



Context:

The Qualicum School District Strategic Plan includes student centred learning support for quality teaching and learning, and social emotional supports as primary areas of focus. Field experiences support all of three of those priority areas. Additionally, provision of field experiences supports the BC education system's core competencies of thinking and communicating by providing hands-on opportunities for learning.

Policy Statement

The Board of Education supports and encourages schools to plan field experiences for groups of students in order to provide supplemental opportunities which enhance curricular learning and core competencies, and which expand on athletic, cultural, musical, linguistic, or other educational endeavours.

Guiding Principles

1. Educational value as described in the policy statement is paramount in the planning of field experiences. That educational value must be balanced with considerations of safety and climate impact, meaning that field experiences should be held as close to Qualicum School District as possible without compromising the quality of the experience.
2. The Board further believes that in planning for any learning experience including field experiences, consideration must be given to the following:
 - a. Student safety and security for all participants including students, staff, volunteers and the District;
 - b. Curricular relevance and the appropriateness of the activity to the students' educational program;
 - c. Ensuring that the experiences are effective, affordable and accessible to all students; and,
 - d. Ensuring that field experiences are reviewed for risk and that supervising staff have the requisite skills and experience necessary to provide safe and appropriate field trip experiences.
 - e. Ensure that students be educated regarding the environmental impact and that participating students give evidence of activities intended to offset environmental impact.
3. The Board retains the right to review and give approval for experiences that are out of province, but delegates that authority to the Superintendent.
4. The Superintendent will ensure the Board is informed of any emerging safety concerns.

References:

- BC's Curriculum – [Core Competencies](#)
- [Administrative Procedure to Board Policy 502: Field Experiences \(Trips\)](#)
- Vancouver School Board [Field Studies Resource Book: Guidelines and Policy for Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)

Dates of Adoption/Amendments:

Adopted: 79.07.21

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2020.05.26: **2023.04.25**



Purpose

The Board of Education of Qualicum School District considers the purpose of field experiences is to enable students to participate in quality off-site learning activities that are:

1. an integral part of the educational process.
2. closely connected to curriculum and prescribed learning outcomes, including curricular and core competencies, and/or supportive of cultural, linguistic, athletic or musical experiences; and,
3. relevant, effective, affordable and accessible.

The Board views field experience to be an outgrowth of a school program that involves a clearly defined class or group and that attends to:

1. the safety and security of all participants;
2. risk assessment and mitigation; and,
3. the protection of students, staff, volunteers and the school district from liability or harm.

Requirements

1. Field experience applications shall demonstrate clear connections to curricular or core competencies and/or be supportive of cultural, linguistic, athletic or musical experiences.
2. Given those connections, field experiences should be held as close to the district as is reasonable without compromising the quality of the experience.
3. Planning for field experiences shall take into consideration the climate impact of the activity and any related transportation, and efforts ~~must~~ shall be undertaken to minimize or offset those impacts.
4. Eligibility criteria to participate in field experiences must be established by the educator in charge of the field experience.
5. No eligible student may be denied access to participate in a day field experience held during instructional hours due to financial hardship. A Principal, or Board designate, may exclude a student from the activity if the student does not meet the eligibility criteria.
6. The Board will provide field experiences free of charge to school-age students resident in the district and enrolled in an educational program at one of its schools where attendance is mandatory and/ or assessment will take place.



7. The Board may charge fees for the expenses such as transportation, accommodation, meals, entrance fees and equipment rentals for optional supplementary field experiences. Efforts to minimize costs to students/parents should be evident in all field experience planning.
8. All details of fundraising activities and requirements for the proposed field experience must be communicated clearly to students and parents and agreed upon at the outset of the planning process.
9. All details of proposed field experiences must be clearly communicated to students and parents.
10. Field experiences should not seriously interfere with the education of neither students who remain at school nor the students who are participating on the field experience.
11. School sponsored field experiences are considered to be school program activities and as such are subject to both the regulations of the school and to all Qualicum School District Board policies and administrative procedures, including in relation to expectations of student behaviour and deportment. Adults who attend as sponsors or chaperones are expected to abide by those same standards.
12. When other agencies (e.g., Rotary, Government of Canada) contact schools regarding opportunities for students to participate in activities sponsored by their organizations, parents should be made aware that such activities are not school field experiences.
13. For any activity which is somehow connected to the school but is not endorsed by the school or the Board as a field experience within the context of this policy and its administrative procedure, is not to be supported by the school in any way for planning or communication purposes.

Parent/Caregiver Responsibilities

Parents/Caregivers are responsible to determine whether their child may participate in a student field experience. In order to provide informed consent, comprehensive student field experience information that clearly describes the educational benefits and safety risks must be communicated to parents and guardians.

Student Responsibilities

Students participating in a field experience are responsible to comply with the school rules, Student Code of Conduct, Board policies, fulfill the preparatory requirements and cooperate with all supervisors.



Educator-in-Charge Responsibilities

The Educator-in-Charge is responsible to:

- a. Ensure the field experience is appropriately planned, authorized and organized
- b. Ensure parents have been provided with comprehensive student information that clearly describes the educational benefits and safety risks of the field experience
- c. Exercise supervision on a full-time basis
- d. Ensure detailed contact and trip information is left with the school Principal or designate
- e. Take whatever precautions are necessary to ensure the proper conduct, appropriate behaviour and safety of students

Field Experience Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors (teachers, volunteers, contracted instructors) are responsible to:

- a. To provide supervision of students 24 hours per day
- b. To serve as role models to students and as ambassadors of the school district
- c. To conduct themselves accordingly, and within the expectations of the Board
- d. Alcohol or illicit drugs are not to be consumed while on, or before, supervising students as supervisors must be capable of reasoned judgment in case of an unexpected emergency at all times during the field experience. This expectation includes international locations where the cultural norms may vary. Any over the counter or prescription medications which are necessary for a supervisor must be taken judiciously and with knowledge of the lead sponsor.

Field Experience (Trip) Categories

The Board expects all Board employees responsible for planning and authorizing field experiences to be knowledgeable of the category definitions for field experiences.

Category 1 - Same Day Field Experiences

These may last up to a full day. Destinations and activities are determined by learning outcomes; examples of such field experiences are visits to museums, law courts, art galleries, nature parks, etc.

For the purposes of this policy, local neighbourhood excursions that are based on a specific class activity/learning outcome, such as a grade 3 class going to the local park to collect leaves for an art project, or a grade 11 Physical Education class jogging in the local neighbourhood, are not considered field experiences. However, teachers must always ensure that the school Principal is aware of such neighbourhood learning activities when they are occurring and that parent/caregiver consent has been granted.

Category 2 - Overnight or Outside of the Central Vancouver Island Area Field Experiences

1. Overnight Field Experiences may last for one or more days and take place within the province of British Columbia. Such excursions require an additional level of approval by the Superintendent or designate.



2. Outside of Central Vancouver Island Field Experiences require Superintendent or designate approval because of the travel required. Field experiences that extend beyond Central Vancouver Island, even if lasting only for the day, are classified as Category 2.

Category 3 - Higher Risk Outdoor Field Experiences

These are outdoor education based field experiences that may last up to a full day, or may last for two days or more, and entail a level of risk that is higher than activities in which students are normally engaged in at school.

These would typically be:

1. Outdoor Programs where an outdoor setting is important and it becomes the classroom. Examples might include Outdoor Education and Physical Education Activities. Examples could include the Rivers, Mountains and Oceans School (ROAMS) and the Vancouver Island Student Ski Patrol Program (VISSPP).
2. Outdoor Pursuits refers to activities related to self-propelled travel on land, water and snow or ice. Examples may include hiking, kayaking and surfing. The definition of outdoor pursuit includes higher risk activities, such as skiing, and extended wilderness travel. Outdoor pursuits are typically of a higher care nature and as such these environments require some more specialized awareness, planning, instruction and leadership. Outdoor pursuit does not include local ice area activities, such as skating, hockey or curling.

Category 4 - Out of Province (Canada, Continental United States, and Off-Continent)

These field experiences involve travel outside of British Columbia, but within Canada or the continental United States, and last typically for 5-14 days. These include cultural and linguistic exchanges, where students travel outside B.C. to be immersed in the language and culture of another area. Off-continent travel is to foreign countries for the purpose of broadening students' understanding of other cultures and of helping them to see their relationship in the world as a Canadians. Extended Off-Continent Field Experiences include excursions during Spring Break. It is understood that Category 4 Field Trips will only be approved pending confirmation that the destination is safe for travel according to the Government of Canada, up to and throughout the scheduled travel.

All participants should be aware that the Board of Education is interested in the learning that has resulted from these trips and that representatives will be invited to present to the Board of Education following their return.

Applying for Category 4 Field Trips

Except in the case of earned experiences (athletics and music for example) where only final approval is required, usually on short notice, Category 4 Field Trips require approval in principle a minimum of eight months prior to travel, and final approval a minimum of four months prior to travel. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring educator along with the school principal for ensuring that applications for approval in principle and final approval are submitted on time.



Excursions During the Non-Instructional Year (school closure in June to school opening in September)

Excursions planned for the non-instructional period of the year (typically the months of July and August) will be supported as school-sponsored field experiences provided all requisite field experience policies, guidelines, and approval processes have been followed.

Teachers, or other Board employees, who participate in a supervisory role during non-instructional year excursions do so as volunteers, without salary compensation or the expectation of time in lieu.

Liability insurance coverage under the School Protection Plan does extend to any Board employee or volunteer acting in a supervisory capacity during the non-instructional year provided the excursion is a school-sponsored field experience and all requisite field experience policies have been followed.

Inappropriate Field Experiences

Field experiences may be deemed to be inappropriate by either the school administrator, or the Board designate.

Inappropriate field experiences are characterized as those that may involve:

- a. Activities that have inordinate risk for serious injury;
- b. Absence of necessary supervision ratios, equipment, instruction and supervisors/instructors experience and training;
- c. Age or developmentally inappropriate for activities for students, individually or as a group;
- d. Inordinate expense or excessive absence from school;
- e. Travel to areas where Foreign Affairs Canada has published a travel advisory; and,
- f. Non-compliance with the policies and procedures of the Board.

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Adopted: 17.03.28

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