



SO15 Out of Classroom Field Trips and Excursions

Category III Manual

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CATEGORY III

Category III	Approval	Insurance	Timeline
All one-day trips to USA (All trips must occur between the first and last day of school)	Principal, and Superintendent of Education and the Director of Education	Mandatory	One month prior to the trip
All trips within Canada over five (5) days			Three months prior to the trip
All overnight trips outside of Canada			Six months prior to the trip
All trips involving air and marine travel			Six months prior to the trip

1. Supervision Ratio

- 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 their children who are not part of the trip.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 Supervision Ratios must be met during any mode of transportation.
- 1.7 OPHEA Safety Guideline supervision ratios must be adhered to wherever they are lower than in this Policy.

Category III Trips	
Grade	Ratio Supervisors : students
Grades 7 - 8	1:10
Grades 9 - 12	1:15

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of the Teacher to hold an information night for parents/guardians/volunteers, once approval has been given for the field trip/excursion.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the Director of Education to review and approve all Category III Trips. The appropriate Family of Schools Superintendent must forward the Excursion Request to the Director's office for review and approval within the timelines as set out in the Manual.

- 2.3 It is the responsibility of the appropriate Family of Schools Superintendents to administer this policy in accordance with the Out-of-Classroom Field Trips and Excursions Manual, and approve all school sanctioned Category III trips.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that all Board policies and procedures related to out-of-classroom experiences are followed by all board employees and volunteers.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 A student may be denied participation on a school trip based on a demonstrated inability to follow school behaviour guidelines.
- 2.7 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.
- 2.8 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.
- 2.9 Learning expectations for the trip will be established early in the planning process.
- 2.10 Principal, Superintendent, and Director approval must be secured before any commitments, including fundraising, are made to agents, organizers, parents, or students. Teacher to Principal communication about the trip is continuous and on-going.
- 2.11 The Principal or teacher shall accompany the students and shall act as head supervisor for all out-of-classroom activities.
- 2.12 The responsibility of the 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). Supervisors must conform to OPHEA Safety Standards.
- 2.13 For water activities such as swimming, kayaking, canoeing please refer to the requirements outlined in the Water Package. Where there are multiple activities, please complete the package in the appropriate category. As an example, for a 7 to 10-day International trip that includes swimming, complete the Category III Field Trips and Excursions package, but refer to the Swim Test requirements within the Water Package.
- 2.14 For Extra-Curricular activities please refer to AM-08.
- 2.15 For Trips involving increase inherent risks (Cat. II & III), the elements of risk must be clearly identified on the Consent Forms. Risks can be identified by reviewing the OPHEA Safety Guidelines specific to each activity.

3. Planning for Inclusive and Accessible Field Trips

- 3.1 When the field trip is in the planning stage, 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.
- 3.2 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. Check out the Toronto Star Ontario Field Trip Guide to determine the accessibility of many popular destinations:
www.classroomconnection.ca/fieldtrip.html
- 3.3 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.

- 3.4 Check and double-check that accessible transportation has been confirmed. Contact Phil Kuckyt (pkuckyt@stsbhn.ca) with any concerns around funding accessible transportation.
- 3.5 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.
- 3.6 Make arrangements for any students who do not go on the trip. They should not be expected to stay home. Since field trips are meant to support curriculum expectations, trips should not exclude any students unless there is no other way to access that curriculum expectation.
- 3.7 Promote the connection between all peers participating in field trips or any school special events. Ensure that the student with a disability is not required to just watch from the sidelines.

4. Travel and Tour Operators

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Billeting will not be accepted as a form of accommodation.

5. File Retention

- 5.1 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.

6. Insurance

6.1 *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 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. Parents/guardians

may purchase insurance through Grand Erie approved Travel and Tour operators or provide private accident insurance coverage. Parents/guardians should be advised that students without some form of accident insurance will be prohibited from participating in Category III trips. Principals should ensure all chaperones and volunteers have sufficient travel/health insurance coverage.

6.2 *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 Administrative Procedure HR 121.

6.3 *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. Volunteers must obtain accident insurance before participating in Category III events and must have travel insurance before participating in Category III trips.

6.4 *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, inflatables, summer camps, 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 require to provide proof of insurance.

7. Transportation

- 7.1 Transportation methods (i.e. train, boat, other) other than busing or taxi through approved vendors, is beyond the approval level of the Superintendent for Category III and requires approval of the Director.
- 7.2 Transportation must be appropriate to the age of the students. Provincial legislation regarding child car-seats must be followed.
- 7.3 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.
- 7.4 Staff and volunteers are not permitted to transport students in rental vehicles. Only certified ground transit as meeting the official standards of the destination and/or as recommended by a qualified travel agent, is to be used during authorized school trips outside Canada.
- 7.5 For booking transportation outside of Canada, travel must be booked through an approved Travel and Tour operator.
- 7.6 If busing 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 of the scheduled departure so as to avoid cancellation or change fees.
- f. Please refer to the Staff Portal > 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.

7.7 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.

8. Volunteer Drivers Information

- a. Students can only be transported in vehicles by staff or volunteers who possess a valid G Licence and a minimum of \$2 million of liability insurance.
- b. All volunteer drivers must have completed and signed a Volunteer Driver Form, Appendix E.
- c. Vehicle Restrictions: 9+ passenger vans (driver plus eight students) are not permitted for student transportation. Board staff shall not use or rent such vehicles for student transportation.

9. Vehicle Liability Insurance

- 9.1 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”.

10. Trips Involving Aircraft

10.1 Only licensed, certified commercial passenger air carriers are to be used.

10.2 Cancellation insurance, is mandatory and is the responsibility of the student, parent/guardian.

10.3 Cancellation and resultant loss of funds, no matter what the cause, is the responsibility of the student, parent /guardian or their insurer should coverage have been purchased.

10.4 The Board assumes no financial responsibility in the event of flight cancellation for whatever reason.

10.5 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. Parents/guardians who wish to drive other students please refer to section 6.7 and complete Appendix E.

10.6 Booking of Flights:

- a. The trip must be approved by the Director of Education prior to booking flights.
- b. Please notify Purchasing Services of any required flights to temporarily suspend any restrictions on Purchasing Cards.
- c. Flights must be paid with a staff Purchasing Card.
- d. Flights must be booked in consultation with Purchasing Services and/or through an approved Trip and Tour Operator

11. Travel Advisories

11.1 When planning out-of-country trips, teachers must check Canada's Foreign Affairs and International Trade 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](#)

11.2 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.

12. Immunizations Required for Travel

12.1 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.

13. Regional Provincial and National Athletic Trips-Outside of Canada or Requiring Flights

13.1 Athletic Trips include teams and individual students who train outside of school but complete at higher levels. (ie. OFSAA, ie. Basketball teams).

13.2 Please follow all Category III requirements for Athletic Trips that are outside of Canada or requiring flights.

13.3 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.

13.4 Trip forms should be completed in advance prior to team qualification. This will speed up the approval time to the Principal, Superintendent, and Director. Please see 'Section 8. Trips Involving Aircraft', for booking flights.

Category III Checklist

Trip Destination: _____ Date of Trip: _____

			✓ or N/A
1.	Appendix A	Request for Approval – Completed and Approved by Principal	
2.	Appendix B	Informed Consent and Indemnification Form Completed	
	Appendix C	Release and Indemnification Form (18+ years of age) Completed	
3.	Appendix B/C	Informed Consent and Indemnification Forms Returned	
4.	Appendix D	Volunteer Supervisor Release and Indemnification Forms Sent Home	
5.	Appendix D	Volunteer Supervisor Release and Indemnification Form Completed and Returned	
6.	Appendix E	If private vehicles will be used for transportation	
7.		Have considered the accessibility of this trip/location for all students	
8.		Transportation arranged and outlined in Appendix A. Special transportation confirmed if any students/staff/volunteers have accessibility needs	
9.		Overnight Trips-Host Planning meeting with parents/guardians and Volunteers	
10.		Approval obtained to take school equipment outside of Ontario	
11.		Required Immunizations required for travel (3 months prior to trip)	
12.		Print off Insurance Declaration via PowerSchool and ensure all parents/guardians have completed the declaration.	
13.		Principal, Superintendent and Director Approval & Signature Obtained	
14.		Money Collected	
15.		Coverage arranged for teacher's and supervision duties	
16.		Plan in place for early return of a student and supervisor	
17.		Post-trip activities planned	
18.		Detailed Program Itinerary Provided to Principal	
19.		Provision for emergency first aid	
20.		SO30 Management of Potentially Life-Threatening Health Conditions in Schools has been reviewed	
21.		Travel Advisories checked (upon the initial planning, 1 month and 1 week prior to trip)	

Teacher's Signature _____ Date _____

Submit to Principal prior to departure