



# Saskatoon Public Schools

## Out-of-School Travel Guidelines

### Acknowledgements

On behalf of Saskatoon Public Schools, we would like to thank all the teachers that gave their expertise, time and involvement in the preparation of this document.

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# **Out-of-School Education**

## **Travel Guidelines**

*Out-of-School Education inspires interconnected learning through first hand exploration and authentic experiences in the community that allows learners of all cultures to construct their own meaning, and use the built or natural environment to actualize the curriculum in the "best place".*

*Out-of-School Education is relevant and engaging for all children, youth and educators. It allows students to discover meaning, develop skills, and act upon their potential. Therein lies the purpose: enriching lives and sustaining the community in which people learn and live.*

The purpose of the Out-of-School guidelines is to assist teachers in the planning of educationally sound and safe experiences for students. They also provide the necessary organizational framework for principals as they oversee and authorize these experiences.

Guidelines, rather than regulations, have been written to support school initiatives. Secondly, guidelines provide the flexibility needed to adapt to special circumstances that may be unique to each excursion. Finally, they ensure that principals have the necessary discretion to meet their responsibilities to students, parents and teachers.

### **Basic Premises**

1. Out-of-school experiences are designed to achieve specific learning outcomes which are directly related to the educational goals of the school and system.
2. The health and welfare of those involved are the priority in the development and delivery of all experiences.
3. Principals must ensure that out-of-school excursions provide the most benefits while still providing for an economical use of resources. These resources include staff, students and parents, together with their time, effort, and finances.

## Guidelines

Although there are many details which must be considered when planning for out-of-school excursions, four factors are addressed in the matrix below. Additional guidelines pertaining to other facets of student travel follow.

<u>Factors</u>	<u>Pre K - Grade 4</u>	<u>Grades 5 - 8</u>	<u>Grades 9 - 12</u>
Distance from school	Within the community and surrounding area (up to 100 km)	Provincial travel	Provincial travel
Duration of trip	Day trips	Maximum 3 school days	Maximum 3 school days
Mode to transportation	Walking Car 7-8 passenger van Bus Train	Walking Car 7-8 passenger van Bus Train Bicycle Canoe	Walking Car 7-8 passenger van Bus Train Bicycle Canoe Air Travel

Note: 15 passenger vans are not an acceptable mode of transportation.

### Adult to Student Ratio For All Grades

The principal is in the best position to determine the appropriate adult/student ratio for out-of-school travel. Therefore, the following principle is to be followed when making such decisions....

*Principals are expected to assume the role of a kind, firm, judicious, and caring parent when determining what ratio is deemed to be safe and reasonable for each specific out of school excursion. NOTE: Principals are to follow, where applicable, any special program requirement ratios (e.g. canoeing, SSSAD).*

A minimum of one staff member is required for all excursions within city limits, and a minimum of one staff member and one other supervisor/volunteer for all out-of-city excursions is recommended.

The principal must be satisfied that all supervisors/volunteers are able to provide responsible supervision for the students.

**\*\* Out-of-Province travel requires prior approval of the Superintendent of Education responsible for student travel and should be considered only if the excursion is a unique educational experience which cannot be duplicated within Saskatchewan.**

### **Student Exchange**

Student exchange programs should follow Board Policy 9170. Where these travel projects involve out-of-province travel, special consideration and authorization by the Superintendent of Education responsible for student travel is required.

## **Factors To Be Considered When Planning and Directing Out-of-School Excursions**

### **1. Authorization**

The planning and authorization process begins with the completion of Out-of-School Excursions: Generic/Specific Notice to Parents/Guardians for all excursions, grades PreK-12. A parental/guardian permission form must be completed for each student.

Pre Planning and Approval Guide: Out-of-School Excursions: outlines all aspects of student travel and provides an organizational framework for the teacher or staff coordinator. It also provides a system of checks for authorization.

All out-of-school education activities require the approval of the principal. .

Principals will authorize all out-of-school education activities unless they involve out-of-province travel which requires a prior authorization from the Superintendent of Education in charge of travel.

Principals are expected to maintain records at their schools for all out-of-school education activities. It is recommended that a yearly school file be established and that the annual file be maintained for two years and removed after the second year.

The Superintendent of Education in charge of travel requires **\*Notification when:**

- a) white water canoeing is planned,
- b) off-road cycling is planned,
- c) remote camping is planned.

**\*Notification** is defined as the principal sending a completed copy of Pre-Planning and Approval Guide: Out of School Excursions to the superintendent **prior to the occurrence of the activity.**

Parent meetings are encouraged when major excursions are being planned.

## **2. Impact on the Classroom**

Consideration should be given to the amount of time given by teachers to any one out-of-school excursion.

Trip preparation should not be at the expense of instructional class time for students who are not participating in the excursion.

Substitute teachers should be provided when teachers are absent from regular classes. Cancellation of classes is not seen as an acceptable practice.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Saskatoon Public Schools does not provide substitute teachers in this situation. Project funds must be used to reimburse the Board for substitute teachers. Student fees should not be used to cover costs for a small group of students to travel.

### **3. Insurance/Medical Coverage**

#### **Student coverage:**

Adequate personal, medical and liability coverage is carried by Saskatoon Public Schools for all students during school and system sponsored activities.

#### **Staff coverage:**

Admin Procedure 518 INSURANCE states: Division shall provide insurance coverage for the following:

- 2.3 Liability for individual employees, student teachers and interns and volunteers; while performing duties authorized by the Board;
5. Travel accident insurance shall be obtained to cover employees and Board members while traveling on Division business.
10. Coverage shall be provided to compensate employees whose vehicles are vandalized during their time at work on school property or on school related business. The maximum reimbursement shall be \$200, which will expire six months following the incident. Application shall be made by the employee on the vehicle vandalism form. (pg 500-31)

#### **Volunteers:**

Admin Procedure 480 VOLUNTEERS states: 8. Since all volunteers are considered to be agents of the Board, they shall be covered by the Division's third party liability insurance plan while engaged in their volunteer tasks. Third party liability insurance defends legal costs and pays for court awarded damages caused by the insured vehicle/driver to the other persons or property. This coverage does not provide insurance for injury to the driver or damage to the vehicle being driven. (pg. 400-74)

#### **Not covered:**

Personal health and medical coverage is not covered for supervisory/volunteer staff, including teachers. Additional health coverage may be obtained by supervisory/volunteer staff on their own accord.

In addition, Saskatoon Public School's insurance policy does not cover the personal property of supervisory/volunteer staff. This includes vehicles and the deductibles on package policies. Temporary, short term insurance and package policies may be purchased.

Rental agencies require that teachers sign for all rented vehicles. They cannot be signed out on behalf of Saskatoon Public Schools.

It is recommended that the collision damage "waiver" be purchased so that in the event of an accident, expensive deductibles will not have to be paid.

The Division does not normally reimburse students, staff, or others for personal belongings, which may be lost or stolen. Loss or damage of personal belongings may be reported in exceptional circumstances through the Principal to the Superintendent of Finance and Administration for consideration and record. Admin Procedures 519 PERSONAL BELONGINGS pg. 500-33.

#### 4. Health and Safety

A medical fitness form should be generated for each student and carried on all (out-of-city) excursions beyond immediate medical assistance in order to ensure knowledge of special medical conditions and treatment. e.g. allergies, diseases, etc. View forms available from Maplewood: Emergency Allergy Alert or Elementary Registration Form

Safety measures and accident prevention should be analyzed and emergency procedures should be planned.

The principal should ensure that adequate first aid equipment and knowledge of its usage accompanies each group of students that leave the school.

Extra first aid kits should be available in the school for groups planning to travel.

All emergency treatment and accidents should be documented by completing the Incident report. (Administrative Procedure 317: ACCIDENTS: REPORTING pg. 300-336)

The teachers' responsibility is to provide first aid or to transport the student to an emergency medical facility. Responsibility is then shifted to the medical facility according to Section #55 in the Hospital Standards Act. (Administrative Procedure 317: ACCIDENTS: REPORTING pg. 300-36)

## **5. Supervision**

The principal must be satisfied that all groups of students are adequately supervised.

A minimum of one staff member is required for all out-of-school excursions.

In addition, it is recommended that one other responsible supervisor (volunteer) should accompany any group which travels beyond the city limits. Admin procedure 480 VOLUNTEERS: Support Volunteers: persons who directly or indirectly assist teachers in achieving educational objectives by providing non-educational services such as the supervision of field trips, driving, coaching, chaperones, etc. The Principal must approve all uses of volunteers in school activities. All volunteers are bound by the same code of confidentiality expected of all employees of the Division. It is inappropriate to discuss students collectively or individually outside the school as a result of information gained as a volunteer.

Dependent upon the circumstances required of the volunteer, a Criminal Record Check may be required (Admin procedure 480: VOLUNTEERS).

In most cases the responsible supervisor is an adult or parent.

If the trip is co-educational in nature, and involves an overnight stay, the supervisory group should include at least one male and one female.

Some out-of-school projects may require special supervisory obligations, such as athletic travel, cycling, canoeing and waterfront activities. Please see applicable guidelines.

If travel utilizes privately owned vehicles, the principal should be satisfied that all drivers are legally qualified.

A statement should be prepared for parents and students which specifies appropriate behavior, responsibilities, sleeping arrangements, curfew and associated consequences of any infractions.

## **6. Equipment Standards**

The principal and staff coordinator should ensure that the equipment meets all legal and safety requirements. e.g. bicycles, canoes, etc.)

The staff coordinator should show reasonable discretion when selecting drivers and vehicles.

**Reminder:** The capacity of any automobile is determined by the number of seat belts.

## **7. Group Size**

The principal and teachers should give serious consideration to the maximum size of groups that travel in order to insure that:

- a. Student/adult ratios are not exceeded.
- b. Groups are able to function safely.
- c. The environmental impact is kept to a minimum.

Specific guidelines may pertain to travel situations such as athletic teams and canoeing.

## **8. Accommodation**

The principal and staff coordinator should be satisfied with the quality of accommodations if the traveling dictates that students must stay overnight.

At hotels, there are a number of situations to be aware of:

- a. For use of pools or water slides see Waterfront Guidelines. The use of hot tubs is not recommended. If they are used, qualified lifeguard supervision must be provided.
- b. Other facilities such as weight rooms, etc. should be given special consideration for supervision.
- c. Have the hotel and supervisory staff inspect the rooms before and after their use, noting the condition. This will ensure that no indiscriminate billing for damage will take place.
- d. The staff coordinator should ensure that tents and/or cabins are safe and functional. See Camping Guidelines.

## **9. Meals**

Details surrounding student nutrition should not be left to random chance. Plans must be put in place to ensure that students eat healthy and nutritious meals. Be aware of food allergies.

## 10. Finances

A breakdown of costs should be detailed and made available before the excursion to the principal and parents.

At the end of any out-of-school project a balance sheet should detail any surplus, or deficit, and plans for any surplus.

People should be asked to volunteer if private vehicles are utilized for student travel. Mileage or reimbursement of costs can be paid to volunteer drivers without jeopardizing School Board Insurance.

In order to cover the costs of any out-of-school excursion the principal and staff coordinator must give special consideration as to the types of activities used to generate the funding.

Fund raising is the most popular form of creating project funds for out-of-school projects, but many things should be considered when fund raising.

- a. Travel should be educational.
- b. In-school, rather than community fund raising is recommended.
- c. If fund raising takes place in the surrounding community, care should be taken not to over tax the community or compete with the local community businesses and other service organizations.
- d. Consideration should also be given to the amount of effort that teachers, students and parents expend on fund raising in any one school year.
- e. See Board Handbook Policy 23: FUNDRAISING AND FEES (pg. 68) regarding other aspects of fund raising.
- f. Sponsorships and donations that are of mutual benefit to schools and the community will be both welcomed and accepted, subject to procedures. For procedures view: Admin Procedures 560: SPONSORSHIPS (pg. 500-63)

## **11. Extreme Weather Precautions**

Precautions should be taken when participating in outdoor activities on extremely hot or cold days.

**Cold** - when wind chill factor of 1800 watts/square meter (w/s m) are excessive (-27 with wind chill), students should not participate in activities that would place them out of doors for extended periods of time without protection of an indoor heated facility. For example: if the temperature exceeded 1800 and you were at a residential camp, then plans need to be in place to provide programming indoors.

**Hot** - when outdoors on hot and sunny days precautions should be taken to avoid extended exposure to the heat and sun. The following ultra violet ray index (UV index) should be considered.

UV index:	0-4	low	1 hour before burn
	4-7	medium	30 minutes before burn
	7-9	high	20 minutes before burn
	9+	extreme	15 minutes before burn

Use of sun screen and protective clothing should be used when the UV index is at medium, high, or extreme levels.

Teachers should be aware of the signs and symptoms of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, and be able to provide proper first aid in such cases.