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# SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 36 (SURREY)

No. 8901.1

## REGULATION: STUDENT FIELD STUDIES - GENERAL

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### 1.0 CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Student field studies are to be directly related to the curriculum and undertaken only to enhance or add value to the learning experience beyond that which is available in the classroom.
- 1.2 Specific educational objectives for the learning experience are to be clearly in mind prior to planning the field study and subsequently, all activities should be directed to achieve these ends.
- 1.3 Evaluation of field studies is recommended to determine that the field study, as a whole, has enhanced the classroom learning experience commensurate with the costs and risks involved.

### 2.0 PLANNING

- 2.1 Educators-in-Charge will obtain the preliminary approval of the Principal for field studies before communicating with parents, making commitments or commencing fundraising.
- 2.2 Educators-in-Charge will submit an educational rationale for the Principal's approval that explicitly describes how the field study is expected to provide significant educational value related to the school program and curriculum.
- 2.3 Before approving a student field study, the Principal must consider the school-wide effect arising from the absence of Educators-in-Charge and students, and the financial impact of fundraising on the total school community.
- 2.4 Student field studies may be approved only after giving due consideration to the factors identified here and in related regulations.

### 3.0 RISK MINIMIZATION

- 3.1 In order to minimize risk and maximize safety, the following should be addressed:
  - (a) **Student group characteristics** of age, developmental level, area of study, skills and self-discipline are to be considered in selecting appropriate field studies.

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- (b) **Parent/guardian information** is to be provided on field study opportunities to enable them to decline those which they believe may be inappropriate for their child or exceed their risk tolerance. Parent meetings may be organized both to provide parents/guardians with risk assessment information and to have parental reinforcement of school expectations.
- (c) **Parental permission** is to include the opportunity for parents to advise of their child's unique medical, dietary and other special considerations.
- (d) **Safety assessment** must be addressed before plans are finalized for all new field studies. This will vary from informal information gathering on routine or repeat field studies to systematic review of more high risk field studies.
- (e) **Specialized resources** needed are to be identified and incorporated into the program. These resources may include:
  - safety equipment;
  - first aid kit and cell telephone;
  - qualified instructors; and/or
  - guides familiar with the area.
- (f) **Students with special needs** must be provided with appropriate safety equipment both for their transportation and their participation in activities.
- (g) **Preparatory instruction** of students will include both the development of physical skills and the self-discipline to participate.
- (h) **Supervision plan** is established per section 8 of this regulation.
- (i) **Critical incident response plans** are developed before travel in order to respond to emergent situations.
- (j) **Extended field studies**, involving absence from the Lower Mainland for more than three (3) days or international travel, or high risk activity (e.g. skiing, snowboarding, tubing, river rafting) require more extensive planning and special approvals as defined in Regulation #8901.2 - *Extended Field*

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*Studies and 8901.4 – Field Studies to Ski/Snowboarding Areas..*

- 3.2 Preparation must include a supervision plan with consideration of: special supervision risk factors affecting the ratio of students to supervisors, needs for specialized skills and qualifications, and the need for female and male supervisors.
- 3.3 Volunteers may be utilized to satisfy the needs of the supervision plan. Selection, orientation and direction of volunteers is to occur in accordance with Policy #10310 - *School Volunteers*.
- 3.4 Land transportation may be organized by bus, selected from the district's list of approved carriers, or by private vehicles in accordance with Policy #10313 - *Volunteer Drivers*.
- 3.5 The use of alcohol or illegal substances by student participants and supervisors is strictly prohibited during field studies regardless of the circumstances, the age of the participants, or local laws, customs and culture.
- 3.6 When planning field studies, opportunities within the district should be considered first. All other factors being equal, local field studies may eliminate many of the negative factors and risks often associated with travel outside the community.

**4.0 ELIGIBILITY & ACCESS**

- 4.1 Eligibility criteria to participate in field studies must be established. Eligibility criteria must include definition by grade, class, subject, team or other characteristics related to the delivery of an education program. No eligible student may be denied access to participate in a day field study held during instructional hours based on inability to pay.
- 4.2 Student field studies may be financially supported in whole or in part by parents and guardians, but must be planned with a due regard for economy in order to be affordable. Limitations on maximum travel expenditures established in Policy #4410 - *Travel Expense Reimbursement* - are applicable to field studies paid from school district and school-based funds.

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### 5.0 FIELD STUDY FINANCES

- 5.1 Field studies must be planned with a due regard to economy in order to be affordable.
- 5.2 Full disclosure of any and all financial arrangements for field studies are to be clearly communicated to parents including the use of subsidized travel or other benefits for supervisors.
- 5.3 The raising of funds for student field studies is to take place in the context of Policy #4910 - *School/Student Fundraising*.
- 5.4 Before any personal contributions are accepted for extended field studies, contributors must be notified, in writing that the district is not responsible for any losses which may arise from cancellation. It should be recommended that trip cancellation insurance is purchased where appropriate.
- 5.5 Revenues and expenditures in relation to student field studies are to be accounted for pursuant to the methodology described in Policy #4900 - *Management of Site Based Funds* and its related regulations.
- 5.6 Limitations on maximum travel expenditures established in Policy #4410 - *Travel Expense Reimbursement* are applicable to field studies whether paid from school district accounts or school-based funds.
- 5.7 All expenditures to be paid from school district accounts must comply with the requirements of Policy #4410 - *Travel Expense Reimbursement* and Regulation #4420.1 - *Petty Cash Funds*.
- 5.8 Teacher-On-Call expenses to replace staff absent on field studies must be factored into the study's financial planning. Secondary Leadership Days may be requested if consistent with their intended purpose.

### 6.0 PARENTAL COMMUNICATION & AUTHORIZATION

- 6.1 Different types of communication to and authorization by parents are appropriate in different situations. In all cases, parents should be informed when students are to be absent from school premises. Where field studies involve younger students, longer absences

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from the school, further travel or riskier activities, parental authorization for the student's participation is required.

- 6.2 There are some circumstances where one permission form may be appropriate for a series of common activities.
- 6.3 Parental communication and consent documentation is to be retained, along with other field study documentation, in Record Classification File #11150-20.
- 6.4 Parents/guardians must be informed of the method or type of transportation that will be used on a student field study.
- 6.6 Field studies should be selected which avoid higher risk exposure. Students and parents can choose to access higher risk activities directly from organizations offering such services. Nevertheless, when a field study has an increased risk of serious injury or death, both the student and parent/guardian must be alerted to the increased risk and accept responsibility for the consequences of that risk should they choose to have the student participate. The acceptance of risk and release of liability is intended to be documented for higher risk activities on the appended form of 8901.2 *Declaration of Acceptance Of Risk And Release Of Liability for High Risk Activities*.

**7.0 TRANSPORTATION**

- 7.1 Volunteer drivers selection, orientation and supervision is addressed in Policy #10313 - *Volunteer Drivers* and its regulation.
- 7.2 District school bus service can be arranged by contacting the Transportation Department. Booking procedures and payment arrangements are described in Appendix A to this regulation: *District Bus Usage For Field Studies*.
- 7.3 Non-district school buses may be utilized subject to vendor having a school bus permit and liability insurance of at least \$10 million.
- 7.4 Societies associated with schools which provide school bus services are subject to the same requirements as other non-district school bus operators.
- 7.5 Where a group of students is transported by a single vehicle (bus), the sponsoring teacher or approved volunteer is to accompany the

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group. Where students are transported in several vehicles, a teacher or approved volunteer will generally accompany the largest section of the group. Included in this group would be those students with exceptional needs which would be unfamiliar to volunteers.

- 7.6 A list of students assigned to each bus or vehicle must be completed and a copy filed at the school. The list should be utilized to account for all students before beginning the return travel of a field study. The *Field Study Transportation Record* form is designed for this purpose.
- 7.7 Where there is a travel advisory issued by authorities, the Educator-in-Charge or approved volunteer will consult with the Principal before travelling.

**8.0 SUPERVISION**

- 8.1 The Educator-in-Charge is responsible for planning vigilant supervision of students at all times. The Educator-in-Charge may use volunteer supervisors. Volunteer supervisors must be selected, oriented and supervised to effectively perform their roles. The Educator-in-Charge must ensure that supervision is provided at all times and the volunteer supervisors are informed and competent to deal with emergencies that might arise.
- 8.2 Supervisors are responsible to supervise students 24 hours per day, to serve as role models to students, to act as ambassadors of the school district and to conduct themselves accordingly. As such, supervisors are not to consume alcohol or illegal substances while on a field study. Supervisors must always be capable of unimpaired judgment in case of an unexpected emergency.
- 8.3 The minimum acceptable standard of supervision for all student field studies, unless specifically required and adjusted by the Principal, is:

Grades K - 3	1 supervisor / 8 students
Grades 4 - 7	1 supervisor / 12 students
Grades 8 - 10	1 supervisor / 17 students
Grades 11 - 12	1 supervisor / 33 students

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8.4 Additional supervision is required when:

- (a) the field study is an overnight activity. There must be at least two (2) supervisors, no matter the size or age of the group. There must be appropriate male and female adult supervision;
- (b) students are using water craft. The supervision must have a ratio of minimum 1/6 for elementary students and 1/8 for secondary students;
- (c) there is an increased risk;
- (d) there is participation of students with special needs;
- (e) there are crowded venues.

8.5 For increased risk activities, competent instruction and vigilant supervision is mandatory. Competence may be established by virtue of a certificate from a governing body, such as a Canoeing Instructor's Certificate from Canoe Sport B.C. In areas where certificates are not issued, competency may be that recognized by the leader's peers by virtue of experience and demonstrated expertise in the activity. The Principal must be satisfied that the Educator-in-Charge will provide adequate supervision, competent instruction, and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities.

### 9.0 INCIDENTS

9.1 When incidents requiring reporting occur, this is to be done as required by Board Policies #5815 - *Risk Management - Incident Reports* and #9615 - *Student Accidents & Illness at School* and their regulations.

9.2 Originals of information, communications to parents, consent, waiver and transportation documentation must be filed with the Incident Report and photocopies retained in the school's Field Study File #11150-20.

### 10.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 Parents/Guardians are responsible to determine whether their child may participate in a student field study. In order to provide informed consent, comprehensive student field study information that clearly describes the educational benefits and safety risks must be communicated to parents and guardians. When a parent meeting has been called to discuss a proposed field study, attendance must be documented. If a parent cannot attend, the

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Educator-in-Charge must personally discuss the field study with that parent. There are some circumstances where one permission form may be appropriate for a series of common activities.

- 10.2 Students participating in a field study are responsible to comply with the school rules and Student Code of Conduct, fulfill the preparatory requirements and cooperate with all supervisors.
- 10.3 The Educator-in-Charge is responsible to:
- (a) ensure the field study is appropriately planned, authorized and organized;
  - (b) exercise supervision on a full-time basis; and
  - (c) take whatever precautions are necessary to ensure the proper conduct, appropriate behaviour and safety of students.

### 11.0 **RESTRICTED & PROHIBITED FIELD STUDIES**

#### 11.1 **Restricted Field Studies**

Some types of student field studies may have restrictions placed on how or when they may be conducted either by district administration or Principals based on risk assessment and/or the loss of instructional time by the teacher and/or student.

#### 11.2 **Prohibited Field Studies**

Some types of student field studies may be prohibited either by district administration or Principals based on risk assessment, inordinate costs, excessive travel and/or a tenuous relationship to curriculum objectives.

#### 11.3 **Unacceptable** activities are those which:

- (a) are not age or developmentally appropriate for the students, individually, and as a group considering:
  - self-discipline and behaviour record; and
  - knowledge, skills and abilities to safely perform the activity;
- (b) have severe consequences that flow from the inherent risks of the activity and the probability of occurrence cannot be reasonably eliminated;
- (c) involve travel time which is excessive for the age of the children;
- (d) incur inordinate expense or excessive absence from school;
- (e) include travel to areas where Foreign Affairs Canada has published a travel advisory; or

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(f) are prohibited by administration.

**12.0 EXTENDED FIELD STUDIES**

12.1 Field studies involving:

- absence from the Lower Mainland for more than three (3) days;
- international travel;
- additional risks

require district level review from the Superintendent's Department before they are approved.

Appendix: District Bus Usage For Field Studies

Revised: 2008-10-23  
2002-02-19  
2000-10-12  
1998-01-16  
1997-06-03

Approved: 1984-02

X-Ref:

Policy 4410  
Reg. #4420.1  
Policy #4900  
Policy #5815  
Reg. #5815.1  
Policy #9615  
Reg. #9615.1  
Policy #10310  
Reg. #10310.1  
Policy #10313  
Reg. #10313.1

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### APPENDIX A: DISTRICT BUS USAGE FOR FIELD STUDIES

#### 1.0 BOOKING PROCEDURES

- 1.1 District buses may be booked for field trips by calling the Transportation Department.
- 1.2 Booking numbers will be assigned by the Transportation Department for each bus trip to facilitate ease of reference to particular excursions.

#### 2.0 CHARGES

- 2.1 The rate schedule is based on hourly charges and frequent destinations have had standard times established. This enables schools to have increased certainty as to costs.
- 2.2 Transportation will communicate the expected charge when confirming the extra bus trip is ordered.

#### 3.0 PAYMENT

- 3.1 Extra bus trips are charged to the school's district budget account at the time of booking.
- 3.2 If the school wishes to utilize school-based funds rather than the school's district budget account, a remittance can be made to the Finance Department to be credited to the school's district account for transportation recoveries.
- 3.3 In those rare circumstances where the school has not sufficient funds in their district budget account and must wait to realize sufficient school-based funds to make the contribution, a temporary deficit in the school's district budget account can be arranged through the Finance Department.
- 3.4 If the actual hours of bus service consumed on the excursion are different than the original booking charge, then:
  - (a) less than ½ hour will not be adjusted; or
  - (b) ½ hour or greater will have the charge adjusted.
- 3.5 Cancelled bus excursions will result in charges being reversed.