



Niagara Catholic District School Board

EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS:

OVERNIGHT, EXTENDED OVERNIGHT, CREDIT PROGRAM AND EXCHANGES

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

400 – Educational Programs

No 400.2

Adopted Date: May 26, 1998

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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: Overnight, Extended Overnight, Credit Program and Exchanges.

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 Director of Education 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 including travel in Canada or internationally.

1. Overnight Educational Field Trip (One to three nights)

A field trip that normally requires students to be lodged for one, two or three nights.

Overnight field trips of more than one night's duration shall be limited to one per class per school year, unless approval is granted by the Director of Education, and shall be restricted to students of Grade 7 to 12.

Overnight field trips shall not include more than two instructional days, exceptions may include grade 7 or 8 class school trip.

2. **Extended Overnight Educational Field Trip (Four or more nights or requires airfare)**

A field trip that requires four or more nights' lodgings, or requires airfare.

Any extended overnight educational field trip is restricted to students of grades 9-12.

An extended overnight educational field trip which involves more than one school will follow the same procedures and will require the approval of the principal/administrator and the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education of all participating schools at the time of submission for approval.

Extended overnight educational field trip can only take place during Christmas or March break, with a maximum of two additional instructional days, unless otherwise approved by the Director of Education.

All extended overnight educational field trips held internationally will only be permitted at each school every two years.

The principal must meet with the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education no later than 60 days prior to the departure date to review and finalize all trip details.

3. **Continuing Education Credit Programs**

Credit courses organized during the school year or during the summer require approval from the principal/administrator of Continuing Education, the Superintendent of Continuing Education and the Director of Education.

4. **Exchanges**

School-to-School exchanges are available for all elementary and secondary students in Niagara Catholic. Applications must be made by the principal/administrator to the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education and include detailed plans and financial expenditures regarding the educational, cultural and linguistic aspects of a school-to-school exchange.

Principals/Administrators are to ensure that there is a formalized reciprocal agreement between participating schools. School-to-School exchanges can take place at any time during the calendar year and require the approval of the principal/administrator, Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education, Extended Overnight Field Trip and Exchange Approval Committee and the Director of Education prior to any authorization to participate.

Student exchanges may be planned for elementary or secondary students by parents/guardians. Prior to any commitment, parents/guardians are to discuss the student exchange request with the principal/administrator for approval. In considering the request, the principal/administrator is to ensure that there is a formalized reciprocal agreement with the student exchange company for an exchange to take place in a mutually agreed upon school year prior to submission to the Extended Overnight Field Trip and Exchange Approval Committee.

EXPECTATIONS/EDUCATIONAL GOALS

1. All educational field trips will follow Niagara Public Health guidelines and protocols (if required).
2. Trips that include charitable activities should consider Canadian initiatives before any international opportunity using registered charities.
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. 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.
6. 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.
7. Regular school attendance with appropriate programming is expected for those students not participating in the educational field trip.
8. 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.](#)
9. If an education field trip occurs on a Sunday or a Holy Day of Obligation, every effort will be made to ensure that an appropriate liturgy, including Eucharist, is conducted for all students, staff, and supervisors. If a liturgy is not possible to be provided, an appropriate prayer service or religious observance will be provided for all students, staff, and supervisors.

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 Overnight Field Trip, Extended Overnight Field Trip, Credit Programs and Exchanges*](#)
- [*Medical Information and Participation/Acknowledgement of Risk Form*](#)
- [*Permission/Informed Consent Form \(Overnight and Extended Overnight Trip\)*](#)
- [*Airline / Tour Company / Insurance Checklist*](#)
- [*Request to Transport Student Consent Form*](#)
- [*Volunteer Drivers - Authorization to Transport Students*](#)

APPROVALS

All requests for educational field trips must be approved in accordance with the administrative operational procedures:

Overnight Educational Field Trips (One to three nights)

All overnight educational field trips (one to three nights lodging) require the approval of the principal/administrator and the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education.

- Completed request forms for overnight educational field trips approved by the principal/administrator shall be sent to the respective Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education **at least four (4) weeks prior** to the commencement date.

Extended Overnight Field Trips, Continuing Education Credit Programs, and Exchanges (Four or more nights or requires airfare)

All extended overnight educational field trips and/or exchanges require the approval of the principal/administrator, the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education, Extended Overnight Field Trip and Exchange Approval Committee, Senior Administrative Council and the Director of Education.

The Extended Overnight Field Trip and Exchange Approval Committee is comprised of:

- 1 Superintendent of Education
- 1 Elementary School Principal
- 1 Secondary School Principal
- 1 Secondary School Vice-Principal
- Administrator of International Education

Requests approved by the Family of Schools' Superintendent are to be forwarded to the Extended Overnight Field Trip, and Exchange Approval Committee **at least twelve (12) months prior** to the planned activity. Exceptions to the timelines can be made at the discretion of the respective Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education in consultation with Senior Administrative Council.

All requests shall include:

- [Request for Overnight Field Trip, Extended Overnight Field Trip, Credit Programs and Exchanges Form](#)
- [Airline / Tour Company / Insurance Checklist](#)
- A copy of the proposed itinerary.
- Additional written information that will assist the committee in its consideration of the request.

All approved trips by the Extended Overnight Field Trip, and Exchange Approval Committee will be reported to the Senior Administrative Council for consideration. The principal/administrator will be informed in writing of the approval, and can proceed with the planning of the trip. Any overnight extended field trips planned for an academic year shall be shared with the Board of Trustees. In order to allow students as much time as possible to raise funds therefore creating a more equitable opportunity for all students, schools should advertise as soon as approval is granted.

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. Where approval has not been granted, the Committee will forward to the principal/administrator of the school requesting permission for the trip, a summary of the rationale. The principal/administrator may re-submit a proposal to the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education with the required revisions.
3. 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.
4. 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 financial commitment.
2. Parents/guardians whose children may be involved in an approved overnight field trip shall be invited to a meeting where the trip proposal will be explained in detail and their support of the proposed trip solicited. A written consent form will be completed and signed by a parent/guardian granting approval for their child to participate in the proposed trip.
3. The supervising teacher shall, send home a Permission/Informed Consent Form (Overnight and Extended Trips) 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.

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, and wind surfing.
5. 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.
6. Non-Commercial/Recreational boating trips (including gondolas) are to be organized only for secondary school students. Principals/ Administrators must obtain the prior approval of the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education to plan a non-commercial/recreational boating trip. As these trips take place on the water, they require close and direct supervision at all times. Teachers must inform parents/guardians when the trip will include planned water activities. These activities must be included on the field trip Informed Consent/Permission form.

Prior to any non-commercial/recreational boating trips the swimming ability of each student must be ascertained. To be considered a swimmer the student must demonstrate to qualified personnel, (the skills outlined in the [OPHEA Swim Test for Non-Designated Swim Areas – Land-Based Trips](#)) that they are able to:

- Successfully complete the following swim test in its entirety, in sequence and without any aids or stops:
 - rolling entry (backwards or forward) into deep water at 2.75m (9') minimum depth
 - tread water for 1 minute
 - swim 50m (164') continuously any stroke
- The test must be administered by a certified Aquatic Instructor or a certified Lifeguard (the test is based on the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive™ Standard).
- The swim test must be completed within the school year in which the activity is taking place.

- In lieu of completing the swim test, students may provide proof of Bronze Star certification or higher.
 - Results of the swim test must be documented and communicated as per school board policy (for example, to the Student, Teacher, Principal, Parents/Guardians, Trip Guide(s), Lifeguards, Aquatic Instructor, and Outside Provider [if applicable]).
 - Students who cannot successfully complete the swim test, must wear a properly fastened P.F.D./lifejacket at all times when in the water, or near the water. All Teachers, Trip Guides and Monitors must be aware of these students
7. Field trips involving commercial ship, ferry or other boat cruises are not prohibited by this policy.
 8. 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.
 - c. All teachers are encouraged to undergo training in first aid and C.P.R.
 9. All Niagara Catholic District School Board students are encouraged to purchase the Accident Insurance Policy offered by the Board each September.
 10. Health Insurance must be offered and included in the cost of any Out of Province/Out of Country excursion.
 11. 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 and/or Principal/Vice Principal and comprise of staff supervisors from the participating school.
2. A school requesting any non-school chaperones, must be approved by the Superintendent of Education and Director of Education.
3. 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.
4. When multiple schools are attending the same event, supervision can be shared with approval from the Family of Schools' Superintendent.
5. 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. In addition to the listed ratios, all excursions outside of Canada or the Continental United States require one additional supervisor.

Grades	Overnight Trips (Within Canada)
Gr. K-6	N/A
Gr. 7-8	1:10
Gr. 9-12	1:15
Gr. 9-12	Overnight Trips (Outside of Canada or Continental USA) 1:8

- 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.
6. If a program includes students of both genders, and extends overnight, then supervisors/chaperones of both genders must accompany the field trip. Under exceptional circumstances, the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education may waive this provision, parents/guardians will be notified of this documented exception, and a notation will be made on file.
 7. 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.
 8. 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.
 9. 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;
 - 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. Principals/Administrators are to ensure that the actual cost to the student reflects the needs of the school community and is kept at a reasonable level. In order to keep overnight field trips reasonably priced, only trips that are no more than ten (10) days in length, and limited to no more than two (2) countries should be considered. As well, travel between two countries shall utilize land transportation only. Trips within Canada are encouraged.
4. 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.
5. All travel providers are to itemize a list of costs, including any savings or travel bursaries, to our students.
6. For trips that do not involve complimentary tickets based on the number of students travelling, all approved chaperones/supervisors above the Board supervision ratio, excluding the required the approved chaperones supervising the trip, will be required to pay the same travel cost as each student.

REFUND OR CANCELLATION

1. For trips outside of Canada or the continental United States, **a minimum of twenty-four (24) participating students are required for an overseas trip to be approved.** The accumulative number of 24 students can be achieved by combining multiple Niagara Catholic schools. During the school year, there will be no pairing up with schools outside of the Board to meet the minimum requirement of students. The trip organizer in coordination with the principal, must clearly identify and articulate the cancellation policy available for participants to acquire full or partial refunds.
2. **At least 130 days prior to the departure date, the principal must provide written confirmation to the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education that the minimum requirement of 24 participating students for the overseas trip has been met.**
3. 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.
12. Air Travel: Shall be arranged through properly licensed travel agencies or airlines. Students, staff, chaperones and supervisors must purchase cancellation insurance.

Prior to approving all travel requests by staff, principals/administrators are to clearly understand the answers to the questions on the Airline/Tour Company/Insurance Checklist as they apply to individual trip applications.

Principals/Administrators are to:

- a. record the answers and file responses at the school;
- b. submit the responses with the checklist to the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education;
- c. instruct the tour supplier to forward a letter outlining their understanding of the Terms and Conditions prior to any finalization/approval of the trip. (provide a copy of [Airline / Tour Company / Insurance Checklist](#) to agent if required)
- d. when applicable, determine the exact date and time period each policy is in effect and the length of time it remains in effect. (i.e., cancellation of a trip without penalty must be made by - date and time; cancellation with fifty-percent refund must be made by - date and time; cancellation done in writing individually or by the entire group signing a letter etc.).

ACCOMMODATIONS

1. All overnight educational field trip accommodations must be in alignment with the [Ontario Human Rights Commission Requirements](#).

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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