

Safety for Offsite Excursions, Outdoor Education and Field Trips

Updated: September 1, 2023

Approved by: Board of Directors

Applies to: All Alberta Certified Teaching staff, ECE Staff, Specialists, student/children, parents and Volunteers

Objective: The purpose of this policy is to guide all above mentioned stakeholders in ensuring continued safety for outdoor education and field trips/offsite excursions.

Policy: Outdoor education comprises of various student activities that occur outside the school building. Offsite Activities are learning experiences that support educational outcomes and are connected to the program of studies and guiding principles.

As student safety is a priority, field trips and offsite excursions will be planned and approved after review of all potential hazards and risks are considered. The consent of the parent or guardian must be obtained prior to an offsite activity.

Field trips are an integral part of education and take place at various locations throughout the City of Calgary. Children are to be safe and cared for during the entire duration of their field trip. There is to be a specific procedure in place to assign accountability at individual and group level with clear lines of communication between Group Leaders, Trip leader, the school and parents/volunteers.

Procedure:

1. Outdoor Education

The playgrounds where the students play should be safe and comply with CSA standards.

During outdoor activities teachers are advised not to take students outdoors when the temperature is below -10 degrees Celsius, whether through wind chill or otherwise. Any time there is a risk of or actual storm, rain, hail, unsafe conditions due to damaged playground or a lockdown, teachers are not to take the children to the playground.

While in the playground, at least two individuals must be present to supervise the children. Of those two individuals, at least one must be an Alberta Certified teacher. Children are to be constantly monitored so that they do not leave the playground, engage in bullying, jump off high structures or try to climb the fence.

The play equipment must be professionally inspected once a year by a licensed play structure inspection company. Any time a student comes forward with an issue regarding any of the play equipment; it must be promptly reported to the designated Health and Safety person at the school. In the absence of the person mentioned above, teachers on playground duty are required to promptly report to any member of the support staff and immediately direct children away from the playground equipment.

2. Field Trips

Parents must provide written consent if they wish to have their child go on a School Authority-sponsored field trip. There must be no more than eight students in a group and an authorized adult must supervise each group. Adults must have their Calgary Police background checks. The term “chaperone” can be used to specify any individual who is accountable for one or more students for the duration of the field trip.

The method of transportation must be approved by and signed off by the parents/guardians. Transportation will be arranged through charter service or a school employee with a valid class 4 license will transport children via MCC vehicle. At least two teachers must supervise loading and unloading of children from a bus in a safe and caring manner. A head count of the children must be performed before leaving any location. Each chaperone must have his or her cell phone number provided to the Field Trip Leader. All trip supervisors will have access to all relevant contact and medical information.

Children on the field trip must return to the school prior to the end of the school day so that they can return home on bus or with their parents in a timely manner.

Should a bus carrying children to or from the field trip get delayed; the parents must be notified by a member of the staff.