

Section 13: Off-Campus Excursions

Updated July 28, 2021

As off-campus excursions relate to our Off-Campus Education Policy and support the overall school philosophy of extending classroom learning beyond the school, resources and time will be made available to support direct learning experiences in the external community. This policy describes many practical concerns that need to be addressed during these field trips, volunteer work and internships.

Background:

In this school, extending learning beyond the campus acts as an integral form of learning and enrichment. We believe in the importance for children, *of all ages*, to gain first-hand contact with their outside world. With no exceptions, it is a part of every child's experience at the school. Learner access to a wide variety of community resources stimulates interest in varying topics, supporting new skill development and reinforcing knowledge. A collaborative approach is taken to decide where learning beyond the school can be most effective. Although there may be third-party sponsorship of an excursion, such sponsorship is not a pre-requisite for participating in an excursion. The use of field trips, partnership programs and volunteering opportunities combine to address and extend all curricular streams.

Not all off-campus excursions are local in nature. Planning for excursions beyond the city and province is dependent upon the feasibility of curriculum fit, time, age of students, availability of supervisors and total cost. We value these treks beyond the city limits, because we want our students to realize their place on earth as citizens of the world.

Safety is of primary concern throughout every field trip. Through careful planning, preparation of the students, acknowledgement of foreseeable danger and alert supervision, accidents should be preventable. Proper supervision and safety are addressed in the school's safety policy. Specific procedures for off-campus excursions can be found below.

Definitions:

In this policy,

1. **"Campus"** means the indoor space that the school occupies, plus the areas outside the school that are used for recess and Physical Education classes.
2. **"Off-campus Excursion"** means any teacher-sponsored field trip, partnership program, volunteer opportunity, cooperative and informal educational activity and any future program offering that is seen as educationally beneficial and beyond the school campus.
3. **"Direct Learning Experience"** means applied learning in authentic contexts.
4. **"External Community"** means any environment outside the school campus.
5. **"Field Trip"** means those excursions where students and teachers participate in situational learning experiences that may or may not directly relate to curriculum topics.
6. **"Partnership Program"** means participating in a curriculum developed by a service-provider that occurs for students from Kindergarten through 12, both off-campus and for multiple days.
7. **"Independent Volunteer Opportunity"** means an opportunity for an individual student from Grades 5 through 12 to perform a community service, either through direct collaboration with Banbury Crossroads School, or with the support and/or sponsorship of local volunteer partners.
8. **"Group Volunteer Opportunity"** means a small group opportunity for student(s) from Grades 1 through 12 to perform a community service, either through direct collaboration with Banbury

- Crossroads School, or with the support and/or sponsorship of local volunteer agencies/partners.
9. **“High Risk Activity”** means a safety designation indicating an excursion that would involve considerable physical and/or emotional danger to students and teachers.
 10. **“Moderate Risk Activity”** means a safety designation indicating an excursion that would involve moderate safety concerns, such as an activity in the water, at a height, involving speed, out-of-town or requiring an overnight stay.
 11. **“Low Risk Activity”** means a safety designation indicating an excursion that would involve little risk to students’ health or safety beyond transportation.
 12. **“Supervisor”** means any adult who is accompanying the group on the excursion, for the purpose of safeguarding the students and enhancing their experience.
 13. **“Service Provider”** means any third party contracted to provide a service for an off-campus excursion.

Procedures:

A. Trip planning

1. As excursions are an integral part of the school’s philosophy, it is incumbent for all teachers to plan and carry them out regularly for their students, the frequency of which will vary according to the subjects taught and the resources available for such direct experiences.
2. All field trips should be planned by teachers carefully, taking into consideration the educational, development and social suitability for the students. This would include arranging the bookings for the site, the transportation, the payment of fees, as well as overall safety and supervision, time-tabling, parental notification, and necessary accompanying materials. In some cases, whether as part of a course or not, students may arrange the visit, with guidance from staff.
3. Most field trips, and particularly full-day and extended field trips, should be planned well enough in advance to allow for financial preparation, transportation arrangements and information transfer. In addition, time must be provided for participants to gather suitable supplies and re-organize their academic schedules and goals.
4. Sites are usually determined on a class-by-class basis, although several groups may team up for an excursion. Suggestions for off-campus visits primarily arise amongst staff members, with independent ideas coming from students or parents.
5. Teachers must inform other teachers whose students will be affected by the field trip. Respect should be given to the instructional needs of teachers who lose class contact time due to lengthy or repetitive excursions.
6. Arranging appropriate timetables including scheduling trips during class time, and attempting punctual returns, so as to be considerate of parents who pick children up from school and also of those students who take public transit at certain times.
7. Ample time must be given to prepare classes and their supervisors in the prerequisite skills and knowledge to undertake field excursions. If third party supervision is required, teachers should arrange such in advance. Reasonable care should be taken to ensure the competence of service providers. Competence may be demonstrated by virtue of the service provider’s reputation, its common use by other school authorities, and certification by a recognized governing body.
8. At any time, before or during an excursion, should any risk factors change, the excursion shall be modified, rescheduled or cancelled at the discretion of school administration, the supervisor and/or the service provider involved.
9. When an excursion involves an overnight stay, there shall be at least one male and one female supervisor when both male and female students are involved.

B. Communication with Parents

1. Parents and students will be notified of field trips in advance of their occurrence under most circumstances, and informed which students will be participating.
2. Notification should normally consist of times, dates, places, potential hazards and precautions taken, transportation plans, supplies, provisions or equipment needed.
3. Any prerequisite orientation or instruction that students must attend will also be explained to parents in advance.
4. If trips extend beyond class time, this fact needs to be communicated *in advance* to the people involved.
5. Parent meetings may be called to inform families about the nature of a long-term or distant excursion, where the complex nature of the supervision would require further direct clarification.
6. Notification will be provided by the following means: monthly newsletters, calendars, notice boards at school, teachers' or the school's websites, special notes sent home, texting families via the Remind App, and pre-trip discussions with the students.
7. Phone calls home may also be necessary in the event that a student is absent from school.
8. Short-term and local spontaneous excursions may occur to capture teachable moments or special events. Parents may not receive advance notification in these cases.

C. Approval and Payment

1. Excursions shall not be promoted to students or parents prior to approval by the administration.
2. Approval for an excursion is provided through discussion with an administrator, and depends primarily upon cost and legitimacy in regards to learning.
3. Payment for fees incurred in field trips is to be coordinated by the teacher involved.
4. Having the third party provider invoice the school is preferable to teachers having to pay for the excursion at the door.
5. If payment at the door is unavoidable, a cheque for the event must be requested with *advance notice* to the Business Manager, through the usual procedures at the front office for procuring goods and services.
6. If the excursion is particularly costly, such as camping, horseback riding, or skiing, the school will request that fee from parents to cover the cost, particularly as not all students will want to attend.
7. Out-of-province or country trips will be at the expense of the parents, with, possibly, the School contributing to the coverage of costs through fund-raising.

D. Transportation

1. Transportation to sites may be one of the following modes:
 - a. City Transit
 - b. School van
 - c. Non-student volunteers or staff drivers
 - d. Walking
 - e. Bicycle
 - f. Plane
 - g. Rental vehicle
2. When arranging for excursions, teachers must take the appropriate steps to ensure that the transportation will be efficient and effective. This means that volunteer drivers are notified *in advance*, that car seats and seatbelts are provided appropriately, that the drivers are given clear directions and maps to the site, and that a sufficient number of supervisors is provided. Individuals wishing gas money for field trips should notify the Principal.
3. When using City Transit, teachers must procure bus tickets in advance, from the front office. They must ride the bus or C-Train with the students, and supervise accordingly. Young children may need extra supervision for such an excursion.

E. Health and Safety

1. To ensure optimal results from excursions, care needs to be taken to obtain adequate information regarding specific safety concerns associated with each trip. Subsequently, this information needs to be shared with all participants, dealing with prerequisite skills, knowledge and experience in order to identify and contend with safety hazards, boundaries, weather, social conditions, etc.
2. For moderate risk sports and ventures, experts should be available for on-site assistance and instruction. Students must receive adequate preparation for these riskier activities, and participation will not be mandatory. All students and their parents must be informed of the potential dangers ahead of time. Supervision for all field trips must be tailored to the specific requirements of each activity, and be adequate for the safety of all individuals. For younger children, a smaller-than-usual supervision ratio is recommended.
3. Any field trip with inherent catastrophic risk will not be taken by the school.
4. The school does not undertake high-risk ventures, such as cross-country skiing in avalanche-prone back-country.
5. All school personnel, staff and students alike, are covered with accident insurance through a policy undertaken by the school, which covers all activities initiated by the school, on and off campus.
6. When planning all trips, teachers need to assess potential risks, asking themselves what could potentially happen, given the activity, the ages of the students, the external environment, and the knowledge regarding particular students. Teachers need to prepare for these possible situations, in order to ensure safety and enjoyment for all.
7. A first aid kit must accompany all field trips, as well as extra supplies pertinent to the trip that students may forget.
8. It is recommended that teachers and/or students bring their cell phones.
9. Teachers must provide the office with an accurate list of the students participating on the field trip prior to leaving.

F. Parent Permission

1. All students must provide the office with a complete *Annual Authorization for Field Trips* form, signed by their parents or guardians. We use this document to cover all low risk field trips for the year. This alleviates the paper waste that would occur if we sent permission slips home for every trip.
2. For activities that have a higher inherent risk to them, a separate permission form will be utilized that informs parents of the risks and what precautions and preparation that the school is undertaking. These forms must be signed and returned to the teacher organizing the excursion.
3. If a waiver has accompanied an information package, a signed copy must be on file in order for students to participate in the excursion.

G. Supervisor and Volunteer Responsibility

1. Maps should be distributed to appropriate parties when necessary, and preliminary instructions should be given at the beginning of the tour, explaining the need for staying with the group. In the unlikely event that a child should get disoriented, a pre-determined meeting place is helpful.
2. Students may be identified by some appropriate means, if this would help keep track of children in a crowded venue. The phone number of the school should be made available to each child, so that communication may be possible in such a case.
3. Parents and staff members who drive on excursions are encouraged to arrange for extra liability coverage on their personal insurance policies. The cost of damage to vehicles that arises through accidents that occur during school excursions must be covered by each driver's personal car insurance, as the school cannot arrange for car insurance for all drivers.
4. All Alberta traffic laws will be followed. It is each driver's responsibility to ensure that the number of occupants in the vehicle does not exceed that mandated through the number of seatbelts and airbags. All occupants must be buckled up by seat belts in the proper manner.
5. Other pertinent regulations are that all children under 40 lb. must be in a car seat, and children 12

- years of age and under cannot sit in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger, or side air bag.
6. Students may not drive other students in their vehicles on school sponsored trips, with the exception of siblings, wherein the parents have approved of this transfer.
 7. Cell phones should not be used by the driver while driving on excursions.
 8. Supervision ratios must not exceed 10 students per teacher on any off-campus excursion. *Head counts must be conducted on a regular basis.*
 9. The excursion shall be organized to ensure that the group remains intact, unless otherwise determined in advance. Supervisors and other adult volunteers shall:
 - a. conduct themselves responsibly and professionally, consistent with the responsibilities inherent in being a competent supervisor;
 - b. take whatever reasonable precautions are necessary to ensure that the communication methods used in the school are carried on to ensure proper conduct, appropriate behaviour and safety of students;
 - c. fulfill their role and duties for the duration of the excursion, including evenings and weekends.
 10. All of the students on a field trip are the responsibility of the supervising teachers. Field trips are concluded when students are back at the school.
 11. For older students in Junior/Senior High, departures may be arranged for them to go directly home from the field trip, but only if the event is over at the end of the school day, and as long as it is agreed-upon in advance between parents, students and teachers. The front office should also be informed of such special situations.
 12. If the field trip does not occupy the entire time allotted to that class, and the students arrive back at the school early, then the accompanying teacher is responsible for planning appropriate activities for those students during intervening times.

H. Emergency Procedures

A serious emergency would be defined as a lost child, a severe injury requiring hospital intervention, a car accident, a medical emergency, etc. In these cases, teachers are expected to:

1. Deal with the emergency as required. For example, have someone call 911, administer first aid, return to the last place the child was seen, go to the meeting place, enlist the help on bystanders, and so on, depending upon the kind of emergency the supervisors are facing.
2. Deal with the rest of the group, by calling upon assistance from other supervisors or adults upon the scene.
3. Inform the school, so that the parents of the affected students can be contacted by the school personnel.
4. The school must act as the communication base for transmitting information, including health care numbers, between the emergency site, parents and the medical staff involved.
5. Once emergency procedures have been initiated, arrangements should be made for the remainder of the class to return to the school.

I. Student Responsibility

1. Students are expected to remain with the group during an excursion.
2. In order to encourage positive public behavior, students are expected to behave appropriately. The main emphasis is to display respect and consideration.