

**Yukon
Education
Policy Subject: Field Trip Policy**

Date Passed: June 16, 2006 (to be reviewed by September 2007)

Policy No. 3004

Legislation: Education Act, Federal Firearms Act

Cross Reference:

- Outdoor Education Resource Manual
- Transportation of Students By Government Vehicles;
- Volunteers in the Schools
- Administration of Medicine Policy

Definitions:

Local Field Trips

Any trip, local sporting event or cultural activity that occurs off school property including on a regular and/or reoccurring basis, and where risks are low and fully manageable.

Overnight and complex Field Trips:

Any overnight or day trip or sporting event that occurs off school property or where any of the following apply:

- Students are canoeing or kayaking.
- Students are off a main highway and beyond 30 minutes from medical attention.
- Temperatures may drop below –30 degrees.
- A risk assessment identifies risks that need to be managed with identified mitigation strategies.

The Department of Education by way of this policy supports:

1. Providing clear guidelines to teachers and administrators who plan and approve local, overnight and complex field trips.

2. Enabling and encouraging “out of the classroom” learning experiences as a way of engaging students in the learning process and delivering the curriculum in a more culturally relevant and holistic way.
3. Nurturing safety and risk management as a significant component of planning for local, overnight and complex field trips.

Policy Principles:

The following are the guiding principles of this policy:

1. Educators have a duty to meet the required standard of care to students.
2. All trips need to be assessed to identify and mitigate risks.
3. Parents have the right to be fully informed when asked to provide consent for their child to participate on a trip.
4. A well documented paper trail is required to document the planning and carrying out of all overnight and complex trips.

(i) *Standard of Care*

School authorities, including teachers, administrators, Directors of Learning and Superintendents are required to provide the highest standard of care in the supervision and protection of students for whom they are responsible.

This means adhering to the following four criteria established by the Supreme Court of Canada in the planning and approval of educational field trips;

- Carrying out activities that are suitable to the age, mental and physical conditions of the participants.
- Ensuring that the participant have been progressively taught and coached to perform the activity properly and to avoid the dangers inherent in the activity.
- Using adequate equipment that is suitably arranged.
- Ensuring proper supervision that matches the inherent risks.

(ii) *Risk Assessment*

The Department recognizes that despite careful planning and

assessment of risk, there exists an inherent risk of injury or accident in most outdoor education settings.

Safety is fundamental to all field trips and identifying measures to mitigate against known risks, particularly in overnight or complex trips, is an essential step in risk assessment and management.

(iii) ***Informed Consent***

Administrators are required to seek informed consent from a parent/legal guardian for all overnight and complex field trips including the completion of a Medical Form (Appendix 6).

Informed consent means that permission slips sent home requesting parent/legal guardian approval must identify risks associated with the activity and include measures to address the risks, (Appendix 17, Risk Assessment)

Trip approval forms must also include details of all aspects and elements of the trip including methods of transportation, levels of supervision, names and details of volunteers, and trip logistics and contingency plans.

(iv) ***Trip Documentation***

Trip documentation files shall include:

Copies all forms used in the planning and approval for all overnight and/or overnight trips including copies of all certification that are required.

Copies of all Incident Reports and near misses must be filed in the Trip Documentation files within seven calendar days of the conclusion of the trip.

Standards and Procedures

Minimum Standards

- (i) Standards described in this policy and appendices are minimum standards that must be adhered to.
- (ii) Teachers, administrators, directors of learning or the Superintendent may enhance the standards and guidelines

included in this policy, as circumstances warrant.

A. Levels and Methods of Supervision

Level of Supervision:

- (i) The Administrator may identify specific methods and additional levels of supervision depending on the trip and/or activity.
- (ii) For all overnight and/or complex outdoor education activities at least one leader per group must have a valid First Aid Certificate (minimum 16 hour course) and at least one leader per group must have valid CPR Basic Rescuer Level “C” or equivalent.
- (iii) For outdoor education activities that are located off a main road and are more than thirty (30) minutes surface travel from a medical station or hospital at least one leader must have a valid Advanced First Aid Certificate or Wilderness First Aid Certificate (minimum 40 hour course).

Methods of Supervision include:

- *Constant Visual Supervision* where the teacher is physically present and watching the specific activity at all times.
 - *On-Site Supervision* where the teacher is present but not necessarily constantly viewing the activity.
 - *In the Area* where the teacher could be in the same location but does not have visual contact at all times.
 - *Use of the Buddy System* where no student leaves the activity area alone.
- (i) In the absence of specific activity methods included as appendices to this policy, the following levels of supervision are recommended for overnight and/or complex trips:

- Kindergarten: one adult to five students.
- Grades 1-3: one adult to eight students.
- Grades 4-6: one adult to ten students.
- Grades 7-9: one adult to thirteen students.
- Grades 10-12: one adult to fifteen students.

B. Transportation of Students

- (i) The Administrator shall approve and file for each school year any parent/legal guardian volunteer, teacher or employee using a private vehicle to transport students to school sponsored events, in accordance with the *Volunteers in the Schools Policy*. The records required in that policy should be kept as part of the Trip Documentation Records.
- (ii) Under no circumstances are student driven vehicles, including snowmobiles, boats and automobiles, to be used to transport students to and from the primary site of a field trip.
- (iii) In situations where student driven vehicles such as snowmobiles and or boats are used to transport other students while on a field trip, and as a component of the learning objectives, full instruction must be provided to all students regarding safety standards, appropriate operation of the snowmobile or boat and other procedural requirements of operating the vehicle.

C. Billeting

- (i) Any person willing to billet students must also be willing to provide signed consent for an RCMP security check
- (ii) A *Billeting Roles and Responsibilities (Appendix 2)* form must be provided to the billet family and that form must clearly specify the duties, roles and responsibilities of the billet family as well as the privileges and support being offered to the student.

D. Contingency Planning

- (i) A *Trip Contingency Plan (Appendix 3)* form shall be

formulated for each aspect of all overnight or complex trips and shall be shared with parent/legal guardians, students and the transportation provider in advance of the trip.

- (ii) A copy of a Contingency Plan is to be taken on the excursion and a copy left at the school so that access can be obtained by an administrator during the trip.
- (iii) An *Incident / Accident Report* (Appendix 4) shall be completed by the Staff Member in Charge noting the reasons, details and explanation for the enactment of any Trip Contingency Plan.
- (iv) The Trip Contingency Plan shall address the following elements of the trip:

1. ***Alternative Student Arrangements***

- (i) Students who are unable to participate in any trip or planned excursion must be provided with learning activities that are meaningful and relevant.
- (ii) An appropriate and related program, including assessments, shall be planned for all students who do not participate in the excursion.

2. ***Inclement Weather or Conditions***

- (i) The Staff Member in Charge has the ultimate responsibility for the safety of the students and shall make a decision as to proceed with the planned trip in circumstances of inclement weather.
- (ii) The Contingency Plan must address how the risks associated with cold weather will be mitigated when at the commencement of or during the trip:
 - the temperature may drop below -30 C.
 - the temperature, drops, or is expected to drop, below -20 C and the activity is predominantly outdoors or 20 km from a major highway,
 - wind chills are greater than 2000 calories per square

metre (-45c equivalent).

- (iii) Trip Planning Documentation and the Contingency Plan must include full details of how the trip or excursion will be re-planned in the event of inclement weather or conditions while the trip is underway including change of pickup points, take out points (canoeing), unplanned overnight stopovers, etc.

3. Early termination of excursions

- (i) Trip planning and approval forms shall clearly outline the process and arrangements for the early termination of students from excursions and arrangements for the return of the students.
- (ii) Approval Forms will inform parents/legal guardians that additional costs associated with early termination of trip due to a student's behavior will be the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian.
- (iii) *An Incident/ Accident / Near Miss Report (Appendix 4)* shall be completed and filed within 7 calendar days of the incident by the Staff Member in Charge noting the details of the near miss, incident or accident and what steps were followed.

E. Trip Approval

1. A Staff Member in Charge shall be designated by the Administrator for each field trip activity.
2. School administration shall determine the internal process and timelines associated with trip approvals provided that all aspects of this requirements of this policy are adhered to, and shall advise parents, teachers and school council, board or committee.
3. The Administrator shall approve all trips that take students off school property. Local, regular and re-occurring trips may be approved on a yearly basis.
4. The Director of Learning shall approve all trips that include:

- an overnight component
 - where the Administrator determines that approval and input from the Director of Learning is desirable,
 - Where:
 - Students will be canoeing or kayaking.
 - Students will be 30 minutes from medical attention.
 - Temperatures may drop below –30 degrees.
 - Volunteer drivers will be used to transport students.
 - The presence of one or more activities noted in Appendix 17, Risk Analysis where either an identified hazard is given either a likelihood or consequence rating of more than 2.
5. No deposits, commitments or notice to parent/legal guardians or students shall be made by the teacher prior to obtaining formal approval by the administrator.

Staff Member in Charge

The Staff Member in Charge is responsible for:

- (i) Ensuring that all aspects of the planned trip comply with the policy principles and guidelines established Department of Education policies.
- (ii) Planning and submitting of paperwork for approval in the required time lines for field trips.
- (iii) All have clear and expressed links to the curriculum and clearly defined learning outcomes.
- (iv) Where a prior site visit is required by as a means of risk management and identified in Appendix 17 of this policy, or where the Administrator has determined that a prior site is beneficial, the Staff Member in Charge will conduct a site visit prior to the filed trip activity to ensure full familiarity with any conditions that may prevail at the time the planned activity is to occur.
- (v) Ensuring that all consent forms include a full identification of any known risks and a plan to mitigate known risks in an effort to maximize the safety of the students, staff and any volunteers.

- (vi) Ensuring all aspects of Risk Management are considered and that effective mitigation measures have been incorporated to minimize the risks.
- (vii) Inspecting all material and gear that will be used on the trip to ensure that it is operational, appropriate and well maintained.
- (viii) Ensuring that students are fully informed as to the requirements of supplies and gear that are required for the trip.
- (ix) Ensuring that the parent/legal guardian permission process is completed and that a parent/legal guardian meeting is held when required, in accordance with this policy.
- (x) Advising any volunteers of their responsibilities and duties, and of any expected code of conduct that is required of them during the trip or activity, in accordance with the *Volunteers in the School* policy.
- (xi) Maintaining a record as part of the trip documentation that records any unanticipated incidents of the trip including near misses, accidents, discharging of a firearm, use of Trip Contingency Plans and any other relevant data that the Staff Member in Charge deems to be important.
- (xii) Being aware of all known health and medical conditions of students, and that an emergency response protocol is in place where appropriate.
- (xiii) Determining, in consultation with the administrator and with the student's parent/legal guardians, if any student may self medicate, if the Staff Member in Charge will maintain possession of the medication or, in the case of a serious medical condition, if a back-up supply is required.
- (xiv) Assuming full responsibility for the students at all times during the field trip activity and for leading the trip in full accordance with what was approved including conducting

any changes in accordance with the approved contingency plan, or with approval from the administrator.

Administrators:

1. Administrators shall develop and implement, in consultation with staff, School Council and their Director of Learning, the school procedures, approval process and timelines to be followed in the submission of trip planning and approval forms for school trips.
2. The approval process and timelines shall determine that:
 - (a) all required certification levels, training and experience to conduct the trip, as required in this policy and attached appendices are current and up to date certification levels are on file;
 - (b) trip planning is done in accordance with this policy;
 - (c) given the nature of the trip and/or the risks involved, further assessment by the Offsite Review Committee is desirable.
3. In approving any field trip it is the responsibility of the administrator to determine that:
 - (a) The principles and guidelines of this policy have been adhered to and that the trip is in compliance with this Field Trip Policy and appendices and all other policies in the Department of Education,
 - (b) The Supervision Principles and Ratios as outlined in this policy are adhered to and sufficient number of teachers and adult supervisors accompany the students on all excursions.
 - (c) Trips have clearly expressed links to the curriculum and clearly defined learning outcomes.

- (d) There are both male and female chaperones and supervisors on all overnight trips where there are male and female students.
- (e) A Staff Member in Charge has been designated for the excursion.
- (f) The Staff Member in Charge has identified all known risks of the activity and has provided for the maximum safety precautions to minimize those known risks.
- (g) A firearm is required on the trip, and if so, the designated shooter holds a valid Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) for the firearm to be taken on the trip, and that the Risk Matrix identifies the expected conditions upon which the firearm will be discharged.
- (h) If required, the Staff Member in Charge has conducted a site assessment in advance, a terrain analysis has been completed.
- (i) An advance site visit may be waived by the Administrator in the event that the trip is being provided by a Commercial Service Provider, or upon the recommendation of the Offsite Review Committee;
- (j) All required checks and approvals are in place for Volunteers in accordance with the *Volunteers in the School Policy*.
- (k) If, given the nature of the overnight or complex field trip, a daily field book is to be kept by the Staff Member in Charge.
- (l) Student absences, withdrawals and adjustments to the trip are approved in accordance with an approved Contingency Plan.
- (m) If any additional materials are required to

approve a trip and/or to assist the Director of Learning in approving a field trip application.

- (n) An administrator must be available to the Teacher-in-charge during the field trip, or must designate an alternative person.
- (o) An administrator must establish a method to keep track of groups from the time that they depart on a field trip, and must have a documented method to contact a group during the off-site activity.
- (p) An administrator must establish a protocol of contacts and provide a copy of this list to the Director of Learning.
- (q) Notify each parent/legal guardian in a case of emergency.
- (r) Maintain access in the school to full Trip Documentation during the time that the field trip is underway including a log of key milestones, rendezvous points, dates of departure, contact numbers and contingency arrangements.

The Director of Learning is responsible for:

- (a) Ensuring that Administrators are aware of the timing requirements of this policy, and that the principles contained within are met.
- (b) Ensuring that the trip planning and approval complies with this policy.

Assistant Deputy Minister of Public School is responsible for:

- (i) Establishing and maintaining safety as a paramount principle of all field trip activity.
- (ii) Ensuring that clearly defined learning outcomes are integral components of all field

trip activities.

- (iii) Establishing a First Nations Perspectives Review Committee that will meet on an ad hoc basis as required to address specific requests and in response to varying issues.
- (iv) Establishing an Offsite Review Committee that will meet on an ad hoc basis, as required to address specific requests and in response to varying issues.

First Nations Perspectives Review Committee

1. The function of this committee is to foster a stronger presence of First Nation culture and values in school sponsored events, culture camps and field trips as an underlying principle of outdoor pursuits.
2. The First Nations Perspectives Review Committee will review and provide recommendations, upon request, to any teacher, administrator, director of learning or superintendent on the planning and approval of a field trip or excursion.
3. The First Nations Perspectives review committee shall meet upon request, and as required to:
 - (i) Review any matter involving culture camps or field trip matters that are referred to the committee from an administrator, director of learning or superintendent.
 - (ii) Review and monitor emerging issues in First Nation culture and values field and recommend updates or revisions to this Field Trip Policy.
 - (iii) Assess culture camps on the basis of ensuring that objectives of this policy are addressed without undue departure from cultural values.
 - (iv) Coordinate, as required, the planning for culture camps.

Chair of the First Nations Perspectives Review Committee

1. The ADM of Public Schools shall appoint a chair of the First Nations Perspectives Review Committee.
2. The Chair shall make recommendations to the Assistant Deputy Minister as to planning and carrying out of culture camps prior to culture camps being launched as a component of school based activities.
3. The Chair of the First Nations Perspectives Review Committee shall convene knowledgeable members of the First Nations community to review and respond to requests that may include but are not limited to:
 - (i) The monitoring of trends and patterns in culture camp activities and to ensure the distribution of this information within the department.
 - (ii) Providing informed advice, as requested, to teachers and administrators regarding First Nation values and cultural interests in the planning and delivery of culture camps and proposed field trip activities.
 - (iii) Maintaining a high level of awareness of First Nation issues and bringing forward issues for the First Nations Perspective Review Committee to review as required or on an annual basis.
 - (iv) Maintaining an up to date inventory of all cultural materials and/or gear that is maintained in the department for use by all schools.
 - (v) Providing support and advice in the managing, acquisition and minor maintenance of commonly held cultural materials and gear and equipment that is acquired and used for culture camps.
 - (vi) Any other cultural matter that is referred to the committee or chair.

Offsite Review Committee

1. The function of this committee is to assist in nurturing a community of interests that supports safety and information sharing as an underlying principle in outdoor pursuits.
2. The Offsite Review Committee will review and provide recommendations, upon request, to any teacher, administrator,

director of learning or superintendent on the planning and approval of a field trip or excursion.

3. The Off-site review committee shall meet upon request, and as required to:
 - (i) Review any matter involving outdoor education or field trip matters that are referred to the committee from an administrator, director of learning or superintendent.
 - (ii) Review and monitor new trends and issues in the outdoor education field and recommend updates or revisions to this Field Trip Policy.
 - (iii) Make recommendations to the Assistant Deputy Minister as to areas and conditions where a Terrain Analysis is required prior to visits by school groups.

Chair of the Offsite Review Committee

1. The ADM of Public Schools shall appoint a chair of the Offsite Review Committee.
2. The Chair of the Offsite Review Committee shall convene knowledgeable members to review and respond to requests that may include but are not limited to:
 - (i) The monitoring of trends and patterns in avalanche awareness and distribution of this information to within the department.
 - (ii) The assessment of trips on the basis of avalanche risk, high water or any other environmental conditions that are pertinent at the time of the trip.
 - (iii) The coordination, as required, of terrain analysis in avalanche areas where trips are planned and where no avalanche classification system exists.
 - (iv) Providing informed advice, as requested, to teachers and administrators regarding the safety assessment of a proposed field trip activity.
 - (v) Monitoring and evaluating this policy, as required.
 - (vi) Maintaining a high level of awareness of outdoor education trends and issues and bring forward issues for the Off-site Review Committee to review as required or on an annual basis.
 - (vii) Maintaining an up to date inventory of all gear that is maintained in the department for use by all schools.

- (viii) Providing support and advice in the managing, acquisition and minor maintenance of commonly held gear and equipment that is acquired and used for outdoor field trips and outdoor education.
- (ix) Any other safety related matter.

School Council/Board/Committee Members:

- (i) The Education Act (sec. 113 (2) j) states that School Councils/ Boards may approve curricular and extra-curricular field trips for more than one night. School Council and School Board members, in approving curricular and extra-curricular field trips shall not be requested to approve a trip prior to the administrator approving the trip.
- (ii) In the event that a School Council or School Board does not approve a field trip that has been previously approved by the Administrator the matter shall be referred to the Director of Learning, who may make the decision, or refer the matter to the Offsite Review Committee for a recommendation prior to the Director of Learning making the decision.
- (iii) In order to provide support to School Council and Board members in carrying out this function, it is the responsibility of the administrator to inform the school council or board member that the policy and procedures of the department have been followed.

F. Out of Territory Medical and Trip Insurance:

- (i) Health insurance will be a required component of all out of territory school trips.
- (ii) In instances, where parent/legal guardians or volunteers choose not to purchase insurance, a waiver must be signed indicating that this person will assume full responsibility for any trip changes, medical care, evacuations, repatriation to Yukon, etc. and that the option to purchase insurance has been waived.

G.. Trip Documentation

- (i) Records of all forms used in the approval process for a trip or planned excursion shall be retained on file, in accordance with the requirements of the Archives Act.

H. Non-sanctioned Events

- (i) Trips that do not reflect the curriculum or do not have a clear educational purpose will not be approved.
- (ii) Certain activities considered to be high and unacceptable risks to participants will require a review by the Offsite Review Committee. These include white water kayaking, outdoor rock climbing in areas other than approved facilities and hiking and/or skiing in known avalanche areas.
- (iii) An administrator, School Council, Director of Learning or Superintendent may, at any time, refer any event to either or both the First Nations Perspectives Review Committee or the Offsite Review Committee for their consideration, prior to approving.

I. Emergency Plan/Search Protocol

- (i) Trip planning must include an Emergency Plan and a Search Protocol, as exemplified in Appendix 7, or included in Trip Contingency Planning as an alternative.

J. Commercial Service Providers

- (i) Commercial Service Providers include any profit, non-profit agency or First Nation Government that is hired or contracted with to provide services to a school group.
- (ii) All Commercial Service Providers must comply with the External Service Providers Standards and Procedures contained within this or any other Department of Education policy.
- (iii) All conditions and agreements with Commercial Service Providers shall be attached and retained as part of the Trip

Documentation files. Examples include but are not limited to the Great Northern Ski Society, Battlefields Tours, Whitewater rafting.

- (iv) The Department may periodically develop standing protocols with a specific Commercial Service Provider that will apply to all school trips using that Commercial Service Provider.

K. Appeals

- (i) Any element of this policy may be appealed to the Superintendent of Public Schools.