PEACE WAPITI PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION
Educating Today for Success Tomorrow

POLICY HGCG – Off-Site Activities

Off-site activities away from the normal location of instruction, if well-planned and delivered in a prudent manner, contribute substantially to the achievement of the Board's educational goals.

PURPOSE

To provide guidelines to facilitate compliance to policy and legislation for off-site activities.

DEFINITIONS

1. ARMIC – Alberta Risk Managed Insurance Consortium

   The ARMIC Prohibited Activities are not permitted on or off site due to the high risk of injury to students, staff, volunteers and third parties.

   a) Red Activities – high risk activities that are prohibited on or off-site and not covered by PWPSD's general liability insurance policy.

2. Off-Site Activity: an instructional activity trip including fine arts and sports but not including work experience, RAP or other programs under Alberta Education guidelines for off-campus activities (it does not apply to activities such as Rotary student exchange program).
3. Local Off-Site Activity-A: an off-site activity within walking distance of the school.
4. Local Off-Site Activity-B: an off-site activity within 80 kilometers of the school requiring vehicular transportation away from the school or within the Peace Wapiti Public School Division boundaries.
5. Provincial Off-Site Activity: an off-site activity within Alberta and Northeastern BC (Peace River Regional District of British Columbia, Powder King, and Mackenzie as well as Prince George solely for high school football or other league sport), including **any overnight off-site activities**.
6. National Off-Site Activity: an activity whose destination is outside of the regional area but within the borders of Canada.
7. International Off-Site Activity: an activity outside of the borders of Canada.
8. Teacher-in-Charge: the PWPSD teacher responsible for the planning, coordination, implementation, supervision and follow-up of the off-site activity.
9. Informed Parental Consent: parental or guardian approval of a field trip indicating an understanding of potential risks related to the student's involvement in the activities identified in the itinerary of the field trip. For Local Off-Site Activity-A and B, Informed Parental Consent, while a signed waiver is preferred, in cases when this is not reasonably possible, the principal may choose to accept Informed Parental Consent by a written note, text, email or, as a last resort, verbally. Verbal consent should be documented.

10. ***School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resources for Safety (SPHEReS)***: a resource intended for use by Alberta schools, staff, and administrations to focus teacher attention on safe instructional practices in order to minimize inherent risk and to provide teachers with safety guidelines related to physical activity.

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

For ALL off-site activities:

1. Field trips and excursions that are not directly sponsored by a school or the District are the total responsibility of the planners, tour agencies, and transportation agencies involved.
2. Unique circumstances at each school, such as multiple grade configurations, may warrant deviation from the policy and must receive prior approval by the superintendent or designate. Note that this applies only to Local Off-Site Activity-B and Provincial Off-Site Activity as outlined in the Definition section previously.
3. All requests for an off-site activity shall be in writing and submitted to the School Administrator and include detailed risk assessment and plans for managing the risk.
4. Prior to submitting a request for approval or holding any planning meetings, the School Administrator will ensure that all guidelines and procedures of this policy are implemented and that the Teacher-in-Charge understands PWPSD policies as they pertain to the off-site activities. The Teacher-in-Charge must fully understand all the applicable Peace Wapiti Public School Division (PWPSD) Policies, particularly those dealing with fund raising, smoking, alcohol, and cannabis and all derivatives.
5. All approvals for off-site activities will be in writing.
6. The Division expects all Off-Site Activities:
   a) will arise out of the regular school program;
   b) will be planned to minimize loss of regular instruction time;
   c) will be conducted in accordance with school and Division policies;
   d) may be shortened, cancelled or terminated, at any time, if in the opinion of the Teacher-in-Charge, the School Administrator, or the Superintendent, the activity cannot proceed or be completed in a safe manner;
   e) will be conducted in adherence to *School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHEReS)*.
7. The use of passenger vans is prohibited.
8. Parents will be informed of:
   a) their child's participation and of the right and responsibility of each parent to make the final decision regarding their own child's participation.
   b) the refund process. Trips may be cancelled due to political unrest, natural disasters, disease, labour disputes, etc. PWPSD takes no responsibility for refunds.

9. In planning off-site activities, the teacher-in-charge shall consider the educational value to be derived, community attitudes toward the proposed trip, safety and security of students, staff and volunteers and undertake appropriate planning to manage the risks.

10. In addition to all activities aligning with the *School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHEReS)*, participation in off-site activities will be restricted as follows:

    a) to local off-site activities for ECS to grade 3;

    b) to local and provincial off-site activities for grades 4-6;

    c) to local, provincial and national off-site activities for grades 7-8 (except with Board approval);

    d) to local, provincial, national and international off-site activities for grades 9-12;

    e) activities listed as Red or Prohibited Activities in the ARMIC Activities Policy are prohibited;

    f) Teachers are required to follow the *School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHEReS)*;

    g) In addition to the requirements within the *School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHEReS)*, swimming in a hotel pool or any pool that does not provide its own certified lifeguard shall remain prohibited under this policy.

11. The school retains the right to deny any student access to a particular activity. Travel is an enrichment activity; activities held away from the school have increased risk, so the Teacher-in-Charge has authority to choose the criteria for participation.

12. The minimum supervision shall be provided as follows:

    a) one teacher for his/her class on day off-site activities within the community and for ECS supervision will be provided by two supervisors per class;

    b) overnight trips require a supervision ratio of a minimum of 1 adult for 8 elementary students and 1 adult for 12 junior/senior high students and mixed student gender groups require chaperones of the same gender. At least one supervisor with valid first aid certification is required for overnight trips;

    c) supervisors (e.g. teachers, parents, chaperones, etc.) shall have an understanding and acceptance of Division expectations for all activities. Supervisors must understand that they are on duty all day every day of travel and be aware of applicable Division policies including but not limited to those dealing with smoking/vaping, alcohol and cannabis and all derivatives. As bus drivers have other duties, they cannot be included as designated chaperones;

    d) one teacher shall be appointed as the designated Teacher-in-Charge of the off-site activity. This teacher is responsible to ensure:

        i) he/she has the training and knowledge appropriate for leading the trip;

ii) appropriate volunteers for the off-site activities and provide these volunteers with direction as to the requirements of the trip and their responsibilities;

iii) criminal record checks, including vulnerable sector checks, will be completed for any volunteers involved in overnight off-site activities; or are working with or interacting with students without the direct supervision of a PWPSD staff member;

iv) appropriate service providers whose staff have additional qualifications, and training when appropriate;

v) appropriate documentation is filed with the School Administrator;

vi) appropriate student information accompanies the teacher on the trip;

vii) he/she is aware of student health conditions and ensures appropriate medication accompanies the student on the trip;

viii) he/she has reviewed possible travel hazards on the planned itinerary and discussed the appropriate safety procedures and emergency response plans where appropriate with supervisors;

ix) all students have appropriate transportation;

x) contingency plans are in place in the event of conditions that require a change to the original itinerary;

xi) "informed parental consent" is obtained and that parents are provided with the following information in writing:

(1) purpose or educational goal of the field trip;

(2) proposed itinerary;

(3) description of the activities or events proposed;

(4) safety precautions in place to deal with activities involving risk;

(5) emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;

(6) method of transportation to be used;

(7) arrangements for supervision;

(8) cost to the student.

xii) sports trips within the school division should have a teacher as the Teacher-in-Charge, but a responsible adult approved by the School Administrator could be appointed if teachers are unavailable. Non-local trips require a Teacher-in-Charge.

13. The following off-site activities are not permitted:

a) any activities defined in the ARMIC Activities Policy as "Red Activities and ARMIC Prohibited Activities";

b) activities where safety measures have been deliberately removed;

c) travel to any regions under a state of emergency.

d) activities that do not align with the *School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHEReS)* (however, School Administrators may approve informed parental consent forms that indicate students are in good standing).

14. For Local Off-Site Activities-A and B, the Division expects:

a) requests for local off-site activities to be submitted for approval to the School Administrator;

b) transportation costs for co-curricular field trips, organized sports activities and special events will be borne by the Division to the amount provided within the site-based or school generated funds budget;

c) a one-time blanket approval for scheduled sports events such as league games and unscheduled walking field trips in the neighborhood of the school will suffice for any off-site activity. Separate consent would be required for activities such as swimming lessons.

d) while a signed waiver is preferred, in cases when this is not reasonably possible, the principal may choose to accept Informed Parental Consent by a written note, text, email or, as a last resort, verbally**.** Verbal consent should be documented.

e) when swimming lessons are not available within 80 km, the Principal, with the support of School Council, may request to the Superintendent for students below Grade 4 to participate in swimming lessons beyond the 80 km limit. The Superintendent will provide a response within 15 days of the request.

15. For Regional or Provincial Off-Site Activities the Division expects:

a) requests for regional off-site activities to be submitted for approval to the School Administrator;

b) competitions at the provincial level will be supported centrally to the amount provided within the budget, providing the team/group has won the right to attend the activity; otherwise the site-based budget or student shall bear the cost of the activity;

c) travel using PWPSD school buses must be organized so buses will return within School Division boundaries by 1:00 am (e.g. if leaving from Edmonton, buses would need to leave by 8:00 pm to reasonably expect to arrive on time).

i) alternative arrangements may be required to delay driver start times in the morning as drivers may not exceed the National Safety Code Hours of Service.

ii) during times of inclement weather, driver discretion shall be the final factor in determining whether a bus will travel.

16. For National Off-Site Activities, the Division expects:

a) initial approval to proceed is obtained from the Principal and then the Superintendent. At any time, the Superintendent may cancel approval for any trip if, in the opinion of the Superintendent, there is a determination that there is an emergent risk of harm to students during the trip when scheduled to travel to a specific region within Canada. The Teacher-in-Charge shall submit the *Checklist for National Travel* to the Corporate Secretary;

b) a Disclosure Meeting will be held after initial approval is obtained;

c) the final application shall include a detailed plan outlining the following:

i) objectives of the excursion;

ii) the number of school instructional days involved;

iii) involvement of Division or Division personnel (the Board should have no direct expense and inconvenience to other students and staff interruption must be minimized);

iv) destination and detailed itinerary including proposed time of departure and return as well as mode(s) of transportation and arrangements for lodging;

v) assessment of reliability of agents or agencies to be used to coordinate travel arrangements (including availability of travel cancellation insurance and appropriateness of training of guides or other provided support personnel);

vi) detailed budget including both sources and uses of funds and how revenue shortfalls or revenue excesses will be dealt with. There will be no cost to the Board:

vii) the number and grades of students involved;

viii) provisions for at least one supervisor with valid first aid certification;

ix) supervisors (both Division staff and volunteers) shall sign an understanding of responsibilities and expectations;

x) risk assessment of activities;

xi) emergency procedures including local contact.

d) final travel plans shall be submitted to the Superintendent at least two weeks prior to the departure date when time permits.

e) between 7 and 14 days prior to the departure date, the trip supervisor will confirm with the School Administrator that the original risk assessment remains viable. Should the original risk assessment not be viable, the School Administrator will consult with the Superintendent;

f) there will be no cost to the Board.

17. For International Off-Site Activities the Division expects that:

a) the request for international off-site activities will be submitted to the Superintendent who will review and submit requests to the Board for approval. At any time, the Board may cancel approval for any trip if, in the opinion of the Board, there is a determination that there is an emergent risk of harm to

students during the trip when scheduled to travel to a specific region of a country;

b) trips must initially be **approved in principle** by the Board before any local action (other than a single meeting/questionnaire to determine the level of potential participation, involving students, parents or community) is taken by the teaching staff. The Teacher-in-Charge shall submit the *Request Form for Approval in Principle for International Travel* to the Corporate Secretary;

c) as per the Government of Canada Travel and Tourism website (www.travel.gc.ca), only locations with an advisory rating of 'take normal security precautions' are acceptable.

d) once approval in principle from the Board is received, the teacher will submit a detailed application for final approval. The final application should be received by the Superintendent at least 4 months prior to departure. The Superintendent will review the detailed application and then submit it to the Board for final approval.

e) Teacher-In-Charge will organize a Travel Disclosure Information Meeting. Attendance of all participating students and their parent or guardian is mandatory. Minutes and attendance sheets are mandatory (*see handbook for templates).* Additional meetings should be held as required to provide updates on travel plans and current foreign affairs.

f) there will be no cost to the Board;

g) the final application shall include a detailed plan outlining the following:

i) objectives of the excursion;

ii) the number of school instructional days involved; to ensure that the loss of regular instructional time is minimized, the number of school instructional days involved should not be more than 4 (four). If more than 4 instructional days are involved the superintendent must provide a special exemption.

iii) involvement of Division or Division personnel (the Board should have no direct expense and staff interruption must be minimized);

iv) destination and detailed itinerary including proposed location and time of departure and return as well as mode(s) of transportation and arrangements for lodging;

v) assessment of reliability of agents or agencies to be used to coordinate travel arrangements (including appropriateness of training of guides or other provided support personnel);

vi) detailed budget including both sources and uses of funds and how revenue shortfalls or revenue excesses will be dealt with;

vii) the number and grades of students involved;

viii) provisions for at least one supervisor with valid first aid certification;

ix) evidence that options for travel closer to the school have been explored and found to be insufficient to meet the objectives;

x) supervisors (both Division staff and volunteers) shall sign an understanding of responsibilities and expectations;

xi) risk assessment of activities;

xii) emergency procedures including local contact;

xiii) assessment of public infrastructure and general safety conditions of destination(s);

h) parents must provide written evidence of current recommended vaccinations for their children.

i) finalized travel plans shall be submitted to the Superintendent at least two weeks prior to the departure date.

j) between 7 and 14 days prior to the departure date, the trip supervisor will confirm with the School Administrator that the original risk assessment remains viable. As part of this confirmation, the trip supervisor will provide to the School Administrator a copy of the travel advisory from the site www.travel.gc.ca or another appropriate advisory approved by the Superintendent. If there are any significant changes to the travel advisory or to the original risk assessment up until the time of departure, the superintendent must be notified immediately. The only acceptable standard is an advisory rating of 'exercise normal security precautions'.

REFERENCES

Cross References:

Exhibit 1 – Off – Site Activities Requirements Chart
ARMIC Prohibited Activities (Internal Document, September 2026)
PWPSD Off-Site Activities Info (Internal SharePoint Site)
Policy IFCG – General Use of Tobacco
Policy IFCI – Illegal Use of Drug and Alcohol by Students
Policy IL – School Sponsored Fund Raising
Policy JG – Non Curricular Use of School Facilities
Policy GBKB – Employee Inappropriate Substance Use
School Physical Activity Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHEReS)

Legal Reference:

Education Act – Section 53

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