GREATER ESSEX COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy: Field Trips and Excursions

Reference No: P-PR-01

The Greater Essex County District School Board believes that well-planned and conducted Field Trips provide students with an enhanced educational experience and program, and therefore approves Field Trips that are conducted in accordance with the regulations.

The Greater Essex County District School Board also believes that Excursions related to a school experience can provide the opportunity for personal, cultural and social growth and school community-building, and therefore approves Excursions that are conducted in accordance with the regulations.

All out-of-school experiences occurring during school hours should be made available to all students in a designated class, grade or course.

All Field Trips and Excursions must have adequate pre-planning and organizers must be aware of, and sensitive to the liability position they are assuming on behalf the Board and themselves.

Definitions:

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will apply.

a) A Field Trip is an out-of-school study which is directly and substantively related to specific expectations found in the Provincial curriculum documents.

b) An Excursion is also an out-of-school activity, however, it does not relate directly or substantively to specific expectations found in the Provincial curriculum documents. Excursions may provide the opportunity for personal, cultural and social growth and school community-building goals.

c) A Field Trip or Excursion occurs off site from the school's and/or school board's property beyond a distance which a student would normally be expected to walk. A Neighbourhood Study Activity takes place off site from the school's and/or school board's property and within reasonable walking or assisted walking distance. If a Neighbourhood Study Activities does not involve activities with increased risks to students, it would not be subject to the provisions of this policy.

d) Field Trips and Excursions can be classified as: 1) Day Trips; 2) Overnight Trips; or 3) International Trips. Trips that include accommodations are classified as Overnight Trips. Travel of any length out of the country is classified as an International Trip.

e) The Board expressly disclaims any liability for claims for personal injuries, property damage or other, that in any way arise out of, or are connected with, out-of-school activities not approved as a), b) or c) above. Trips of this kind shall be the sole responsibility of the teacher (s) who participate in any manner.

Greater Essex County District School Board

Regulation: Field Trips and Excursions

Reference No: R-PR-1

General

1. Field Trips and Excursions shall be developmentally appropriate, reflecting the age, skill, physical abilities and level of understanding of the students. Field Trips shall relate directly and substantively to the curriculum. Excursions shall relate to the school's plan to promote opportunities for students' personal, cultural and social growth and the enhancement of school community.

2. Field Trips and Excursions can be classified as: 1) Day Trips; 2) Overnight Trips; or 3) International Trips. Trips that include overnight accommodations are classified as Overnight Trips. Travel of any length out of the country is classified as an International Trip.

3. All arrangements shall be made with the full knowledge and formal approval of the school principal.

4. Field Trips and Excursions should be planned to be inclusive of all students. Consideration should be given to the accessibility and appropriateness of activities, transportation and venues for all students.

5. The use of local, community and regional institutions and locations is greatly encouraged.

6. The Greater Essex County District School Board adopts the safety standards set out by the OPASSE -Ontario Physical Activity Standards in Education (formerly OPHEA) as the minimum standards for Field Trips and Excursions.

7. The Greater Essex County District School Board accepts the OSBIE Field Trip Risk Management Guidelines set out by the Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange as guiding principles for effectively managing risk when planning and conducting Field Trips and Excursions. OSBIE states that, consideration should be given to the risks associated with several components of any school trip, as follows: 1) Mode of Student Transportation; 2) the Foreseeable Hazards at the planned destination; 3) the Collateral Hazards or incidental activities that may take place at, or en route to the planned destination; 4) Supervision requirements; and 5) Volunteer recruitment and supervision. Considerations and guidelines are available at: Field Trip Risk Management Guideline.

8. Field Trips and Excursions which are identified as 'High Risk' with respect to safety, are not permitted. 'High Risk Activities' are identified by the Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange on OSBIE and our GECDSB Risk Management Policy (P-BA- 16). Reference these sources for a current list. Some examples of 'High Risk Activities' include, but are not limited to:

    - downhill skiing or snow boarding
    - trampolines
    - air-filled 'Fun Structures
    - white water rafting

- canoeing or kayaking in rapids
- wilderness or winter camping
- diving or sliding into foam, mud, ice or snow
- Extreme Sport Activities: e.g. skateboarding, cliff rappelling, downhill mountain biking, skydiving, rock climbing in natural terrain
- paint-ball games
- Amazing Race type events

9. Outside Activity Providers/Venues (activity providers or venues not affiliated with the GECDSB) are occasionally used for Field Trips and Excursions. Proof of adequate commercial liability is required through a Certificate of Insurance from venues and service providers who are privately owned and operated independently, including and not limited to climbing walls, zip lining, camps, and family farms. Large established public venues such as the Royal Ontario Museum, libraries, municipal parks, the CN Tower, and conservation authorities would not be required to provide proof of insurance. Activity providers/venues must be provided with the relevant OPASSE Safety Guidelines. The activity provider/venue must agree to and verify compliance with the requirements of the OPASSE Guidelines outlined in the Generic section and activity page(s). In a situation where the activity provider/venue enforces a higher safety standard, this standard applies.

10. OSBIE does not recommend the use of liability waivers from Outside Activity Providers/Venues and recommends the use of the GECDSB informed consent forms. Waivers may not be used (signed by, or on behalf of students) for an Outside Activity Providers/Venues unless they explicitly acknowledge/accept liability for events that arise from their negligence.

11. Schools will make every reasonable effort to be aware of and plan for the religious observances of their staff, students and community when planning Field Trips and Excursions. Refer to the GECDSB Multicultural Observances Calendar.

12. Occasional teacher coverage is not provided by the board for any staff participating in Field Trips or Excursions unless written approval is received by a Superintendent of Education prior to the event taking place.

13. All aspects of student health, safety and accessibility must be taken into consideration when planning Field Trips and Excursions. Successful Field Trips and Excursions for all students, and especially those with identified needs, require thorough and timely planning. Considerations must be given for identified learning needs, safety and behavioural needs, and the needs of students with Prevalent Medical Conditions (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and/or are at risk of anaphylaxis which have the potential to result in a medical incident or a life threatening medical emergency) and other medical conditions, including Plans of Care, and specialized equipment. Accessibility needs and limitations must also be determined for the venues, activities and modes of transportation used on all Field Trips and Excursions.

14. Excursions that permit students to access rides at amusement parks are not permitted, with the exception of students who are currently enrolled in classes or programs whose teachers are using the experience for instruction tied directly to the curriculum, or for those students who are performing in musical competitions on site. In these circumstances, a comprehensive assessment of risk for the activities and rides, supervision requirements and Emergency/Safety planning is required. A detailed description of the activities and elements of risk for all activities at the amusement park must be included in the informed

consent. Water activities in amusement parks are not permitted.

15. Excursions shall not last longer than three days of scheduled classes.

Finances

16. Planning for Field Trips and Excursions should incorporate provisions to include all students who wish to participate in the experience. Principals will employ a discreet and respectful process in the implementation of this cause.

Transportation

17. School buses are the preferred form of ground transportation. Passenger vans designed to carry 9 or more passengers must not be used to transport students.

18. Private transportation should be used only with the full appreciation of the implications related to liability insurance. Refer to the information in Administrative Procedure BA-AP- 21 (Consent/Permission/Acknowledgement Forms Recommended by the Board's Insurer) and use the designated forms for all drivers/passengers. Student drivers are not permitted to transport other students on Field Trips and Excursions. For all private transportation, students can only be transported in privately-owned or rented vehicles by staff or approved volunteer drivers who possess a valid G license, a minimum of $1 million of automobile liability insurance and have completed and signed the appropriate Volunteer Driver Form (BA-AP-21 Form 4).

19. When transporting students by water craft, the school shall obtain a letter from the owner/operator verifying sufficient, approved lifejackets and/or PFD (personal floatation devices) for the group and indicating the date of their most recent successful Ministry of Transportation (or other relevant national standards authority) inspection. A safety demonstration must be given by the crew and emergency procedures must be explained. Local weather conditions should be monitored. If weather conditions (including lightning, wind, waves and currents) pose a safety risk, the trip or activity should not proceed.

20. Some students with significant physical limitations will require specialized travel arrangements. Wheelchair accessible busses, safe seating harnesses, etc. will need to be discussed prior to approval and must be arranged well before the planned trip. Please refer to # 67 of this regulation.

Approvals

21. Formal principal approval is required for all Field Trips and Excursions. Principal approval indicates that the planned activities are in compliance with all applicable elements of the Field Trips and Excursions Policy (PR-01), Regulation (PR-01) and Administrative Procedure (PR-AP-05). Principal approval also requires that the following expectations, outlined by OSBIE, have been addressed: 1) complete an assessment of risk - transportation, location and activities involved; 2) take reasonable safety steps; 3) provide appropriate supervision – acting as a careful and prudent parent; and 4) exercise due diligence. Upon weighing these factors and balancing the potential risks versus the potential benefits, each principal will make a determination as to whether to approve a proposed trip application. Principal approval of a completed application package is required prior to seeking additional approval by the designated superintendent.

22. Field Trips and Excursions which are classified as Day Trips require formal principal approval.

23. Field Trips and Excursions which are classified as Overnight Trips, require formal principal approval and additional approval from the designated superintendent. The appropriate application form, along with a detailed itinerary and outline of the proposed activities and accommodations, must be submitted a minimum of four weeks in advance of the date of the proposed activity.

24. Field Trips and Excursions which are classified as International Trips, require formal principal approval and additional approval from the designated superintendent. The appropriate application form, along with a detailed itinerary and outline of the proposed activities, must be submitted to the superintendent a minimum of four weeks in advance of the date of the proposed activity.

25. International Trips to countries other than the United States, require formal principal approval and additional approval from the designated superintendent and the Director of Education. The appropriate application form, along with a detailed itinerary and outline of the proposed activities, must be submitted to the superintendent a minimum of four months in advance of the date of the proposed activity.

Supervision

26. All Field Trips and Excursions require that the principal and supervising staff ensure that effective supervision is provided for students. The minimum ratio of students to adults, including at least one teacher, must be as follows:
    - 15:1 for secondary school students
    - 10:1 for elementary students in the intermediate division
    - 8:1 for elementary students in the junior division
    - 5:1 for elementary students in the primary division

    Effective supervision for a Field Trip or Excursion must be based on a number of factors, including the nature of the activity, the age, ability and experience of the participants, and environmental factors, such as the site lay-out, number of others at the site, the presence of other risks at the site, and the qualifications of the supervisors. In many circumstances, additional adult supervision above the minimum ratio is required. OPASSE guidelines provide details for supervision ratios based on many common school activities (e.g. swimming, ropes course, hiking, physical education activities) and must be followed on Field Trips and Excursions. OSBIE identifies “inexperienced volunteers and/or teacher supervisors” as an element of “High Risk”.

27. Volunteers are often used to assist teachers in supervising Field Trips and Excursions. Volunteers should be screened for their appropriateness and capacity to serve as a chaperone. The principal must assess which activities are appropriate for volunteers to be involved in and ensure that there is appropriate supervision of volunteers by staff. In their role as chaperones, volunteers should not be ‘in charge’ of a trip and must not administer discipline to students. Volunteer Drivers’ must show evidence of a valid driver’s license and liability insurance and must complete the appropriate Volunteer Driver Forms (AP-BA-21 Forms 4 and 5) prior to the trip. Police clearances are recommended for volunteers, particularly for activities that require long term interaction with students.

28. Teachers and chaperones must actively supervise students at all times during Field Trips and Excursions and must not schedule any unsupervised time for students. A review of volunteer/chaperone supervision expectations must be conducted by the principal prior to the trip to ensure that all volunteers and chaperones are aware of their responsibilities and expectations (e.g. active supervision at all times), as well as the applicable student code of conduct.

29. Where a Field Trip or Excursion involves activities such as hiking, climbing, ropes course, camping, archery or any other activity in which students may be at greater risk, the principal shall ensure that:

    (i) Parents/guardians and students are fully informed of the location, activities and inherent risks involved;
    (ii) the staff supervising the activities are properly and sufficiently qualified;
    (iii) the facilities and operators that are being used for the activity understand and comply with all OSBIE, OPASSE and GECDSB guidelines. It should not be assumed that third party providers and facilities meet these standards.
    (iv) all students are adequately prepared to participate in the activities, including successfully completing pre-requisite testing;
    (v) all of the equipment used in the activity, such as tools, utensils, protective clothing, appropriate footwear and tents are of a standard sufficient to ensure the safety of students;
    (vi) each student has submitted a signed consent form which explicitly describes the nature of the activities and their inherent risks.

30. Where a Field Trip or Excursion involves water activities, the principal shall ensure that:

    (i) trip organizers have read and complied with all of the OPASSE guidelines and requirements for the identified activities (e.g. Elementary Curricular – swimming; Secondary Outdoor Education – canoeing), including safety equipment and planning;
    (ii) participating students have satisfied OPASSE's activity-specific Swim Test requirements;
    (iii) Swim Test Results are signed by the assessor, reviewed by the principal prior to the trip/activity, retained at the school, and made available to parents if requested;
    (iv) the staff supervising the activities are properly and sufficiently qualified (e.g. OPASSE - ORCKA and Paddle Canada certification for canoe instructors);
    (v) the facilities and operators that are being used for the activity understand and comply with all OPASSE and GECDSB guidelines (e.g. OPASSE requirements for supervision of pools). It should not be assumed that third party providers and facilities meet these standards.
    (vi) all students are adequately prepared to participate in the activities, including successfully completing pre-requisite testing where required (e.g. swimming and canoeing tests as per OPASSE);

31. Organizers of Field Trips and Excursions shall establish, prior to the trip, Emergency/Safety Procedures to be followed in the event of a mishap or emergency. Evacuation and meeting places must be determined and shared with students and chaperones, including procedures to respond in the event that a student(s) become separated from the group. Students and chaperones should also be aware of the emergency procedures (e.g. fire alarm) for all locations visited. It should be determined what skills are available within the group of supervisors of a particular Field Trip or Excursion (e.g. first aid training). In addition, if a 911 call, or other emergency call (e.g. police or medical) is made during the Field Trip or

Excursion, the teacher must contact the school principal immediately.

32. As part of the Emergency/Safety Procedures, the staff leader must have access to health information about each participating student, such as medication, medical Plan of Care documents, allergies, and Epi-Pens, as well as access to information regarding GECDSB health-related protocols and practices and those outlined in the **Student Health Policy (P-AD-59)**. For an activity, any part of which is outside of normal school hours, the staff leader shall have the information on hand. For activities which are taking place within school hours, the information may be retained at the school where it can be accessed by telephone. Refer to the information in Administrative Procedure AP-BA-21 (Consent/Permission/Acknowledgement Forms Recommended by the Board's Insurer).

33. Organizers of Field Trips and Excursions must be aware of IEPs, Safety Plans and Behaviour Plans of students attending the trip, and must include these considerations in their Emergency/Safety Procedures and supervision planning.

34. Teachers must review the school code of conduct and the Emergency/Safety Procedures for their trip with students and chaperones.

35. Students are expected to travel to and from the Field Trip or Excursion with the staff leading the trip. Students are not permitted to leave the trip on their own. Teachers must never send a student home alone - even for disciplinary reasons. Parents/guardians desiring to take their children home before a trip ends must receive approval prior to the Field Trip or Excursion.

Collateral Hazards

36. OSBIE identifies collateral hazards as the risks associated with activities that are "incidental to the primary purpose of the school excursion." These activities often take place at, or en route to the primary destination. Examples include hotel swimming pools or waterparks, activities such as go cart parks and carnival rides that may be set up close to hotels or trip destinations, as well as restaurants, parks or rest stops used on the way to the destination. The same assessment, approval and management of risk must be applied to participation in these activities. All elements of the Field Trip and Excursion Policy apply to these activities, including supervision, compliance with OPASSE, OSBIE and GECDSB policies and guidelines (e.g. swim tests and certified life guards), principal approval and informed consent. Additional or incidental unapproved activities are not permitted.

Consent Forms, Documentation and Records Management

37. A key principle of this regulation is Informed Consent. Informed Consent not only includes appropriate parent/guardian signatures of consent, but requires that this consent is based upon a clear understanding of the following factors: means of travel, location(s), supervision, and importantly, a description of the activities that students will engage in. An itinerary and a description of the inherent risks of these factors must be part of the parent/guardian information and consent package. Informed Consent also requires that parents/guardians understand the information provided to them. Translate consent forms and trip itinerary as required

38. Signed parental/guardian consent forms shall be received for each student prior to participation in any Field Trip or Excursion. Refer to the information in Administrative Procedure AP-BA-21 Consent/Permission/Acknowledgement Forms Recommended by the Board's Insurer.

39. Documentation and maintenance of records for Field Trips and Excursions is guided by the GECDSB Records Management Policy (P-AB-25) and Administrative Procedure (AP- BA-25). Documentation of Field Trips and Excursions must include a copy of:

    - the approved Field Trip;
    - the communication between school and home;
    - the communication between school and activity providers/venues (e.g. sharing of OPHEA Guidelines, booking costs and itineraries);
    - certificates of liability or insurance from venues or service providers as required in the regulation;
    - parent/guardian consent forms for each student

Overnight Trips

40. For Overnight Trips, the itinerary accompanying the parent/guardian consent form will include information about accommodations, as well as the rules of conduct relative to the activity and the consequences if they are broken. Students on an Overnight Trip are required to follow the same expectations as they would in school (Safe Schools Policy/Regulations/Administrative Procedure) and may, in fact, be subject to additional consequences. (e.g. consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol will result in parents/guardians being notified and the student being sent home, accompanied, at the earliest opportunity at the parent's/guardian's expense).

41. Organizers of Overnight Trips must ensure that an adequate number of male and female chaperones are assigned and that appropriate overnight supervision is in place.

42. Principals may make a request to the Superintendent of Special Education for Educational Support Staff to provide continuous support for students, where appropriate, on Overnight Trips.

43. All adult volunteers/chaperones participating on an Overnight Field Trip or Excursion must have a current police clearance prior to attending the trip.

44. On Overnight Trips, the principal must have access to the phone numbers and contact information to reach the group in case of an emergency. In addition, staff should establish a list of emergency phone numbers, and the location and contact information of the nearest hospital or emergency facility and police department prior to the date of the Field Trip or Excursion.

45. A contingency plan must be put in place to provide supervision for students who become injured or ill, experience travel changes or delays, or are detained by authorities. Students cannot be left unaccompanied in these situations.

46. Field Trips which are out-of-province shall occur for reasons tied directly and substantively to a curriculum which the students are currently enrolled in, or when students are representing the GECDSB or region in an adjudicated or sanctioned competition or event. Out-of-province trips that do not meet these criteria are classified as Excursions.

International Trips

47. Field Trips which occur outside of Canada, shall occur for reasons tied directly and substantively to a curriculum which the students are currently enrolled in, or when students are representing the GECDSB or region in an adjudicated or sanctioned competition. Trips which occur outside of Canada that do not meet these criteria are classified as Excursions.

48. Field Trips and Excursions which are classified as International Trips, require additional approval from the designated superintendent. The appropriate application form, along with an outline and itinerary of the proposed activity, must be submitted a minimum of **four weeks** in advance of the date of the proposed activity.

49. International Trips to countries other than the United States, require additional approval from the designated superintendent and the Director of Education. The appropriate application form, along with an outline and itinerary of the proposed activity, must be submitted a minimum of four months in advance of the date of the proposed activity.

50. The Government of Canada provides a determination of the Level of Risk for travel to all countries. Travel advice and advisories by destination. This determination is based on an assessment of the nationwide safety and security situation. If the safety and security situation of a particular region within a country or territory is assessed to be different than that of the rest of the country or territory, a separate risk level for that region will be provided. The government uses a 4 level scale to identify travel risk: 1) Exercise normal security precautions; 2) Exercise a high degree of caution; 3) Avoid non-essential travel; 4) Avoid all travel. Levels 3 and 4 are official Government of Canada Travel Advisories and are issued when the safety and security of Canadians travelling or living in the country may be compromised. Field Trips and Excursions will not be approved, and must be cancelled, if the Government of Canada Travel Advisory Risk Level for any country to be visited is, or is raised to Level 3 or 4 (Avoid non-essential travel or Avoid all travel). In the event that the Government of Canada Travel Advisory Risk Level is raised to Level 3 or 4 during an International Field Trip or Excursion, the trip organizers and school principal will consult with the designated superintendent to determine the appropriate next steps, up to and including relocation and/or cancellation and re-booking of return travel as soon as possible.

    Caution must also be given for consideration for travel to regions that have been identified as a Level 2 risk – Exercise a high degree of caution. A clear plan is required to ensure that all appropriate safety measures are in place to address the elements of the level of risk as identified by the Government of Canada.

    As part of consideration for approval, the principal will review and monitor the Canadian Government's determination of the Level of Risk for travel to each country being visited Travel advice and advisories by destination.

51. The trip organizer must inform students and parents/guardians, in writing, that International Trips may be canceled or delayed if there is a determination of an increased Level of Risk by the Government of Canada, or the Greater Essex County District School Board, (for reasons such as political unrest, the threat of war or insurrection, or the threat of terrorism on route or at the destination, or concerns of participant safety), and that the GECDSB is NOT responsible to reimburse cancellation fees, insurance deductibles, etc.

52. Care must be taken to ensure that students have the appropriate documentation, immigration and legal status to permit them to travel across the international border(s) and gain entry into

each country visited on an International Trip.

53. As part of consideration for approval, the principal will identify the citizenship of all participating students, staff and chaperones.

54. As part of consideration for approval, the principal will identify the entry requirements of each country visited on an International Trip, for all participants (e.g. Travel Visa requirement for Permanent Residents of Canada to travel to the United States).

55. Based on the information gathered in (#50 – #54), its potential impact on students, and balanced by the educational/curricular value of the Field Trip or Excursion and the assessment of risks for participants, the principal will make a determination as to whether to approve the proposed Field Trip or Excursion and submit a request to the designated superintendent for additional approval.

56. The principal will include as one of the risks of international travel, "immigration decisions - denied entry into a country on the trip or denied entry back into Canada" in the parent/guardian consent form.

57. All participants must assess the potential risks involved before committing to International Trips. If a student, staff or chaperone is unable to depart or enter a country or a venue on a designated itinerary, or should a student, staff or chaperone be denied re-entry into Canada, the sole risk shall belong to the student and their parent/guardian, the staff member or the chaperone. This statement must be included in the consent form and parent/guardian information provided to students and parents/guardians.

58. A contingency plan must be put in place to provide supervision for students who become injured or ill, experience travel changes or delays, or are detained by authorities or denied entrance to a country. Students cannot be left unaccompanied in these situations.

59. Staff leaders of International Trips must carry appropriate documentation. This includes a:
    (i) formal letter identifying the itinerary of the trip, and a description of the student or school group. This letter must be on school letterhead and signed by the principal;
    (ii) formal letter of consent attesting that all students are travelling with signed and informed parent/guardian consent. This letter must be on school letterhead and signed by the principal;
    (iii) list of all students on the trip;
    (iv) copy of the signed parent/guardian consent forms for each student.

60. International Trips that require accommodations must be organized through the service of an approved and registered Travel Agency (compliant with Travel Industry Act, RSO, 2980) and must follow the procedures outlined in PR-AP-05 (International Trips).

61. All travelers on International Trips must have Out of Country Health Insurance.

62. Cancellation insurance must be purchased for all travelers on International Trips that require accommodations. This must be part of the negotiated travel package and must be included in the pricing of the trip.

63. A detailed communication plan must be developed for International Trips. This plan must provide clear, detailed and comprehensive information about the travel, accommodation and daily activities for the proposed trip. The communication plan must outline student

expectations and consequences, as well contact arrangements for parents/guardians, students, chaperones, supervisors and the principal. The plan must provide information about the entry requirements for each country visited on an international trip, including countries of departure and arrival. The communication plan must involve both detailed information in writing for parents/guardians and a formal Pre-Trip Parent/Guardian Information Session and should include the following topics:

- the tentative itinerary and supervision plan;
- a description of the nature of the activities involved in the trip and the foreseeable or inherent risks of engaging in the activities;
- the Emergency/Safety Procedures;
- an explanation of costs to students (known and potential) and the total cost of the field trip;
- a review of the factors that could cause the trip to be cancelled by the school or board and a reminder that the GECDSB is NOT responsible to reimburse cancellation fees, insurance deductibles, etc. under these conditions;
- a question and answer period, as well as an opportunity for parents/guardians to provide relevant information about their student to the trip organizers;
- the trip rules, instructions and student code of conduct as well as a discussion about the consequences for inappropriate behaviour;

Appropriate accommodations should be made for parents/guardians who require language translations. Parents should confirm in writing that they have participated in the pre-trip meeting. These records should be maintained with the other Field Trip/Excursion documentation.

Planning, support and approval of Field Trips and Excursions for Students with High Needs or Prevalent Medical Conditions

64. A student with High Needs is a student who has been assessed by a professional practitioner and deemed to have medical, physical, communication, social-emotional or intellectual needs to such a degree that special accommodations and supports are required in the school setting. Educational Support Staff refers to the Child and Youth Workers, Developmental Service Workers, Support Worker-Hearing Impaired, and Educational Assistants who have been hired to support students with High Needs and/or exceptional students in our schools.

65. It is important when planning for students who are deemed exceptional, students with High Needs, or students with Prevalent Medical Conditions that planning is completed at least one month in advance of the trip to ensure all aspects of safety, support, specialized equipment, medication protocol, accessibility issues and transportation requirements have been addressed completely.

66. When a Field Trip or Excursion includes student(s) identified with High Needs, the following procedures are required:

    a. The principal will review the nature of the Field Trip or Excursion being proposed with the Special Education Team (school and system members) and sponsoring teacher(s) and the parent/guardian of the student to determine what precautions and/or additional supports will be needed for the Field Trip or Excursion. This consultation must occur at least one month prior to the date of the Field Trip or Excursion. This applies to all Day Trips, Overnight Trips and International Trips.

b. Following the consultation above, the IEP and OSR must be reviewed for medical needs, administration of medication protocol, specialized equipment needs, accommodations and modifications, special diet restrictions, health related disorders, physical needs, behavioural supports, special transportation requirements, the assignment of educational support staff, etc. prior to seeking approval from the Superintendent of Education/Special Education Services.

67. Overnight Trips for students identified with High Needs shall be subject to the approval of the Principal and the Superintendent of Special Education. Once all information from #3 has been collected, the principal will contact the Superintendent of Education/Special Education Services for final discussion and approval. This action should occur at least one month prior to the trip.

68. It may be necessary to align Educational Support Staff (ESS) to students with High Needs in order to provide continuous support and address safety issues throughout the duration of a Field Trip or Excursion. Requests of this nature will be reviewed by the Principal and the Superintendent of Education/Special Education Services prior to final approval. Consideration of additional costs such as overtime and the assignment of casual replacement workers to cover the absence of the assigned ESS employee will be subject to the approval of the Superintendent of Education/Special Education Services. Overnight trips will be considered carefully.

69. Some students with significant physical limitations will require specialized travel arrangements. Wheelchair accessible busses, safe seating harnesses, etc. will need to be discussed prior to approval. The Principal and Superintendent of Education/Special Education Services will also discuss options and costs for specialized travel and equipment. It is paramount that all expenditures associated with specialized travel be discussed one month prior to the planned trip. With the approval of the Superintendent of Education/Special Education Services, the expenses for specialized transportation may be shared between the school and the special education budget allocated for specialized transportation.