Northeastern Catholic District School Board

EDUCATIONAL EXCURSIONS

Administrative Procedure Number: APE019-1

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) is committed to providing our learners with diverse opportunities outside of the classroom setting. The NCDSB believes that experiential learning opportunities allow our students to explore and experience the Ontario Curriculum and Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations in different, meaningful ways. We believe that all such opportunities must be designed to enhance the spiritual, academic, cultural, social or athletic components of the school program.

REFERENCES

Education Act
Ontario Physical and Health Education (OPHEA) Guidelines
NCDSB Policy

- B-16 School Generated Funds
- E-2 Prevalent Medical Conditions
- E-6 Provisions of Health Support Services in Schools
- E-19 Educational Excursions
- E-31 Volunteers in Schools
- E-34 Safe Schools
- E-38 Student Concussions

NCDSB Administrative Procedure

- APB016 School Generated Funds
- APE002 Prevalent Medical Conditions
- APE006 Provisions of Health Support Services in Schools
- APE019-2 Use of Private Vehicles to Transport Students
- APE038 Student Concussions

DEFINITIONS

EDUCATIONAL EXCURSION
Activities in accordance with the *Education Act*, whereby students leave the school property for a special learning experience.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY
Any school-authorized or education-related activity occurring during or outside the regular instructional day.

HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES
An activity that requires specialized expertise and certified instruction, and/or has an inherent danger to the participant.

SUPERVISING STAFF MEMBER
An employee of the NCDSB who assumes responsibility for an excursion and/or activity.

VOLUNTEER SUPERVISORS
Adult supervisors who are not employees of the NCDSB.

PROCEDURES

1.0 GENERAL GUIDELINES

1.1 Planning and supervision for excursions are the joint responsibility of the Principal and the supervising staff member.

1.2 Communication about the excursion must be ongoing between the Principal and the supervising staff member.

1.3 All requests for educational excursions will provide sufficient details relating to the proposed itinerary, impact on student achievement and opportunities, links to curriculum expectations, and financial requirements of the participants.

1.4 Each proposed excursion will be reviewed and approved by the appropriate authority, in advance of the scheduled activity.

1.5 In the event that two or more schools are participating in the same excursion (i.e. year-end excursions), each school must submit their own package for approval.

1.6 Excursions can occur throughout the school year. The Principal and supervisors will consider factors such as timing, frequency of excursions per student/staff member; the age and maturity of students related to the excursion length; availability of site; and financial costs to students and families.

1.7 The Principal will be provided with all relevant details of the excursion including but not limited to participant lists, emergency lists, itineraries, contact information, planned stops along the route, places of accommodation, and site to be visited. In the instance that the group is travelling by air, flight information including carrier, flight numbers, departure/arrival times/locations will be included. Relevant information must be clearly communicated to parents before the excursion takes place.

1.8 Where an educational excursion occurs on a Holy Day of Obligation, the Principal is to ensure that an appropriate liturgy is celebrated by all students, staff, and supervisors.

2.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1 Health and safety shall be given the highest priority and consideration for students and staff when planning an excursion.

2.2 Custodial parents/guardians or students (providing the students are 18 years of age) are required to provide the school with current emergency information on the appropriate consent form.

2.3 The administration of medication during and excursion shall be conducted in accordance with the appropriate policies and procedures.

2.4 All excursion consent forms will be accompanied by information that describes the elements of risk for the activities that students will experience during the excursion.

2.5 Supervisors will ensure that they are properly prepared to address emergency situations while on the educational excursion.

2.6 It is advisable that at least one supervisor have valid certification in first aid.

3.0 SUPERVISION

3.1 Educational excursions shall be supervised by an employee of the NCDSB.

3.2 At all times during an educational excursion, supervisors will be available and present to students.

3.3 In the case of all education excursions of more than one day which includes students of both genders, supervisors of both genders will be required. Extenuating circumstances may be considered in consultation with the appropriate supervisory officer.

3.4 Principals will ensure that adequate supervision is secured in accordance with these guidelines:

Type of Excursion	Supervision Ratio	
Regular Day Excursion	Primary/Junior:	1 supervisor to 8 students
	Intermediate:	1 supervisor to 15 students
	Senior:	1 supervisor to 15 students
Extended Excursion	Primary:	Not recommended
	Junior:	1 supervisor to 8 students
	Intermediate:	1 supervisor to 10 students
	Senior:	1 supervisor to 10 students

3.5 Principals may exercise their discretion for supervision ratios noted above, depending on the following factors:

i) Risk level of the activity;
ii) Nature of the destination;
iii) Need for safety gear;
iv) Participants' skill level, special needs, competence and capacity;
v) Participants' ages and maturity; and
vi) Environmental factors, such as weather, travel distance, and traffic.

3.6 Volunteer supervisors who come in direct contact with students on a regular basis must provide a Vulnerable Sector Screening Check conducted by the local police force, the Ontario Provincial Police Force or a Ministry approved Third-Party provider. Once a Vulnerable Sector Screening Check has been provided, the volunteer may complete an Annual Offence Declaration on a go-forward basis.

3.7 Volunteer supervisors will receive the required information relating to the expectations for supervision in advance of the excursion.

3.8 All supervisors are expected to adhere to the trip schedule and to model appropriate behaviour at all times.

4.0 CONSENT AND COMMUNICATION

4.1 The Principal or supervising staff member will communicate with parents regarding all excursions in which students take part. This allows parents/guardians to make an informed decision about their child's participation in an excursion. The date, time, and full description of the activity must be provided.

4.2 Consent from a parent/guardian where a student is under 18 years of age is required. A signed consent form must be submitted to the supervising staff member prior to departure of a student on an excursion. The consent form should include the following acknowledgements:

i) The date, time, and description of the activity;
ii) Confirmation of any medical conditions and response requirements, if necessary; and,
iii) Description of any dietary restrictions, if applicable.

4.3 Students who are 18 years of age may sign their own consent form if they have completed the school's independent student process.

4.4 When planning multiple activities, staff members may use one consent form for students, indicating multiple activities, with locations and dates.

4.5 If a student requires departure from the itinerary due to extenuating circumstances, the parent must advise the Principal or supervising staff member in advance of the excursion. Any planning details for this situation must be completed in advance and a copy will remain at the school and a copy with the supervising staff member.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Principals

The Principal will:

i) Ensure that all requirements of all related policies and procedures are adhered to.

ii) Ensure that approval is received by the appropriate supervisory officer in accordance with the appropriate timelines, excursion type, and links to any fundraising endeavours associated with the excursion.

iii) Ensure that the educational excursion or activity has educational value and is aligned with values and belief of the Catholic faith.

iv) Ensure that information is communicated to parents in a timely and comprehensive manner.

v) Have the discretion on the eligibility of the student's participation after consultation with the appropriate staff members.

vi) Ensure that the supervising staff members have received the appropriate consent forms and filed properly with the office.

vii) Ensure that one NCDSB employee is designated as the supervising staff member who is in charge of the excursion, and should have sufficient knowledge about the students and the activities on the excursion.

viii) Ensure that adequate supervision is in place to cover class(es) and duties at the school, while the supervising staff member is away for an excursion.

ix) Ensure that adequate supervision is provided for the students on the excursion.

x) Approve the participation of volunteers and ensure they have a Vulnerable Sector Search if required.

xi) Ensure that the proper form is completed if the excursion involves the use of personal vehicles to transport students.

xii) Ensure that all fundraising activities that relate to the excursion comply with the appropriate policies and procedures.

xiii) Refer any exceptional or extenuating circumstances to the supervisory officer for approval.

xiv) Ensure that all supervisors are aware of relevant medical concerns for all participants. Plans of care must be included in the documentation sent with the group.

xv) In the event that a student requires medication to be given on an excursion, this needs to be planned by the principal. A staff member needs to take responsibility for bringing, administering and documenting the administration of medication as required.

xvi) Make certain that prior to departure, the following items are in the main office and a copies provided to the lead supervisor:

- the emergency phone numbers or contact information for the principal, if on the excursion or off site;

- the excursion itinerary and contact number for the supervising staff member while on the excursion; and
- a complete list of students and supervisors and their emergency contact information.
- vehicle information.

xvii) Ensure that completed copies of excursion forms and all relevant organizational checklists are retained in the office for one year from the return date of the excursion.

xviii) Be available to the supervising staff member by telephone, cellular telephone, or other wireless means of communication in case of emergency, during the excursion. If the principal is unavailable, a designate must be identified.

xix) In the event of an emergency or injury, once the principal is informed by the supervising staff member, they will ensure the situation is managed as needed.

xx) Confirm with the supervisor that they have a plan to properly respond to emergency situations that may arise.

xxi) Ensure that participants have the proper medical coverage for participation.

xxii) Seek the appropriate guidance and instruction from a supervisory officer as it relates to insurance policies, waivers, and/or contracts.

xxiii) Ensure that any high-risk excursion sites contracted to provide services is on the approved excursion list and all appropriate insurance documents are on file.

xxiv) Ensure that, for any approved out-of-country excursion (a tour organized by an outside agency) the agency's plan includes comprehensive additional coverage for students while on the tour that includes hospital/medical and other relevant travel coverage (lost baggage, tour cancellation). All students must purchase the comprehensive insurance package offered by the travel agency.

5.2 Supervisors

The Supervisor will:

i) Ensure all appropriate procedures have been completed prior to the excursion departure.

ii) Ensure the appropriate curriculum connections for the excursion and that all expectations are established early in the planning process.

iii) Ensure that principal approval, using the appropriate forms, is secured before any commitments are made.

iv) Ensure that supervision meets the standard of a careful and prudent parent and that the minimum requirements for supervision are followed for each type of excursion.

v) Ensure that completed forms and organizational checklists for excursions have been submitted to the principal well in advance of the excursion. For any physically-related activity, the supervising staff member shall consult the detailed Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) Safety Guidelines.

vi) Ensure that formal bookings or reservations are arranged well in advance to secure use of facilities or resources.

vii) Become familiar with the excursion site and curriculum-related activities prior to the date of the excursion.

viii) Ensure that the equipment and supplies required for excursion activities are available and in good working condition.
ix) Review with participant students the Code of Conduct and all required safety and emergency procedures.
x) Ensure that all transportation arrangements are in accordance with the *Highway Traffic Act*.
xi) Adhere to all finance-related policies and procedures as it relates to any fundraising or collection of fees.
xii) Ensure that parents and students are provided with detailed written information to explain the purpose and details of the excursion. Parents must be advised of their responsibilities and written parent consent must be received on the appropriate consent form.
xiii) Ensure that parent meetings take place for excursions that are overnight or involve high risk activities, as appropriate. It is mandatory for a parent of a participating student to be made aware of the information meeting and that information is provided in an alternate form, should the parent be unable to attend.
xiv) Ensure they understand any Plans of Care or individual needs of students, and that they are properly prepared for emergency situations.
xv) Ensure students carry proof of adequate health insurance for out-of-province/country excursions. For out-of-country excursions, participants must have the appropriate visa, proof of citizenship, passports, immunization, and insurances.
xvi) Carry emergency contact information during excursions. Before departure, a copy of the manifest which contains a list of student names and emergency contact information must be left with the Principal for use in the event of emergency during the excursion.
xvii) Make certain that students, in their classes, who do not participate in the excursion, will receive appropriate programming, including any assessments.
xviii) Allow students participating in the excursion to complete any assignments or assessments missed due to the excursion within a reasonable time after the excursion, without penalty.
xix) Ensure they have relevant medical information and medications for students, as required.
xx) Complete Student Accident Reports, as required, and ensure that the Principal is informed of any incident promptly.
xxi) Ensure that advance notice is given to other teachers/staff members whose schedules or classes will be affected by the excursion.

5.3 Students and Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

The student/parent/guardian will:

i) Complete all pertinent forms and ensure financial arrangements have been completed and submitted by the dates set out.
ii) Make supervisors aware of medical conditions that may affect participation (asthma, anaphylaxis, cast, concussion, orthopedic device, etc.) and provide instructions for medical response.

iii) Make supervisors aware of food sensitivities and/or related food allergies.
iv) Adhere to the processes for student concussion, as required.
v) Be responsible for any assignments and assessments missed in other subjects or program areas because of the excursion. These will be completed within a reasonable time after the excursion, as communicated by the student's teachers.
vi) Follow the Code of Conduct and rules for safety and emergency plans for the specific excursion. Students must understand that failure to adhere to the above responsibilities may result in a variety of consequences.
vii) Ensure that the student behaviour prior to and during the trip is consistent with the Code of Conduct.
viii) Ensure the preparations for the excursion have been made, including required documents, appropriate clothing, sun protection, supplies and learning materials, and additional resources if required.
ix) Acquire proper authorization, documentation and medical coverage for participation in any out-of-province/country excursion.

6.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The discussion regarding the financial component of the excursion will take place before the opportunity is presented to students. The following factors must be considered:
i) estimated costs for the students and the school (i.e. transportation, occasional staff, admission charges, meals, accommodations); and
ii) anticipated sources of income.

6.2 The Principal will make certain that all fundraising activities that relate to the excursion comply with the related policies, procedures, and timelines.

6.3 The Principal makes the decision to approve or not approve the excursion and its associated costs.

6.4 Schools will ensure that plans for excursions include consideration for students who may require financial assistance.

6.5 Copies of related financial statements for the excursion will be filed in the school office in accordance with the retention requirements.

6.6 A supervising staff member may not receive any pecuniary advantage, salary, honorarium, or other, from an approved tour agency. The supervising staff member may, however, accept free travel and accommodation on the excursion for their services, provided all such benefits are approved by the Principal.

7.0 TRANSPORTATION

7.1 As a general principle, schools are encourage to hire licensed carriers to transport students for excursions.

7.2 All transportation arrangements must be in accordance with the *Highway Traffic Act*.

7.3 The following means of transportation are acceptable for students who participate in excursions:

i) Vehicles owned or hired by the Northeastern Catholic District School Board;
ii) privately owned insured vehicles;
iii) licensed government and commercial public carrier vehicles;
iv) transit authorities in municipalities; and
v) other forms of transportation approved by a superintendent.

7.4 Vehicles identified as vans are not to exceed 8 passengers unless the vans are owned or hired by the NCDSB, and the vans are maintained, inspected and operated as a school purposes vehicle in accordance with the *Highway Traffic Act*, and that any driver is qualified and licensed to drive this type of vehicle for school purposes.

7.5 Vehicles being rented by staff members for approved excursions must be rented in the name of the NCDSB, and the Principal's permission is required. The full insurance coverage offered by the rental company is to be purchased.

7.6 If the excursion involves the use of volunteer drivers, the Principal will ensure that the appropriate procedures are followed.

7.7 When private vehicles are driven during excursions, whether they are driven by staff or volunteers their car insurance is primary. Their insurance coverage would apply before any other insurance. Only if the claim exceeds the liability limit carried on the owner's auto policy, would the board's excess insurance for non-owned automobiles apply, and then only for the amount in excess of the limit.

7.8 For the personal protection of excursion drivers, it is recommended that drivers carry a minimum of $1,000,000.00 of Third-Party Automobile Liability Insurance. Volunteers and board employees who use their personal vehicles for transporting student to school activities should advise their insurance carrier.

7.9 If a student/parent/guardian indicates a need or desire to deviate from the departure and/or return locations, as noted in the itinerary, these plans must be developed and agreed upon in advance of the excursion. A copy of the arrangement must be filed in the office and another copy kept with the supervising staff member on the excursion.

8.0 HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES

8.1 All high-risk activities require approval by the Principal and the Superintendent of Education, in advance of any such activity. It is important to note that all activities include a level of risk. Some examples of higher-risk activities may include, but are not limited to:

i) Tree-top trekking;
ii) Water sports, including swimming;
iii) Alpine skiing;

iv) Rock climbing;
v) Trampoline parks;
vi) Sliding;
vii) Skating;
viii) Ice fishing.

8.2 Engagement in high-risk activities must adhere to the OPHEA guidelines.

8.3 For any excursion involving more than one high-risk activity, the supervising staff member will refer to all appropriate checklists and guidelines for each activity.

8.4 In the event of a suspected head injury or concussion, students will be immediately removed from the activity by the supervisor, and the provisions of the related policy and procedures will apply.

8.5 The lead supervisor must read the appropriate sections of all related NCDSB policy and procedures and complete all necessary checklists and forms to ensure that all requirements for certification, supervision ratios, and safety will be followed. All information must be shared with the Principal, prior to the departure.

8.6 A first aid kit should be available with other safety equipment as required for each high-risk activity.

8.7 Consent and communication relating to high-risk activities must include:

i) The **school's consent form** must clearly outline the planned activities and risks involved and the extent of each party's responsibility for liability insurance. The **school's consent form** must also include a Notice of Risk intended to provide fair, common-sense cautions about risks which may typically occur through no fault of either students or those staff members/volunteers arranging and supervising the excursion. The consent form also requires a parent/guardian signature.
ii) Students and parent(s) should be made aware that they are responsible for their own Health and Accident Insurance and that they are accepting the risks inherent in the activity.
iii) Parents should not be asked to "waive" rights to file suit for liability for accidents caused by the neglect of the board, lead supervisor, or staff of outside agencies or facilities. Forms should not be sent to parents from any facility requesting such a waiving of rights.
iv) An itinerary which meets the mandatory requirements must be communicated to parents and stored in the school office and kept with a staff member who is on the excursion.
v) Lead supervisors must be aware of the location of the nearest telephone and/or help in case of emergency, and of appropriate contact numbers for emergency help in the area.
vi) The parent must be given an information contact number to use if the return from an excursion is delayed.

8.8 Principals and Superintendents of Education who approve excursions which involve high-risk activities must be satisfied that the lead supervisor and/or volunteers have the necessary certification, as required by OPHEA safety guidelines.

8.9 In addition to formal qualifications, all supervisors must have recent experience to the demands of the excursion. The skills of the supervisor must include the experience needed to prepare and instruct students, to assess their progress and physical state, and to exercise effective management of groups on the excursion. In some cases, the lead supervisor or certified service provider may need to conduct planning and/or training sessions for students and other supervisors.

8.10 For each high-risk activity, the lead supervisor will ensure that the students who participate in the activity are informed about expectations for behaviour.

9.0 EXTENDED OVERNIGHT EXCURSIONS: OUT-OF-PROVINCE/COUNTRY

9.1 Billeting of students on an excursion is not permitted.

9.2 Participation in all such excursions is voluntary and requires parental consent.

9.3 All safety provisions and educational value of the activity must meet the minimum standards in the province of Ontario.

9.4 Excursions to destinations where there is political unrest, civil instability, or the threat of war or insurrection, are strictly prohibited.

9.5 When giving permission, the parent is required to inform the school of any medical conditions of the student and to provide current emergency information, including a contact number.

9.6 Out-of-country excursions require extended medical insurance coverage to be paid by the student/parent. Written proof of coverage will be required by the school in advance of the excursion.

10.0 BEHAVIOUR

10.1 Regardless of the type of excursion or location, all participants are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct.

10.2 During an excursion, if the lead supervisor deems the behaviour of a student to be so inappropriate as to warrant the cancellation of their excursion privileges, the student will be returned home at the parent's expense.

10.3 Any student found in the possession of, or using, illegal drugs or a weapon, will be sent home from the excursion at their parent's expense and may be subject to

penalties under the law of the country the group is visiting. In all such instances, the lead supervisor must notify the principal as soon as possible.

10.4 If a student is sent home, the lead supervisor must contact the principal or designate and a parent prior to the student's departure, to ensure appropriate supervision of the student during the trip home and that the student is met by a parent upon arrival.

11.0 RELATED FORMS AND TEMPLATES

FORM: Request for Educational Excursion: Regular Activity
FORM: Request for Educational Excursion: High Risk Activity
FORM: Parent/Guardian Permission Form – Overnight Excursion
DOCUMENT: Responsibility Checklist for Supervisors and Principals
FORM: Use of Private Vehicle to Transport Students Authorization Form

Chief Executive Officer: *Tricia Stefanic Weltz*
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