



OFF-SITE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING POLICY

DM Approval:

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Effective Date: June 1, 2017

GENERAL INFORMATION

Among the goals and objectives of the *Education Act* are: to encourage the appreciation and understanding of creative arts; to encourage the physical development and personal health and fitness of students; to promote understanding of the history, language, culture, rights and values of Yukon First Nations and their changing role in contemporary society; and to increase awareness and appreciation of the Yukon's natural environment.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Enable and encourage off-site experiential learning in order to engage students in the learning process and deliver curriculum in a more culturally relevant and complete way.
2. Provide guidelines for all activities taking place off school grounds to staff, school administrators, superintendents and directors of education, and School Councils and School Boards who plan and approve off-site experiential learning trips.
3. Promote safety and effective risk management as a paramount component of off-site experiential learning trip planning and approval.
4. Encourage the review and evaluation of off-site experiential learning activities.

DEFINITIONS

'Commercial Service Provider' means any for-profit or non-profit agency or First Nation Government that is engaged to provide services for an off-site experiential learning trip.

'Complex Trip' means an off-site experiential learning trip in which any of the following applies:

- a. the trip occurs overnight;
- b. the trip occurs outside Yukon;
- c. students are canoeing, kayaking, or engaging in any other activity that takes place on water;

- d. students are off the main highway and beyond one hour from medical attention;
- e. temperatures on the trip may drop to minus 30 degrees Celsius or colder (including wind chill); or
- f. the risk assessment prepared for the trip identifies risks that need to be managed with specific mitigation strategies.

'Parent' means the biological parents, the adoptive parents by custom or otherwise, the persons legally entitled to custody, or the persons who usually have care and control of the child.

'Simple Trip' means an off-site experiential learning trip that occurs off school grounds that is not a Complex Trip.

POLICY STATEMENT

Principles

All proposed off-site experiential learning trips must be assessed to identify and effectively mitigate safety risks.

Parents must be fully informed of the safety risks and the identified mitigation strategies, as well as learning outcomes, when they are asked to provide consent for their child to participate in an off-site experiential learning trip.

Yukon Education staff must provide the highest standard of care in the supervision and instruction of students for whom they are responsible on off-site experiential learning trips, and are expected to adhere to the following criteria in planning and approving the trips:

1. Trip activities must be suitable based on the age and mental and physical condition of the participating students.
2. Each student must be properly instructed for the trip activities and for managing the risks involved in those activities.
3. Equipment used on the trip must be appropriate for the activities and must be regularly checked to ensure that it is operational and properly maintained.
4. Supervision must be provided that is appropriate given the students involved and the risks that have been identified and assessed.

Risk Assessment

Safety is the paramount consideration in all off-site experiential learning trips, and identifying and effectively mitigating safety risks is an essential component of all off-site experiential learning trips, in particular Complex Trips.

Yukon Education recognizes that notwithstanding careful planning and assessment of risk, there is an inherent risk of injury in many experiential learning activities.

Off-site experiential learning trip activities involving specific risks to the safety of participants (e.g. whitewater kayaking, outdoor rock climbing, skiing or hiking in possible avalanche areas etc.) must be reviewed by the Off-site Review Committee before the trip is approved.

A prior site visit may be required in order to properly assess the risk of the trip activities before the trip is approved.

Risk assessments must be completed with the input of persons with expertise in the required areas. For example, an avalanche terrain analysis can only be completed by a certified alpine ski guide.

Informed Consent

The staff member in charge of the off-site experiential learning trip and the school administrator are responsible for ensuring that informed consent is obtained from parents for Simple Trips using the *Simple Trip Consent Form* (appendix 2).

The staff member in charge of the off-site experiential learning trip and the school administrator are responsible for ensuring that informed consent is obtained from parents for Complex Trips using the *Complex Trip Consent Form* (appendix 3). The risks associated with the trip activities and the measures that will be used to mitigate those risks must be identified using the *Risk Analysis Form* (appendix 4).

Off-site experiential learning trip consent forms must include the purpose, learning outcomes, and other relevant details of the trip as appropriate, including modes of transportation, levels of supervision, a trip itinerary, etc.

Off-site Experiential Learning Trip Documentation

Off-site experiential learning trip documentation files must include copies of all forms used in planning and obtaining approval for the trip, including copies of all certifications required. Copies of all *Incident Report forms* (appendix 12) and *Daily Trip Logs* (appendix 11) must also be included within the off-site experiential learning trip documentation files.

Records of all forms and other documentation relating to an off-site experiential learning trip must be retained in accordance with the requirements of the *Archives Act* (i.e. for at least seven years).

Standards and Procedures

Standards relating to specific types of off-site experiential learning trip activities (e.g. camping, outdoor cooking etc.) are attached to this policy and must be reviewed and followed during a trip involving those activities.

The standards set out in this policy are minimum standards that must be adhered to by Yukon Education staff. Higher standards may be applied to off-site experiential learning trips on a case-by-case basis as circumstances warrant.

Levels and Methods of Supervision

First Aid

For Complex Trips, drawing from available staff and adult volunteers, at least one leader per group must have a valid First Aid Certificate (minimum 16 hour course) and at least one leader per group must have a valid CPR Basic Rescuer Level 'C' or equivalent.

For Complex Trips that take place more than 60 minutes surface travel from a hospital or medical station, at least one leader must have a valid Wilderness Advanced First Aid (WAFSA), Advanced First Aid Certificate, Wilderness First Aid Certificate, or Canadian Ski Patrol System Training (minimum 40 hour course in all cases).

For highway travel on the Alaska Highway, South and North Klondike Highways, Haines Highway and Robert Campbell Highway (between Ross River and Carmacks only) where participants are more than 60 minutes surface travel from a hospital or medical station a 40 Hour wilderness first aid course is not required. A valid First Aid Certificate (16 Hours) with CPR Level C is required.

A *Medical Form* (appendix 5) must be used to document a medical condition of a student participating on an off-site experiential learning trip, and an emergency response protocol must be in place where appropriate.

Emergency contact information for all participating students must be available to trip leaders at all time.

Levels of Supervision

The following levels of supervision are recommended for Complex Trips, and may vary depending on the activities and location of the trip or other relevant factors:

- Kindergarten: 1 adult to 5 students;
- Grades 1-3: 1 adult to 8 students;
- Grades 4-6: 1 adult to 10 students;
- Grades 7-9: 1 adult 13 students;
- Grades 10-12: 1 adult to 15 students.

Depending on the trip and/or activity, the school administrator will identify specific methods and levels of supervision for Simple Trips, and may identify specific methods and additional levels of supervision for Complex Trips.

Methods of Supervision

Appropriate methods of supervision on off-site experiential learning trips include:

- Constant Visual Supervision – where staff or volunteers are physically present and supervising a specific activity at all times.
- On-Site Supervision – where staff are present but are not directly supervising the activity at all times.
- In-Area Supervision – where staff are in the same location but do not have visual contact with the activity at all times.
- ‘Buddy System’ – no student leaves the activity area alone.

There must be both male and female supervisors on all Complex Trips involving both male and female students. The number and makeup of the supervisors will be determined by the school administrator depending on the makeup of the group and the nature of the trip or activity.

Transportation of Students

School administrators must approve and file for each school year a record of any employee or volunteer who uses a private vehicle to transport students on any off-site experiential learning trip, in accordance with the *Volunteers in the Schools Policy*.

Student-driven motorized vehicles (including automobiles, boats, snowmobiles etc.) cannot be used to transport other students on off-site experiential learning trips.

Billeting

Any person who will be billeting students for an off-site experiential learning trip must provide a signed consent for an RCMP security check, and the school administrator and superintendent or director of education are responsible for ensuring that the security check is carried out before the students are billeted with the person. The administrator, using this information, will determine whether billeting will be allowed.

A *Billeting Roles and Responsibilities Form* (appendix 9) must be provided to the person who will be billeting students, and it must set out the person’s roles and responsibilities as well as the privileges and other support being offered to the student.

Contingency Plans

A *Contingency Plan* (appendix 6) must be completed for all Complex Trips and must be shared with the parents of the students on the trip and the transportation provider(s) in advance of the trip.

A copy of the *Contingency Plan* (appendix 6) must be left at the school or with the school administrator, and shall include the following:

1. Students who are unable to participate in a trip must be provided with other meaningful and relevant learning activities.
2. The *Contingency Plan* (appendix 6) must address how cold weather risks will be mitigated when during the trip:
 - a. the temperature may drop below minus 30 degrees Celsius (including wind chill - combination of air temperature and wind speed); or
 - b. the temperature may drop below minus 20 degrees Celsius and the trip activities will take place mainly outdoors or at least 5 km from a road.
3. Plans for early termination of the trip.

For Complex Trips, emergency planning must either be fully included as a component of the *Contingency Plan* (appendix 6) or it must be addressed using the *Emergency Plan and Search Protocol* form (appendix 22).

If the *Contingency Plan* (appendix 6) has to be used during the trip, an *Incident Report* must be completed by the staff member in charge of the trip noting the reasons why the *Contingency Plan* (appendix 6) was used.

Early Termination of Off-Site Experiential Learning Trips

Arrangements for the early termination of an off-site experiential learning trip should be included in the *Contingency Plan* (appendix 6) for the trip.

When there is early termination of a trip, an *Incident Report* (appendix 12) must be completed by the staff member in charge, noting the reasons for the early termination of the trip and what arrangements were required as a result.

Any additional costs associated with the early termination of a trip due to the misbehavior of a student will be the responsibility of the student's parents, and parents should be informed of this when they provide consent for their child to participate in the trip.

Approval of Off-Site Experiential Learning Trips

The *Off-Site Experiential Learning Trip Checklist & Authorization Form* (appendix 1) should be used to obtain approval for all off-site experiential learning trips.

The school administrator shall approve all off-site experiential learning trips, and shall designate a staff member in charge for each approved trip.

The superintendent, or school board director of education, shall approve all Complex Trips, and the Deputy Minister of Education must approve travel for any off-site experiential learning trip taking place outside Yukon.

The School Council or School Board may approve a curricular or extra-curricular off-site experiential learning trip that is of more than one day.

No commitments may be made regarding an off-site experiential learning trip until the required approvals have been obtained.

Off-site experiential learning trips that do not fit with the delivery of the curriculum or do not have a clear educational purpose shall not be approved.

Planning for an out-of-territory off-site experiential learning trip must start with obtaining the initial authorization from the school principal, superintendent and deputy minister on an *Initial Out-of-Territory Trip Authorization Form* (appendix 26). Any request for approval for an out-of-territory off-site experiential learning trip must include a *Travel Authorization* (part of appendix 1), and any request for approval of an off-site experiential learning trip taking place outside of Canada must include an *Application for Extended Coverage Outside Canada* form (appendix 14).

Off-site experiential learning trip activities involving specific risks to the safety of participants must be reviewed by the Off-Site Review Committee before the trip is approved. Such activities include (but are not limited to) whitewater kayaking, outdoor rock climbing, and hiking or skiing in possible avalanche areas.

A school administrator or superintendent or director of education may at any time refer any off-site experiential learning trip proposal to the Off-Site Review Committee or the First Nations Perspectives Review Committee for their input and advice prior to approving the trip.

Communication Protocol During Off-site Experiential Learning Trips

The school administrator must ensure that a protocol is in place to communicate with the staff member in charge of the off-site experiential learning trip while the trip is underway, including:

- the school administrator (or designated alternate) must be available to be contacted by the staff member in charge during the trip;

- a method must be in place for the school administrator and the staff member in charge to maintain contact during the trip (e.g. satellite phone);
- a process must be in place for notifying parents in case of emergency; and
- trip information (itinerary, contact numbers, contingency arrangements etc.) must be readily available to the school administrator (or designate) while the trip is underway.

Medical and Trip Insurance

Medical and trip insurance coverage is mandatory for staff and students for all out-of-territory off-site experiential learning trips.

Where parents or other volunteers who are participating in an out-of-territory off-site experiential learning trip choose not to purchase medical and trip insurance, they must agree that they assume full responsibility for any charges incurred by them for medical care, evacuations etc. and that they have waived the option to purchase medical and trip insurance.

Commercial Service Providers

All Commercial Service Providers must comply with the requirements of this and all other Yukon Education policies.

All contracts and agreements with Commercial Service Providers must be retained as part of the off-site experiential learning trip file.

Yukon Education may develop standing protocols with Commercial Service Providers (sample: appendix 23) that will apply to all off-site experiential learning trips that involve that Commercial Service Provider.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

***note: for more detailed information about the roles and responsibilities of those involved in planning, approving, and carrying out off-site experiential learning trips, please refer to the *'Detailed Roles and Responsibilities'* (appendix 25) that is attached to this policy.**

In planning and carrying out an off-site experiential learning trip the staff member in charge of the trip is responsible for ensuring that the standards and requirements of this policy are met, all safety risks are identified, assessed and effectively mitigated, and that parents are fully informed when they are asked to provide consent for their child to participate in the trip.

School administrators are responsible for approving off-site experiential learning trips and for ensuring that the standards and requirements of this policy are met, all safety risks

are identified, assessed and effectively mitigated, and that parents are fully informed when they are asked to provide consent for their child to participate in a trip.

Superintendents and school board directors of education are responsible for ensuring that school administrators are aware of the standards and requirements of this policy, and are responsible for approving Complex Trips when they are satisfied that the standards and requirements of this policy are met.

School Councils and School Boards may approve curricular and extra-curricular off-site experiential learning trips that are of more than one day.

The First Nations Perspectives Review Committee is responsible for providing advice and recommendations to foster the integration of First Nation culture and values into off-site experiential learning trip and culture camp activities.

The Off-Site Review Committee is responsible for providing advice and recommendations to ensure student safety and share expert information and advice regarding proposed off-site experiential learning trip activities.

The Assistant Deputy Minister of Public Schools is responsible for ensuring that student safety is a paramount principle for all off-site experiential learning trips and for ensuring that clearly defined learning outcomes are also an integral component of all trips.

The Deputy Minister of Education must approve travel for any off-site experiential learning trip taking place outside the Yukon.

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all staff of Yukon Education, as well as to School Councils and School Boards.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In situations where the individual circumstances of a case are such that the provisions of this policy cannot be applied or to do so would result in an unfair or an unintended result, the decision may be based on the individual merits and justice of the situation. Such a decision will be considered for that specific case only and will not be precedent setting.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective January 20, 2016.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REFERENCES

Education Act ss. 4 (h), 51, 113 (2) (j), ss. 116 (2) (h)
Yukon Education Policy 'Volunteers in the Schools'

Yukon Education Policy 'Student Transportation by Government Vehicles (Vans)'
Yukon Education Policy 'Administration of Medication to Students'

HISTORY

Field Trip Policy, effective June 16, 2006; amended as the Off-Site Experiential Learning Trip Policy, effective September 1, 2013; amendments to First Aid requirements effective January 20, 2016; amendments to definition of 'Complex Trip' effective June 1, 2017.

Appendices

- Appendix 01 - Off-Site Experiential Learning Trip Checklist and Authorization
- Appendix 02 - Simple Trip Consent
- Appendix 03 - Complex Trip Consent
- Appendix 04 - Risk Analysis
- Appendix 05 - Medical
- Appendix 06 - Contingency Plan
- Appendix 07 - Volunteer Registration Form
- Appendix 08 - Use of Private Vehicles for Transporting Students
- Appendix 09 - Billeting Roles and Responsibilities
- Appendix 10 - Firearms Safety Standards
- Appendix 11 - Daily Trip Log
- Appendix 12 - Incident Report
- Appendix 13 - ~~Travel Authorization and Claim~~ (NOW PART of APPENDIX 1)
- Appendix 14 - Application for Extended Coverage Outside of Canada
- Appendix 15 - Camping Standards – Summer and Winter
- Appendix 16 - Outdoor Cooking Standards
- Appendix 17 - Hiking and Backpacking Standards
- Appendix 18 - Canoeing Standards
- Appendix 19 - Kayaking Standards
- Appendix 20 - Cycling Standards
- Appendix 21 - Lift Area Skiing and Snowboarding Standards
- Appendix 22 - Emergency Plan and Search Protocol
- Appendix 23 - Commercial Service Provider
- Appendix 24 - Snowmobile Standards
- Appendix 25 - Detailed Roles and Responsibilities
- Appendix 26 - Initial Out-of-Territory Trip Authorization