

## CONNECT CHARTER SCHOOL SOCIETY

Policy Title: **Educational Field Trips and  
Outdoor Education Excursions**

Policy No. **6.10**

**RATIONALE:** Providing students with field experiences is integral to an authentic and balanced program. Educational field trips and outdoor education excursions are an important part of the inquiry process; students are able to connect their learning to the world outside of the school and more fully understand their impact on the environment and society.

**POLICY:** The Board of Connect Charter School supports engagement in educational field trips and outdoor education excursions by students, classes, or other school groups during and/or outside of school hours when such excursions have educational value and are an integral part of the school program.

### DEFINITIONS

Field Trip – off site experience of one day or less in duration with no overnight.

Educational Excursion – any off site experience of more than one day in duration.

### PRINCIPLES:

1. The Board authorizes the Superintendent/Principal to approve educational field trips and outdoor education excursions with due regard for the safety, well-being and educational benefit to the students involved, according to the procedures below.
2. School administration and teachers will take all necessary and reasonable steps and precautions to limit risk to students, chaperones and staff attending educational field trips and outdoor education excursions.
3. The Youthsafe Outdoors Off-site Experience Safety Manual and the processes and procedures therein will be used as a guide to school personnel in planning, preparing, and conducting educational field trips and outdoor education excursions.
4. Educational field trips and outdoor education excursions may be financially supported in part or whole by parents of eligible students, but no eligible student may be denied participation solely on the basis of inability to pay the cost.

First Reading	<u>June 24, 2008</u>
Adopted	<u>November 25, 2008</u>
Amended	<u></u>

## **PROCEDURES:**

The procedures outlined in the Educational Excursions and Outdoor Education handbook are broken into the following categories:

1. Types of trips.
2. The administrative process.
3. Roles and responsibilities.
4. Access/eligibility of students for off-site experiences.
5. Trip planning.
6. Other board requirements.

## **Types of Trips**

There are generally 3 types of trips:

Type 1 - local field trips (within Lakeview, the Weaselhead Natural Area and North Glenmore Park)

Type 2 - field trips within city and nearby areas

Type 3 - excursions outside of Calgary and area but within Canada

## **The Administrative Process**

- Parental permission for type 1 field trips is given by parents at the start of the year by signing the Informed Consent and Acknowledgement of Risk form for Local Field Trips.
- Teachers must notify school administration and parents of all type 1 trips no later than the day preceding the trip (via agenda, email, or paper notice).
- Teachers must notify parents of all type 2 and 3 trips well in advance of the date of departure.
- Teachers must submit an Off-Site Activity approval form to the Principal for all type 2 and 3 trips. The Principal approves type 2 trips. The Superintendent and Principal must approve type 3 trips.
- The duration and location of type 2 and type 3 educational field trips and outdoor education excursions will be determined by the teacher(s) in consultation with school administration.
- Off-Site Activity Approval forms for type 2 field trips should be submitted to the Principal at least one week in advance of the date of departure; off-site activity approval forms for type 3 excursions should be submitted to the Principal and Superintendent one month advance of the date of departure.
- The Principal, in approving Type 2 trips, or the Principal and Superintendent, in approving Type 3 trips, will consider the following criteria: the destination and distance from school, duration, age of students involved, the educational value of the trip, the level of risk, the types of activities planned, and the cost.
- All students participating in off-site trips and their parents will sign an Informed Consent and Acknowledgement of Risk form, acknowledging the risks inherent in such activities and giving permission for students to attend the off-site trip.
- Teachers will collect information on student health and medical issues on the Health Information Form.
- The Health Information Form for all students will be kept by a teacher and will be available at all times to all supervisors.
- Teachers will make parent volunteers aware of health and medical issues for students whenever it is appropriate to do so, while still maintaining a student's right to privacy.
- Teachers are obligated to have an immediate means of contacting the school and have an immediate means of contacting the school while off site.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- The **Principal** approves type 2 and the **Principal** and **Superintendent** approve type 3 outdoor education excursions.
- The **Principal** will work with the teachers to ensure that the trips are educationally valid and have an acceptable level of risk.
- **Teachers** are responsible for initiating, planning, implementing and supervising the off-site activity. When an external organization is providing program delivery for an off-site activity, it is expected that the service provider will conduct a site inspection and risk assessment prior to commencement of the activity. It is the responsibility of the organizing staff member to ensure this has taken place and inquire as to any risks or mitigation measures that need to be conveyed to other adult and student participants. Any type 2 or type 3 trips that are organized and delivered by school staff must have a site inspection and risk assessment conducted by the organizing staff member(s) in advance of the trip departure. Those conducting the site inspection and risk assessment are responsible for briefing adult and student participants on any perceived risks and mitigation measures that may be necessary. Teachers are also responsible for reflecting on educational field trips and outdoor education excursions in order to improve the quality of these experiences for students.
- **Students** are responsible for conducting themselves according to the code of conduct and for enthusiastically undertaking any and all studies associated with the off-site trip.
- **Parents** are expected to become informed about the nature of all trips. For type 3 trips this involves attending the parent information session and/or reading all supplied materials. For all trips parents must also ensure that students are well prepared in terms of supplies and equipment.
- **Parent volunteers** are responsible for assisting teachers in the implementation of educational field trips and outdoor education excursions. They will also provide any feedback to the teachers and school administration that will improve Connect Charter School's off-site experiences.

### **Accessibility/Eligibility of Students**

- Off-site trips are curriculum based and, as such, participation in the trips is expected. Exceptions may be made for extraordinary circumstances or religious or health related reasons.
- Diversity is a fundamental aspect of Connect Charter School. The school will provide equal opportunity for all students to be involved in educational field trips and outdoor education excursions.

### **Type 3 Trip Planning**

#### Step 1 – general planning and initial approval

- Teachers planning an off-site trip must provide the following documentation to school administration:
  - Student group involved;
  - Purpose or objectives of the trip i.e. the connection to existing curricula;
  - Departure and return dates, times and locations;
  - Destination(s) and route of travel;
  - A complete itinerary of events, including general times and the activities to be undertaken;
  - Name of any external service provider, including the nature of the program delivery they will provide;
  - Notices that will be sent home to parents;
  - Costs (whenever available);
  - Means of transportation;
  - List of clothing and equipment required by students (if applicable);
  - Number of supervisors;
  - Safety plan i.e. what provisions are in place to deal with emergencies (where is the nearest medical centre or hospital, is an emergency parent vehicle required and available, availability of emergency services, etc.);
  - Accommodations for students and supervisors;
  - Contingency plans (if applicable);
  - Contact information while off-site and during travel;
  - Other relevant and pertinent information.

#### Step 2 – communication with parents

- Teachers will schedule a parent meeting and invite all parents. Teachers will make themselves available to answer questions via email and over the phone for those parents who were unable to attend the parent meeting. All information provided to parents at the meeting will also be provided to those parents who were unable to attend the parent meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to go over the itinerary for the trip, discuss clothing and equipment requirements, provide a venue for parents to ask questions, and to generally inform parents of the details of the trip.
- Parents will be notified of volunteer requirements.
- School administration will maintain a list of parent volunteers for all trips in order to ensure that the responsibility and benefits of volunteering on off-site trips is shared.