Niagara Catholic District School Board

NAME EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS: DAY AND EXTENDED DAY

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

400 – Educational Programs **No 400.2.1**

Adopted Date: August 25, 2025	Latest Reviewed/Revised Date:

PREAMBLE

In keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the following are Administrative Operational Procedures for Educational Field Trips: Day and Extended Day.

The Board recognizes and encourages educational field trips as part of an enriching Catholic education for all students. All educational field trips must have a direct and enhancing relationship with the curriculum of the classroom and must be in alignment with our Catholic values. The board promotes Canadian experiences and social justice activities attached to registered charities.

When planning educational field trips every effort will be made to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to access all field trips. The dignity of every student and parent/guardian will be honoured in the collection of fees. If there is a direct cost to the student, participation is voluntary. Arrangements must be made for the continued education of those students not participating in the educational field trip. It is expected that all educational field trips involve preparatory, and learning experiences.

Employees of the Board can participate and accompany students on approved education field trips, as appointed by the principal/administrator, to act as a chaperone to meet the supervision requirements of the Board.

Individuals, who are not employed by the Board, and are requested by the principal/administrator and approved by the principal/administrator to serve as a chaperone/volunteer to meet the supervision requirements of the Board, will require, prior to being appointed as a chaperone/volunteer, an acceptable Police Vulnerable Sector Check.

DEFINITIONS

EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS
The term educational field trip includes any event or program that has students leaving the school property for educational purposes.

1. **Day Field Trips**
   A field trip which occurs within the regular school hours.

2. **Extended Day Field Trips**
   A field trip which extends beyond regular school hours, but does **not include an overnight stay**.
   A field trip in which students are driven to and/or picked up by parents/guardians at the school.

EXPECTATIONS/EDUCATIONAL GOALS

1. All educational field trips will follow Niagara Public Health guidelines and protocols (if required).

2. Educational field trips must be in alignment with Catholic values that call for us to protect the well-being of all God's creations. When choosing a trip to any attraction where animals are held in captivity, teachers/principals shall consider the reputation of the attraction and vet it with any relevant agencies, including the Ontario Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) (CAZA) to ensure that no investigations are under way or charges of animal cruelty have been laid or pending.

3. Should directly enhance specific curriculum expectations and/or the spiritual, esthetic, cultural, intellectual, athletic or social experiences of students.

4. Educational field trips are an extension of the classroom and school with all expectations enforced upon departure.

5. Trips that include charitable activities should consider Canadian initiatives before any international opportunity using registered charities.

6. Provisions are to be made for students with special education, accommodation and/or accessibility needs, with the school, student support services, the student, the student's parents/guardians, provider of transportation, and the venue of the educational field trip.

7. Educational field trips are made available to every student at the appropriate grade level; exceptions may be made at the discretion of the principal/administrator.

8. Regular school attendance with appropriate programming is expected for those students not participating in the educational field trip.

9. Educational field trips are supervised by an employee of the Board, unless otherwise approved by the principal/administrator and shall follow the Volunteering in Catholic Schools AOP 800.9.

10. Where reasonable and practical, educational field trips shall be in the Niagara Region and surrounding area.

REQUESTS FOR EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

All requests for educational field trips must be completed on the applicable forms (see below) and submitted to principal/administrator for approval prior to any announcement to students and parents/guardians. Interest may be solicited with clear communication indicating that the educational field trip will only occur pending final approval from the principal/administrator.

Applicable Forms

- ***Request for Educational Day and Extended Day Field Trip Form***
- ***Request to Transport Student Consent Form***
- ***Volunteer Drivers - Authorization to Transport Students***
- ***Permission/Informed Consent Form (Day and Extended Day)***
- ***Medical Information and Participation/Acknowledgement of Risk Form***

APPROVALS

Day and Extended Day Educational Field Trips
Completed request forms for day and extended day educational field trips must be submitted to the principal/administrator for consideration/approval.

Principals/administrators may approve:

- trips within walking distance of a school;
- half-day or full day trips; and
- extended school day trips, but not continuing overnight.

UNAPPROVED EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

1. An unapproved trip is one, which has not followed the process outlined to receive official approval or is one, which has followed the process, but has been denied. Neither the school nor the Board will sponsor, promote or participate in the planning of any unapproved trip.

2. Teachers are deemed in law to be in a position of authority over students by virtue of their positions as teachers. Therefore, teachers shall not become involved in any unapproved field trips with students. As well as facing disciplinary procedures, teachers involved in non-approved field trips surrender their legal claim to the Board's liability insurance coverage and to Workers' Compensation protections.

3. All supervisors/chaperones must follow only the approved itinerary. Supervisors/chaperones shall not become involved in any unapproved activities outside the scope of their supervisory duties during a field trip.

PARENT GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

1. All requests for educational field trips must be approved prior to any announcement to students and parents/guardians.

2. Written permission/consent from parents/guardians must be obtained for all approved educational field trips. Teachers must inform parents/guardians when the trip will include planned water activities.

3. The supervising teacher shall, send home a Permission/Informed Consent Form (Day Trip) with trip details (educational objective, destination, dates, departure/return times and pick up arrangements, method of transportation, accommodations, meals, itemized costs and itinerary, as applicable). Parents/guardians are to sign and return the form to the supervising teacher. The signed documentation of all trips shall be retained for the current school year until the successful completion of that trip.

4. Parents must complete a Medical Information and Participation/Acknowledgement of Risk Form and all medical information will be kept confidential.

5. A signed parental consent form is recommended but not required for a day trip beyond school property where the students will be travelling on foot, or is part of non-optional program or Board expectations of students. (i.e., day retreats, Church liturgies, graduation practices, graduation celebrations). Although specific notification and application are not necessary for such trips, it is essential that parents/guardians be made aware of the fact that such trips may

take place throughout the school year as part of the total school curriculum or Board expectations. It is mandatory that such awareness be created by means of information letters and/or newsletters throughout the school year to parents/guardians.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

1. An itinerary of each trip must be available in the school office in order that the principal/administrator may contact the supervising teacher in-charge if an emergency arises.

2. A list of participants including students, staff, and volunteers/chaperones must accompany the group and a copy must be submitted to the school office. If students are travelling by various means, each group and vehicle must be identified and must be in alignment with existing Volunteer Drivers AOP 302.4.

3. A principal/administrator or designate from the school will be available to be contacted should an emergency arise at any time during the trip or if a return is delayed. Parents/guardians are to be contacted as soon as possible.

4. The supervising teacher in-charge/teacher designate has the right to change the itinerary of the trip if, at their discretion, an emergency or dangerous situation arises, or as the situation warrants. Any change to the itinerary must be communicated to the principal/administrator, and as determined by the principal/administrator based on the nature of the change of itinerary, communicated with parents/guardians of students on the field trip.

SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

1. Student medical safety requirement will be outlined by parents in the Medical Information and Participation/Acknowledgement of Risk Form and all medical information will be kept confidential.

2. Before any out-of-school program, the teacher must instruct the students in appropriate behaviour and safety procedures, as well as any inherent dangers of the activity. The teacher(s) must show that the students have been carefully prepared and that the activity is appropriate to the age and physical/motor maturity of the participants.

3. Where there is instruction in High Care (i.e., water activities, skiing, etc.) the instructor(s) must be certified personnel, and additional supervision must be provided by appropriate teaching personnel.

4. Whenever physical activities are a part of the field trip, please refer to the applicable OPHEA Safety Guidelines. Special attention must be given to the safety regulations for all water activities, including but not limited to: canoeing (all forms), kayaking (all forms) diving, dragon boat, food and water, paddle boat rafting, rowing, sailing, scuba diving, skiing (all forms), snorkeling, swimming (all forms), water polo, wind surfing.

5. Field trips that include water parks are at the discretion of the principal/administrator providing all safety and supervision procedures are adhered to as described in the OPHEA Safety Guidelines. Recreation swimming is prohibited unless it is an integral part of the program.

6. Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding Trips are permitted only for Grade 4 to Grade 12 students. Principals/Administrators are to ensure that adequate supervision is in place and that qualified

instructors are available to provide the necessary training and instruction (OPHEA Safety Guidelines).

a) It is a requirement that all staff, chaperones and students participating in a school-sponsored ski/ snowboarding trip provide and wear a Canadian Standards Association (CSA) ski helmet indicating the helmet is approved as a ski helmet specifically designed for skiing or snowboarding.

b) Parent/guardian approval letters for participation in ski/snowboarding trips or co-instructional activities will include the following acknowledgements signed by parents/guardians:
   - that students will be skiing/boarding on their own, parents/guardians are to impress upon their child to follow all safety rules including wearing a properly certified and fitted ski/boarding helmet at all times while skiing/boarding;
   - that parents/guardians will provide their child with all certified safety equipment for the activity;
   - that skiing/boarding is a high-risk sport and students are accountable for their own safety;
   - that student consequences are in place for non-compliance which could include the exclusion from the activity for the rest of that day and/or a revoking of a ski/boarding pass for the remainder of the season; and
   - that the school nor the Board is responsible for any accident or financial loss.

7. Procedures in Cases of Student Injury or Illness:
   a. In the event of serious injury or illness to the student, the individual nearest to the incident shall provide immediate First Aid and inform on site First Aid personnel for support.

   b. The individual in-charge shall establish and follow an emergency action plan.

8. Additional Coverage:

   All Niagara Catholic District School Board students are encouraged to purchase the Accident Insurance Policy offered by the Board each September.

9. If, as a result of discipline/safety concerns, a student is required to be sent home by the supervising teacher during an educational field trip, the school and/or the Board is not responsible for any costs incurred in sending a student home. As a result of discipline/safety concern the student(s) may be required to discontinue their journey and shall not be entitled to a refund. It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to provide, or arrange for supervision of a student who is sent home by the supervisor in-charge. All costs to provide for such supervision is incurred by the parent/guardian.

SUPERVISION

1. Educational field trips are to be under the supervision of at least one teacher or, in unique situations, any Board employee or designate approved by the principal/administrator and Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education. Where more than one employee of the Board participates in an educational field trip, the principal/administrator shall designate one as the individual "in-charge". Principals/Administrators shall ensure that all precautions for the safety, comfort and supervision of participating students are taken.

2. The following minimum adult-to-student ratios are required. As soon as the number of students increases by one over the ratio, another supervisor must be added.

   Supervision Ratios:

	Day/Extended Day Field Trip Supervision Ratios
Gr. JK - K	1:10
Gr. 1 - 6	1:10
Gr. 7-8	1:15
Gr. 9 - 12	1:20

3. In determining supervision requirements, principals/administrators shall ensure that:
   - the selection of additional supervisors/chaperones beyond the ratio will be recommended by the principal/administrator after consultation with the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education.
   - Volunteer supervisors will be only considered after board employees have first been provided the opportunity.

4. Principals/Administrators are required to ensure approved chaperones/volunteers aware of their insurance coverage under this policy. Names of all staff and chaperone/volunteer supervisors must be recorded in order to protect them from liability.

5. Only individuals approved to chaperone or supervise a field trip are eligible to participate in any aspect of the educational field trip. For clarity, individuals who are not approved as chaperones, supervisors or volunteers cannot be included in travel arrangements, travel with or accompany the students and staff on the field trip.

6. Students or staff who request to leave the group on an approved field trip, such as to meet a family member, must submit a request, in writing, to the principal/administrator prior to the departure of the field trip. The principal/administrator will determine if arrangements can be made to assist with the request providing it does not interfere with the travel arrangements of the group. If approval is granted by the principal/administrator, it is permitted with the conditions that:
   - the Board is not responsible for the safety of the student or staff member when away from the group;
   - a staff member, chaperone or supervisor must meet with a designated family member prior to a student's departure and upon return to the group;
   - the student or staff member must report to the chaperone/supervisor upon their return;
   - any delay in meeting with the group at the designated time and location is not the responsibility of the Board and will not adversely affect the travel arrangements of the group; and,
   - students or staff who miss returning to the group will incur any costs for the delay or will be solely responsible for alternate transportation arrangements to either meet the group at a designated location or to return home.

FINANCING EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

1. All costs associated with an educational field trip must be considered, itemized and included in the original application being considered by the principal/administrator.

2. Principals/Administrators should ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to participate in planned trips, which may include providing partial or complete financial subsidies. They must keep the cost to students reasonable and reflective of their needs. Additionally, principals/administrators are responsible for obtaining the fairest prices for transportation, accommodation, and other expenditures, ensuring all transactions comply with Board procedures and guidelines.

3. All complimentary tickets provided by a travel company will be used to reduce the cost of travel of the number of supervisors/chaperones as outlined by the supervision ratio chart. Additional complimentary travel tickets provided will be used to defray the cost of the students participating in the program.

   For example:

   36 participating students generates 6 complimentary tickets.
   Based on these procedures, 36 students require three (3) supervisors who travel at no cost. Therefore, there are three (3) complimentary tickets remaining.

   The principal/administrator would inform staff that three (3) complimentary travel spaces are available with financial assistance up to 25% of the cost of the trip. The difference of the three (3) complimentary tickets would be used to defray the cost paid by students participating in the program.

REFUND OR CANCELLATION

Any educational field trip may be cancelled at any time by a principal/administrator and/or Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education, if required.

TRANSPORTATION

1. While the Board does not recommend using private motor vehicles to transport students to a school related activity, all staff members (administrators/teachers/support staff) or volunteer drivers must complete the Volunteer Drivers - Authorization to Transport Students Form and have authorization from the principal/administrator.

2. In the event that privately owned automobiles are used in the transportation of students, only fully-graduated licensed drivers authorized by the principal/administrator shall be permitted to transport the students.

3. A passenger list containing the name of the driver and the names of each student in the vehicle must be made, with one copy provided to the driver of the vehicle, and one copy retained at the school. Only the students on the passenger list are permitted in the designated vehicle.

4. All parents/guardians of the students transported by volunteer drivers must be informed of the transportation arrangements and liability by providing a signed letter consenting to their child being transported by the approved volunteer driver. Request to Transport Student Consent Form

5. When an activity is completed, principals/administrators will ensure that prior to the event, a student provides written permission from their parent/guardian to allow them to:
    - return to the school with the volunteer driver;
    - receive a ride home from another parent as identified on the permission letter; or
    - receive a ride home from an identified parent/guardian.

6. By law, the Board cannot provide the automobile insurance for individuals and vehicles not owned by the Board. Principals/Administrators are to ensure that persons using their own vehicles to transport students for extracurricular activities have a minimum auto insurance limit of $1 million in the event of an accident. A vehicle shall not be used to transport in excess of six passengers unless licensed under the Highway Traffic Act as a bus and the driver is licensed appropriately.

7. Individuals transporting students in private motor vehicles should be sure that their Automobile Public Liability Insurance coverage is valid and current and meets the Board's requirements. The Board, however, maintains an Excess Liability Insurance Policy, which covers all employees and volunteers who are transporting students within Canada and Continental United States on behalf of the Board. This Administrative Operational Procedure comes into effect if a judgment arises against that employee or volunteer resulting from use of his vehicle and is in excess of the limit carried by the individual on their personal policy.

8. It is expected that all parents/guardians of students being transported in private motor vehicles have valid automobile insurance, including the O.P.C.F. 44R endorsement.

9. When a school group is staying in a remote area, teachers are advised to have a vehicle available for emergency transport of students, in the event of medical emergency, to the nearest appropriate Medical Facility.

10. Where staff or parent/guardian volunteers provide transportation, a seat belt must be provided for each student.

11. Rental Vehicles: Please refer to Volunteer Drivers AOP 302.4 for rental vehicle criteria.

References

- ***Canadian Standards Association (CSA)***
- ***Education Statutes and Regulations of Ontario***
- ***Ontario Human Rights Commission***
- ***Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA)***
- ***Ontario School Boards Insurance Exchange (OSBIE):Risk Management Advisory***

Niagara Catholic District School Board Policies/Procedures

- ***Volunteer Drivers (302.4) AOP***
- ***Volunteering in Catholic Schools (800.9) AOP***
- ***Student Fees (301.11) AOP***

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