

Administrative Procedure 260

OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

Background

Occasional or off-site activities can be valuable educational activities that are intended to provide opportunities to supplement and enhance school programs. Division staff shall ensure that the safe learning environment that exists within the school shall also extend to off-site experiences. Prudent care shall be taken to ensure that off-site activities are organized to maximize educational benefit and protect the safety and well-being of students.

Definitions

Amber Activity (considerable risk): involves and shall include any activity with a foreseeable potential for injury and are those programs included, but not limited to Appendix I: Risk Management – Amber Activities.

Red Activity (prohibited): shall mean an activity that is not acceptable by the Northern Gateway Public Schools and are those activities included, but not limited to Appendix I: Risk Management – Red or Prohibited Activities.

Key Supervisor: shall mean the responsible adult in charge of an off-site activity, be that a teaching or non-teaching staff member who organizes an off-site activity and accompanies the student(s) on the activity. The Principal retains overall responsibility for designating the key supervisor and shall serve as the teacher in charge of any activity where the key supervisor is not a teacher.

Occasional Activity: shall mean, at the Principal's discretion, an activity that takes place within a school outside of regular school hours and does not include intramurals, school athletics (sports teams), clubs, societies, or regularly occurring extra-curricular activities but is intended to capture an infrequent event that foreseeably operates within parallel parameters of an off-site activity.

Off-Site Activity: shall mean an instructional activity or a student activity that occurs at any place, and for any duration, away from the school/school grounds. In order of planning significance, off-site activities shall include:

- a) Local off-site activities: shall include any activity that occurs within Northern Gateway Public Schools, notwithstanding regularly scheduled courses occurring in alternate school locations;

- b) Provincial off-site activities: shall include any activity that occurs out of Northern Gateway Public Schools, but within the province of Alberta;
- c) National off-site activities: shall include any activity that occurs out of the province of Alberta, but within Canada;
- d) International off-site activities: shall include any activity that involves travel to a country other Canada.

The following shall specifically not be considered as off-site or occasional learning activities:

- e) Any Work Experience/Work Study Program or Registered Apprenticeship Program as defined by the Off-Campus Education policy of Alberta Education;
- f) Community-based program activities for students with special needs where such activities are specified in each student's ISP/IPP;
- g) Regularly scheduled Career and Technology Foundations courses held in alternate schools.

Outdoor Pursuits: shall refer to activities related to self-propelled mobility on land, water, ice or snow, and self-sustained outdoor living, i.e., camping, where physical conditions that may present at least some considerable safety risk due to the activity itself or from natural phenomena, i.e., weather, terrain, conditions. Outdoor pursuits may occur in the school (e.g., climbing wall), on the school yard (e.g., orienteering), and more often at sites away from the schoolyard.

Over-Night Accommodations: shall refer to any on-site or off-site activity that requires sleeping arrangements for students.

Parent: shall mean, for the purpose of this Administrative Procedure, any individual who meets the definition as set out in the Family Law Act, or an independent student as defined in Section 6 of the Education Act, or a student aged 18 years of age or older.

Participant: shall mean a student, teacher or parent/community volunteer or any other employee of the Division who participates in an off-site activity.

Safety Guidelines: shall mean the most recent version of the [Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity](#) in Alberta Schools, or any replacement document, as published and updated from time to time by Alberta Education.

Procedures

1. Regarding the educational context:
 - 1.1 Each activity shall have educational outcomes established for the activity that are in alignment with the Alberta Programs of Study and the school's educational program (co-curricular or extra-curricular).

- 1.2 International off-site activity proposals shall provide an explicitly thorough curricular connection as the primary reason for international travel and exploratory travel-trips that are either absent of a curricular connection, or demonstrate minimal curricular connection shall not be approved.
- 1.3 The educational experience provided by the off-site activity shall not be replicable in Canada; or
 - 1.3.1 In keeping with resource stewardship, the educational experience provided by traveling to an international destination demonstrates a financial advantage (cost saving) beyond a replicable off-site activity in Canada.
2. With respect to approval and/or cancellation:
 - 2.1 All occasional or off-site activities require appropriate authorization as specified within these procedures and identified on the [Form 260-1 Occasional or Off-Site Activities Form](#) as set out by the Superintendent, specifically:
 - 2.1.1 Local, provincial off-site activities, including those requiring overnight accommodations, shall be authorized by the Principal;
 - 2.1.2 Prior to approval, the Student Safety and Risk Mitigation checklist shall be reviewed by the Principal and Key Supervisor for ALL off-site activities;
 - 2.1.3 Prior to approval, Principals shall ensure that off-site activities that May involve Amber Activities (considerable risk) receive insurance verification through Northern Gateway Public Schools as prudent to do so.
 - 2.2 Activities outside of Alberta, including international travel, will adhere to the following process:
 - 2.2.1 At least 90 days before travel, submit a trip proposal to the Superintendent for insurer and Board pre-approval. The information package for each trip will include:
 - Completed Form 160-1
 - A letter requesting permission that gives an overview of the trip, cost and method of raising funds if applicable, and documents the curriculum connections in keeping with 1.2 and 1.3
 - Draft itinerary
 - Information for cancellation and refund
 - 2.2.2 A detailed itinerary and finalized arrangements for any

international off-site activity shall be submitted to the Superintendent or designate and attached to the Occasional or Off-site Activities Form for final approval no later than 21 days prior to the travel departure date:

- 2.2.2.1 Once approved, the key supervisor shall ensure that there is no substantial variance from the approved itinerary except in the case of an emergency situation.
- 2.2.3 International activities also require the completion of a “Consent for Risk Acknowledgement and Waiver” for parents and Chaperones as found in in [Form 260-2 International Travel - Consent for Participation - Student Form](#) and [Form 260-3 International Travel - Consent for Participation - Chaperone Form](#) of this administrative procedure.
- 2.3 All completed occasional or off-site activity forms shall be sent electronically to Northern Gateway Public Schools for central filing.
- 2.4 Notwithstanding any of the guidelines set out in this Administrative Procedure, the Superintendent may cancel or interrupt any approved occasional or off-site activity at any time up to the point of return from that activity where the Superintendent considers the safety and well-being of students and supervisors to be at unusual risk, real or potential, due to emergent circumstances:
 - 2.4.1 Such a decision shall consider any emergent change in social, political, health, legal or physical environment that may have created risk(s) greater than that which existed when the off-site activity was originally given approval;
 - 2.4.2 Where time allows, the Superintendent shall consult with the Principal regarding the potential risks, and may consider input, either through the Principal or directly from the affected staff, volunteers and families, prior to making a decision regarding cancellation;
 - 2.4.3 Principals are expected to ensure that strategies are in place to address the financial implications of cancellation/interruption of off-site activities for emergent reasons, e.g., cancellation or interruption insurance, any refunds on payments, distribution or retention of fundraising monies; and
 - 2.4.4 Parents, students and staff shall be given written information about the potential for loss of some or all of monies they pay or fundraise for each off-site activity, without any recourse to the Division for financial loss.

- 2.5 Each activity shall be organized in a manner that conforms to Board policies and Administrative Procedures regarding student transportation and the use of private vehicles.
- 2.6 Any occasional or off-site activity that is planned and organized by a parent, parent group (excluding School Councils) or other community group or government agency outside of the school program is the responsibility and liability of the parent or organizing group and shall not be covered by this Administrative Procedure.
- 3. With respect to parental information and consent:
 - 3.1 Parents shall be given prior information and opportunity to make informed decisions about their child's participation in any off-site activities, including the right to withdraw their child from such activities.
 - 3.2 Depending on the nature and venue of each occasional or off-site activity, the Principal in collaboration with the key supervisor, shall determine what information shall be provided to parents, and delivered in a timely manner, about some or all of the following topics, or other information as appropriate:
 - 3.2.1 Purpose/goals of the activity;
 - 3.2.2 Proposed/final itinerary and arrangements for overnight stays;
 - 3.2.3 Description of the activities or events;
 - 3.2.4 Need for any additional medical insurance;
 - 3.2.5 Potential hazards and safety planning information for dealing with activities involving significant risk;
 - 3.2.6 Emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;
 - 3.2.7 Supplies/equipment/documentation students are to bring;
 - 3.2.8 Accommodation (including billeting);
 - 3.2.9 Transportation arrangements;
 - 3.2.10 Arrangements for supervision;
 - 3.2.11 Cost to the student/parent; and
 - 3.2.12 Costs and other implications in the event of emergency cancellation or interruption of the activity.
 - 3.3 Written parental permission:
 - 3.3.1 Shall be required for all local, provincial, national or international

off-site activities, occasional activities that require overnight accommodation, and/or for any activity beyond what parents would expect their child to participate in at a school or where the risks are beyond what is normal to the operations of the school;

- 3.3.2 Shall ensure parents are fully informed regarding foreseeable risks inherent in any considerable risk activity; and
- 3.3.3 May not be required, at the discretion of the Principal, for local off-site activities not requiring transportation, such as walking trips in the neighbourhood of the school, or to a series of curricular lessons at local sports, health, cultural, educational or municipal facilities that require brief transportation;
- 3.4 While not recommended, documented verbal permission by telephone may be obtained in very rare and emergent circumstances at the discretion of the Principal for local or provincial off-site activities that do not require overnight accommodation.
- 3.5 Parents are to be given information for occasional or off-site activities in a timely manner.
- 4. With respect to supervision of occasional or off-site activities:
 - 4.1 Each activity shall be adequately supervised, as per section 16 through 21 of this procedure, to ensure appropriate student behavior and safety as outlined elsewhere in relevant Alberta legislation, Board policies, Administrative Procedures, and current Alberta Physical Education Safety Guidelines.
 - 4.2 The Principal shall designate a key supervisor for each off-site activity and ensure, to a level of satisfaction, the nature and amount of preparations that are made for all off-site activities:
 - 4.2.1 Multi-school off-site activities shall establish a NGPS (Division) Key Supervisor, agreed upon by the schools' Principals:
 - 4.2.1.1 The Key Supervisor shall be an administrator (Principal or Assistant Principal) in any instance where an administrator is attending the offsite activity.
 - 4.2.2 Multi-school off-site activities shall establish a school Key Supervisor to coordinate with the division Key Supervisor; and
 - 4.2.3 Principals are responsible to ensure that all participants in a multi-school off-site activity understand, and demonstrate an understanding of the duty of care that all supervisors hold for all students.
 - 4.2.3.1 In any multi-school off-site activity, all supervisors

share the duty of care for all students at all times.

- 4.3 The Principal shall take into consideration, and ensure, with the Key Supervisor, that the nature and number of supervisors present on the occasional or off-site activity are prudent and reasonable to provide supervision for each activity and effective response to emergency situations:

4.3.1 Supervision in general, and including extended occasional or off-site activities that require “supervision shifts,” shall not breach the standard of care established in loco parentis through the Alberta Education Act, through Northern Gateway Public Schools Board Policies, and through Northern Gateway Public Schools Administrative Procedures.

- 4.4 Prior to each off-site activity, the Principal(s), in consultation with the key supervisor, shall ensure that all staff and volunteers have been briefed on their specific roles and behavior standards for the students and themselves.

- 4.5 For each off-site activity, the Principal shall give consideration as to the advisability of, or need for, one or more supervisors having training in a recognized First Aid/CPR program.

- 4.6 The Key Supervisor shall have appropriate emergency information available, with consideration given to at least the following items, depending on the nature, duration and destination(s) for each off-site activity:

4.6.1 Student names and emergency contact names/numbers;

4.6.2 Student Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan numbers for international travel;

4.6.3 Details of any additional health/medical insurance for international travel;

4.6.4 Student health/medical concerns and medications as necessary; and

4.6.5 Contact numbers for a school administrator or alternate staff member.

- 4.7 For occasional or off-site activities requiring overnight accommodations and/or in excess of 10 hours in length of time, supervisors who are not current staff members of the Division shall be considered Volunteers as defined by **Administrative Procedure 390 Volunteer Requirements and Vulnerable Sector Verification**, and therefore:

4.7.1 Shall have on file with the Principal an appropriate Vulnerable Sector Check document or corresponding police security clearance for review prior to embarking on any off-site activity.

5. With respect to organizational procedures:

- 5.1 The Principal and the Key Supervisor shall make reasonable provision that off-site activities that involve curricular instruction are affordable for all eligible students:
 - 5.1.1 No student shall be excluded from required instruction through an off-site activity on the basis of financial ability to pay.
- 5.2 The Principal shall consider whether it is prudent to consult the Superintendent or designate during occasional or off-site activity planning phases and act accordingly.
- 5.3 All offsite activity forms and documents shall be provided to the Secretary-Treasurer for central filing.
- 5.4 Transportation for any school sanctioned activity shall be arranged in accordance with any relevant Transportation Administrative Procedure (Administrative Procedure category – 800s).
 - 5.4.1 Fifteen (15) passenger vans shall not be used for transporting students in any circumstance.
- 6. Regarding considerable risk activities
 - 6.1 Where an occasional or off-site activity involves one or more considerable risk activities, the Principal is responsible for ensuring that a reasonable assessment of the risks involved is completed in cooperation with the key supervisor.
 - 6.2 For all outdoor pursuits and/or all other activities that may include considerable risk, the Principal shall ensure that the Division's liability insurance provides coverage for claims arising from planned activities.
 - 6.3 The Principal shall ensure that no students participate in excluded activities at any time and under any circumstance:
 - 6.3.1 Excluded activities include, but are not limited to those listed in Appendix I: Risk Management – Red Activity (prohibited).
 - 6.4 With significant consideration, a Principal may approve outdoor activities that, by design, may place students beyond the threshold of **Administrative Procedure 750 Severe Weather and Emergency Closing** (i.e., Winter Survival Programs, downhill skiing, etc.) in consideration of section 30 (below).
 - 6.5 The Principal, in consultation with the Key Supervisor shall consider all foreseeable risks; notably:
 - 6.5.1 The activity proposed shall be suitable to the age, mental and physical condition of each student;
 - 6.5.2 The students shall have previously been progressively taught and

- coached to perform expected activities properly and to avoid foreseeable dangers;
- 6.5.3 Each student's equipment shall be thoroughly checked and approved by the Key Supervisor to ensure that all equipment is suitable to the activity prior to participation;
 - 6.5.4 The activity shall be fully and sufficiently supervised;
 - 6.5.5 An adequate contingency plan shall be predetermined and in place to respond to unforeseen severe weather emergencies; and
 - 6.5.6 Notwithstanding the other requirements of this Administrative Procedure, an Administrative Procedure 260 Form 260-2 B Parental Informed Consent/Permission, requesting acknowledgement of considerable risk, including the elements detailed in (29) above, shall be signed by the parent or guardian and secured prior to the occurrence of the activity.
- 6.6 The Principal shall be satisfied that supervisors assigned to accompany students in any outdoor pursuit or considerable risk activities are sufficiently trained for the activity and have been appropriately briefed on at least the following topics to make informed choices about participating:
- 6.6.1 Behavior expectations/responsibilities for supervisors and students;
 - 6.6.2 Foreseeable risks that may arise from participation in the activity;
 - 6.6.3 Appropriate roles during the activity or in emergency circumstances;
 - 6.6.4 Plans and strategies for any of the activities, e.g., site, conditions, routes, etc.;
 - 6.6.5 Safety precautions and plans for responding to emergency situations/accidents;
 - 6.6.6 Feasible contingency plans and emergency equipment/procedures have been established to address foreseeable emergencies, e.g., weather conditions, medical/health issues, accidents;
 - 6.6.7 Cancellation implications; and
 - 6.6.8 Sufficient numbers of volunteers who accompany groups for outdoor pursuits/considerable risk activities are selected on the basis of their ability to effectively support all participants through their knowledge, skill, fitness and experience to be a positive factor and minimize risks.

Reference: Education Act 31, 32, 196, 197 Traffic Safety Act School Fees Regulation (95/2019) ASBIE Off-Site Activity Manual Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Schools	
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References shall be updated as required and do not require additional approval.