

# CONNECT CHARTER SCHOOL SOCIETY

Policy Title: **Off Campus Experiences**

Policy No. **6.10**

**RATIONALE:** Providing students with off campus experiences is integral to authentic, balanced and real-life learning. Off campus experiences are an important part of the inquiry process; students are able to connect their learning to the world outside of the classroom and more fully understand their impact on the environment and place in the community.

**POLICY:** The Board of Connect Charter School supports off campus experiences that are aligned with curricular outcomes and charter goals.

## PRINCIPLES:

1. The Board authorizes the Superintendent and Principal to approve off campus experiences 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, volunteers, and staff attending off campus experiences.
3. The YouthSafe Outdoors Off-site Experience Safety Manual and Outdoor Council of Canada principles, processes, and procedures will guide school personnel in planning, preparing, and conducting off campus experiences.
4. Off campus experiences may be financially supported in part or whole by parents of eligible students, but no eligible student will be denied participation solely on the basis of inability to pay the cost.

First Reading      June 24, 2008

Adopted            November 25, 2008

Amended          June 12, 2018

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **1. Types of Experiences**

There are generally 4 types of experiences:

Type 1 - local single day experiences (within Lakeview, the Weaselhead Natural Area, Mount Royal University, and North Glenmore Park)

Type 2 – single day experiences within Calgary

Type 3 – single day experiences outside of Calgary and area but within Canada

Type 4 – any multi-day experience

### **2. The Administrative Process**

- a. Parents give permission for Type 1 experiences at the start of the year by digitally signing the Informed Consent and Acknowledgement of Risk form for Local Field Experiences during the registration process.
- b. Teachers must notify school administration and parents of all Type 1 experiences no later than the day preceding the experience (via agenda, email, or paper notice).
- c. The duration and location of Type 2, 3, and 4 experiences will be determined by the teacher(s) in consultation with school administration.
- d. Off-Site Activity Approval forms for Type 2 and 3 experiences should be submitted to the Principal at the earliest opportunity in advance of the date of departure; off-site activity approval forms for Type 4 excursions should be submitted to the Principal and Superintendent one month in advance of the date of departure.
- e. The Principal, in approving Type 2 and 3 experiences, or the Principal and Superintendent, in approving Type 4 experiences, will consider the following criteria: the destination and distance from school, duration, age of students involved, the educational value of the experience, the level of risk, the mitigation of risk, the types of activities planned, and the cost.
- f. Parents must be notified of type 2, 3, and 4 experiences as soon as practical upon approval. All students participating in off campus experiences 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 campus experience.
- g. Teachers will collect information on student health and medical issues on the Health Information Form.
- h. The Health Information Form for all students will be kept by a teacher and will be available at all times to all supervisors.
- i. 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.
- j. Teachers are obligated to have an immediate means of contacting the school while off campus.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

- a. The **Principal** approves Type 2 and 3 and the **Principal** and **Superintendent** approve Type 4 outdoor education excursions.
- b. The **Principal** will work with the teachers to ensure that the experiences are educationally appropriate, have an acceptable level of risk, and will support teachers in the planning and implementation of the experiences as required
- c. **Teachers** are responsible for initiating, planning, implementing and supervising the off campus experience.
  - i. Planning includes conducting a satisfactory site inspection and risk assessment within a reasonable time before the experience. Site inspections include analysis of potential risks and risk mitigation measures.
  - ii. When an external organization is providing program delivery for an off campus experience, the service provider must conduct a site inspection and risk assessment prior to commencement of the activity and provide documentation. 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.
  - iii. Any Type 2, 3, and 4 experiences 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 experience departure. Those conducting the site inspection and risk assessment are responsible for briefing adult and student participants on any identified risks and mitigation measures that may be necessary.
  - iv. Teachers are also responsible for reflecting on off campus experiences in order to improve the quality of these experiences for students.
- d. **Students** are responsible for conducting themselves according to the code of conduct and for enthusiastically undertaking any and all studies associated with the off campus experience.
- e. **Parents** are expected to become informed about the nature of all off campus experiences. All Type 4 experiences must be preceded by parent information session. For all off campus experiences parents must also ensure that students are well prepared in terms of supplies and equipment.
- f. **Parent volunteers** are responsible for assisting teachers in the implementation of educational field experiences and outdoor education excursions. They will also provide feedback to the teachers and school administration that will improve Connect Charter School's off campus experiences.

### **4. Additional Requirements for Type 4 Experiences**

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

Teachers planning a multi-day off campus experience must provide the following documentation to school administration:

- a. Student group involved;
- b. Purpose or objectives of the experiences i.e. the connection to existing curricula;
- c. Departure and return dates, times and locations;
- d. Destination(s) and route of travel;
- e. A complete itinerary of events, including general times and the activities to be undertaken;
- f. Name of any external service provider, including the nature of the program delivery they will provide, insurance certificate, and accreditation, if applicable;
- g. Notices that will be sent home to parents;
- h. Costs (whenever available);
- i. Means of transportation;
- j. List of clothing and equipment required by students (if applicable);
- k. Number of supervisors;
- l. 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.);
- m. Accommodations for students and supervisors;
- n. Contingency plans (if applicable);
- o. Contact information while off campus and during travel; and
- p. Other information.

**Step 2 – communication with parents**

- a. 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 experiences, discuss clothing and equipment requirements, provide a venue for parents to ask questions, and to generally inform parents of the details of the experience.
- b. Parents will be notified of volunteer requirements.
- c. School administration will maintain a list of parent volunteers for all off campus experiences in order to ensure that the responsibility and benefits of volunteering on off campus experiences is shared.

**5. Accessibility/Eligibility of Students**

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

**Off campus review and approval packages are required for all Type 2,3, and 4 experiences.**