



# SO15 Out of Classroom Field Trips and Excursions

## Category II Manual

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## CATEGORY II

Category II	Approval	Approval Lead Time	Insurance
Activities involving increased elements of inherent risk (All trips must occur between the first and last day of school)	Principal, and Superintendent of Education	Four weeks prior to the trip	In Province – Recommended
All overnight excursions up to and including 5 days within Canada			Out of Province – Mandatory

### 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.
- 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 II Trips	
Grade	Ratio Supervisors : students
Grades 1 - 8	1:10
Grades 9 - 12	1:15

### 2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 It is the responsibility of the appropriate Principal and 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 II trips.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 It is the responsibility of the teacher and principal when planning out-of-classroom experiences to follow and implement all Board policies and procedures within the appropriate timelines.
- 2.4 A student may be denied participation on a school trip based on a demonstrated inability to follow school behaviour guidelines.

- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 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.
- 2.7 Learning expectations for the trip will be established early in the planning process.
- 2.8 Principal and Superintendent 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.
- 2.9 The principal or teacher shall accompany the students and shall act as head supervisor for all out-of-classroom activities.
- 2.10 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 parent/guardian as quickly as possible in the event of a health or safety concern for the student(s). Supervisors must conform to OPHEA Safety Standards.
- 2.11 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.
- 2.12 For Extra-Curricular activities please refer to AM-08.
- 2.13 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](http://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](mailto: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. Multiple Event Trips and Excursions

4.1 For short excursions within normal school hours, a 'multiple-event' Informed Consent Form may be obtained at the beginning of the school year or semester (ie. skating programs, health and physical education programs, construction projects or activities that fall within Category II as outlined in the Activity Risk Chart). (Appendix B)

4.2 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.

#### 5. Travel and Tour Operators

5.1 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 for [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.

#### 6. File Retention

6.1 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.

#### 7. Insurance

##### 7.1 *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. 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.
- e. Parents/guardians should be advised that students without some form of accident insurance may be prohibited from participating in Category II trips.

- f. Principals should ensure all chaperones and volunteers have sufficient travel/health insurance coverage.

#### 7.2 *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.

#### 7.3 *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 school events and must have travel insurance before participating in out of province trips.

#### 7.4 *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.

### 8. Transportation

8.1 Transportation methods (i.e. train, boat, other) other than busing or taxi through approved vendors, is beyond the approval level of the Principal for Category II and requires approval of the Superintendent.

8.2 Transportation must be appropriate to the age of the students. Provincial legislation regarding child car-seats must be followed.

8.3 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.

8.4 Staff and volunteers are not permitted to transport students in rental vehicles. Only certified ground transit through an approved Board vendor. These vendors can offer a variety of transportation options and can provide services across Canada.

#### 8.5 Vehicle Restrictions

- a. 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.

8.6 If busing or 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.

## 9. Volunteer Drivers Information

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 All volunteer drivers must have completed and signed a Volunteer Driver Form, Appendix E.

## 10. Vehicle Liability Insurance

- 10.1 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”.

## 11. Regional, Provincial and National Athletic Trips-Within Canada

- 11.1 Athletic Trips include teams and individual students who train outside of school but compete at higher levels. (ie. CWOSSA, SOSA, OFSAA, ie. Basketball teams).
- 11.2 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.
- 11.3 Trip forms should be completed in advance prior to team qualification. This will speed up the approval time to the Principal, Superintendent, and Director.
- 11.4 For trips within Canada that do not require flights, please follow all Category I or II procedures, following the Activity Risk Chart and Category definition. For Athletic trips outside of Canada or that require flights, please refer to Category III.

Category II Checklist

Trip Destination: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Trip: \_\_\_\_\_

			✓ or N/A
1.	Appendix A	Request for Approval – Completed and Approved by Principal	
2.	Appendix B	Informed parent/guardian Consent Form Completed	
3.	Appendix C	Release and Indemnification Form (18+ years of age) Completed	
4.	Appendix D	Volunteer Supervisor Release and Indemnification Form Completed	
5.	Appendix E	Volunteer Drivers – Authorization to Transport Form Completed	
6.		Have considered the accessibility of this trip/location for all students in my class	
7.		Transportation arranged and outlined in Appendix A. Special transportation confirmed if any students/staff/volunteers have accessibility needs	
8.		Print off Insurance Declaration via PowerSchool and ensure all parents/guardians have completed the declaration	
9.		Overnight Trips-Host Planning meeting with parents/guardians and Volunteers	
10.		Special arrangements made for any students requiring overnight supports (ie. for toileting)	
11.		Approval obtained to take school equipment outside of Ontario	
12.		Principal Approval & Signature Obtained	
13.		Money Collected & submitted to Office	
14.		Coverage arranged for teacher's and supervision duties	
15.		Plan in place for early return of a student and supervisor	
16.		Post-trip activities planned	
17.		Detailed Program Itinerary Provided to Principal	
18.		Provision for emergency first aid	
19.		SO30 Management of Potentially Life-Threatening Health Conditions in Schools has been reviewed	
20.	Appendix A/B	Include copy in teacher's package with student information	

Teacher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Submit to Principal prior to departure