curricular activities during the school day, the school is responsible for the student transportation and ensuring the requirements are met for volunteer drivers.
- 9.7 If the planned transportation method changes (such as a student leaving with parent/guardian instead of returning via the original transportation method), it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school/teacher ideally prior to the activity, or at least before the activity has ended
- 9.8 Staff and volunteers are not permitted to transport students in rental vehicles. Only certified ground transit through an approved Board vendor is acceptable. These vendors can offer a variety of transportation options and can provide services across Canada.
- 9.9 Vehicle Restrictions:
 - a. 9+ or larger passenger vans (driver plus eight students) are not permitted for student transportation.
- 9.10 For booking transportation outside of Canada, travel must be booked through an approved Travel and Tour operator.
- 9.11 If bussing or a taxi is required, the following steps must be completed
 - a. Obtain a quote through an approved Board vendor.
 - b. Complete a purchase requisition through the current purchasing system identifying the key transportation requirements of the trip.
 - c. Board staff will process the requisition and forward the completed copy to the school and successful vendor.

- d. Vendors submit invoices directly to Student Transportation Services Brant Haldimand Norfolk for verification and payment.
 - e. Cancellations or changes must be made within 48 hours of the scheduled departure to avoid cancellation or change fees.
 - f. Please refer to the Staff Portal > Business Services > Purchasing > What to Buy and Where: Transportation for instructions on booking various modes of transportation, and; Travel and Tour Operators to locate the approved transportation vendor listing.
- 9.12 Marine Travel Documentation & Guidelines
- a. Any kind of Marine Travel including but not limited to ferry, tour boat or dinner cruise is considered a Category III trip.
 - b. Marine Travel must be booked through and an approved Travel and Tour Operator.
 - c. It is the responsibility of the Travel and Tour operator to obtain a current Inspection Certificate and Liability Insurance Certificate.

10. VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

- 10.1 Students can only be transported in privately-owned vehicles by staff or volunteers who possess a valid G Licence and a minimum of \$2 million of liability insurance.
- 10.2 Students may be permitted to drive themselves to extra-curricular events. Students that wish to provide transportation for other students are considered volunteer drivers and must follow the requirements for volunteer drivers.
- 10.3 All volunteer drivers must have completed and signed a Volunteer Driver Form.

11. VEHICLE LIABILITY INSURANCE

- 11.1 Staff and Volunteers should be aware that under the Insurance Act of Ontario the insurance of the driver/owner of the vehicle is the primary policy accessed for claims. The Board does provide liability coverage for employees and volunteers providing transportation on approved out-of-classroom programs. Volunteer drivers and the vehicle owners should check with their insurance providers ensure their policy permits them to transport students for “educational purposes”.

12. TRIPS INVOLVING AIRCRAFT

- 12.1 Only licensed, certified commercial passenger air carriers are to be used.
- 12.2 Cancellation insurance is mandatory and is the responsibility of the student, parent/guardian.
- 12.3 .
- 12.4 The Board assumes no financial responsibility in the event of flight cancellation for whatever reason.
- 12.5 For trips involving aircraft, the trip commences at the school. Students can either take the chartered bus to the airport or arrive by their parent.
- 12.6 Booking of Flights:
 - a. The trip must be approved by the Director of Education prior to booking flights.
 - b. Flights must be booked in consultation with Purchasing Services and/or through an approved Trip and Tour Operator.
 - c. Direct flights are preferred over flights with layovers.

13. TRAVEL AND TOUR OPERATORS

- 13.1 It is required that Category II and III trips are booked through the vendors of record. Business Services has completed a competitive process and has provided a list of approved vendors for Travel and Tour Operators. Please refer to the staff portal Travel and Tour Operators [Travel and Tour Operators - All Documents](#) to obtain a listing of the approved vendors who can provide full service trips and tours. (travel, accommodations, meals, links to curriculum). These vendors have the Board required insurance and licencing to provide this service and have been vetted.
- 13.2 Billeting will not be accepted as a form of accommodation.

14. TRAVEL ADVISORIES

- 14.1 When planning out-of-country trips, teachers must check the Government of Canada Travel and Tourism website for travel advisories to ensure it is safe to travel in the selected country, and again at one month, one week, and one day prior to travel:

Travel Advisories

- 14.2 Changes of a significant nature must be reported to the Principal, Superintendent and Director of Education who will review the information and will reaffirm or withdraw permission for the trip.
- 14.3 The Senior Administrative Team will regularly monitor the health and safety implications of student trip destinations which may result in the withdrawal of trip approvals.

15. IMMUNIZATIONS REQUIRED FOR TRAVEL

- 15.1 Staff, students and volunteers are to consult their family health care provider at least three (3) months before departure to obtain immunizations which may be required for travel to the planned destination. Please refer to the [Public Health Agency](#) for more information.

16. REGIONAL PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL ATHLETIC TRIPS OUTSIDE OF CANADA or REQUIRING FLIGHTS

- 16.1 Athletic Trips include teams and individual students who train outside of school but complete at higher levels. (ie. OFSAA, ie. Basketball teams).
- 16.2 Please follow all Category III requirements for Athletic Trips that are outside of Canada or requiring flights.
- 16.3 When a high school team is performing well, and the possibility of moving on to a higher level of competition is great, the teacher and principal will begin planning for team travel.

17. REQUESTS FOR FORMER STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

- 17.1 Occasionally students may transfer schools after a school trip has been planned and or paid for. The former student is to receive the same duty of care as a student of the school/board and must complete all the same trip and excursion requirements and complete all forms.
- 17.2 The participation of former students in school trips and excursions will only apply if the student has paid for the trip and the trip takes place within the current academic year.

- 17.3 Requests for former students to participate must have the following:
- a. Approval and support from the Teacher and Principal
 - b. No concerns with student behaviour
 - c. Not impact current students from participating
 - d. Approval from the Director of Education

18. FILE RETENTION

- 18.1 Field Trips/Education Outside the Classroom: The school is responsible for keeping all documents on site for 1 year; offsite in a board-designated storage area for 3 years; for a total of 4 years.

SAMPLE: Parental Consent Form

PART A – Trip Information:

Student Name					
School Name		Grade/Class			
Emergency Contact Name		Emergency Contact Phone			
Medical and Emergency Information not previously provided to the school					
Trip Destination					
Method of Transportation <small>Alert Teacher in Charge if method changes</small>					
Teacher in Charge					
Departure From		Date:		Time:	
Return To		Date:		Time:	
Itinerary has been received for trips more than one day		Yes		No	
Cost per Student					

Ontario Health Cards:

Students are encouraged to carry their Ontario Health Cards or photocopy with them when going outside their local school community.

Behaviour:

Students participating in Out-Of-Classroom Education Programs are expected to meet the same standards of behaviour as are required in the regular school setting. Alternative arrangements will be made with the student should it be necessary to return him/her to the school/home prior to the completion of the trip as a result of inappropriate behaviour as outlined in the school’s Code of Conduct or Board Policies. No student would be sent home until appropriate sending and receiving arrangements had been made ensuring the safety of transport and reception of the parent/guardian.

PART B – For Trips of Increased Inherent Risk

Educational activity programs, such as _____
 _____ involve certain elements of risk. Accidents may occur while participating in these activities. Accidents may cause injury. A few examples (the list is not exhaustive) of the type of injury which one is at risk of having, occur while participating in the above-mentioned activity include:

Accidents may result from the nature of the activity and may occur without any fault on either the part of the student or the Grand Erie District School Board or its employees or agents, or the facility where the activity is taking place. By allowing your child to participate in the activity, you are accepting the risk of an accident occurring. The chance of an accident occurring can always be reduced by carefully following instructions while engaged in the activity. If you choose to allow your child to participate in the activity on the date(s) mentioned, you must understand that you will bear the responsibility for any accident that might occur.

The Grand Erie District School Board does NOT provide any accidental death, disability, dismemberment or medical expenses insurance for students participating in these activities.

