

**NLSchools** refers to all public K-12 English schools and school-related facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, Education Operations Branch and all employees working therein providing services and supports to such schools, including those who work in the areas of school facilities, student transportation, program implementation, student services, and procurement.

## Policy Name

Student Travel

## Policy Statement

The Department of Education recognizes and encourages the educational value of well-planned and properly organized learning experiences beyond the classroom. The department is committed to equitable inclusion of all students in safe, curriculum-based excursions and extra- curricular opportunities.

## Background

Student travel can contribute to the overall educational, cultural, social and recreational development of students. Travel does, however, carry inherent risks, and it may impact instructional time. This policy and the associated administrative procedures outline the criteria for planning and implementing student travel in order to promote safety and the effective use of instructional time.

## Scope

This policy applies to all students, school groups and schools within NLSchools.

For the purpose of this policy, Student Travel includes the following categories, which require different procedures, as outlined in the administrative procedures:

1. Field Trips/Excursions
2. Out-of-Province Travel

## Definitions

### Field Trip/Excursion

A field trip/excursion is defined as a group trip that is arranged to allow for first-hand observation (e.g., trip to a museum), or participation in a curricular, co-curricular or extra- curricular activity.

## Policy Directives

1. School trips provide valuable educational opportunities for students. To ensure student travel provides a positive learning experience, schools are to only use travel companies from an NLSchools approved list for out of province travel.
2. School Administrators are responsible for determining the suitability of, and for approving, proposed trips. In accordance with the administrative procedures for this policy, the School Administrators shall be responsible for final approval of all in-province travel, with the exception of overnight travel for K-6 students as outlined in the Student Supervision policy. All out-of-province travel will require prior approval by the Director of Schools. In approving school trips, the school administrator must also give due consideration to the importance of maintaining maximum time for instruction as per the Use of Instructional Time policy.
3. Student safety shall be the priority in the planning and implementation of all student travel. Expectations and conditions of travel must be fully discussed and clearly communicated with all participants and families.
4. The written informed consent of custodial parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be obtained for all student travel outside of the general vicinity of the school as outlined in the Student Supervision Policy.
5. Every effort will be made to ensure that field trips/excursions, and other co-curricular travel is available to all students in a class, grade, course or activity as per the School Materials and Student Fees Policy.
6. Funding of student travel shall be in accordance with the School Fundraising policy and the School Materials and Student Fees Policy.
7. Under no circumstances shall students be transported when weather or road warnings are issued for any portion of the area to be travelled, or when the school has been closed due to poor road or weather conditions.
8. Supervision of students on all school trips shall be in accordance with the Student Supervision policy.
9. During school travel, all school and NLSchools policies, and corresponding administrative procedures, will continue to apply as they do in the school building.

## Administrative Procedures

### 1. Supervision of Students

Supervision of students on all school trips will be in accordance with the Student Supervision policy and associated administrative procedures.

### 2. Approval for Field Trips and Excursions

2.1 All school-sponsored field trips and in-province excursions shall be approved by the school administrator or designate.

2.2 Overnight excursions shall normally be limited to students in Grades 6 and above as per the Student Supervision policy.

2.3 When approving field trips and in-province excursions, the school administrator will take into account the total number of such field trips for students during the school year, and the amount of instructional time lost due to travel to and from the destinations.

2.4 Out-of-province excursions shall be approved by the Director of Schools. Such approval must be received prior to any fundraising being conducted or travel arrangements being confirmed (e.g., airline tickets, accommodations) as per the School Fundraising Policy.

2.5 An application for approval of out-of-province trips must be completed by the school and submitted to the relevant Director of Schools.

### 3. Trip Planning and Student Safety

3.1 For all school-sponsored field trips/excursions, student supervision must be in place as outlined in the Student Supervision policy.

3.2 Students should only be billeted for overnight stays when other forms of accommodation are not feasible. It is required that a minimum of two students be assigned per billet.

3.3 The school administrator or the teacher sponsor shall ensure that parents or guardians consent to the billeting arrangements.

3.4 Students are to be advised to bring any concerns regarding their billets to the teacher sponsor.

3.5 Emergency Protocols:

a) Schools will ensure that an emergency protocol is in place in the event of an accident or other emergency during a field trip.

b) The teacher sponsor should contact emergency response services (ambulance, fire, police) where necessary, and notify the school

administrator. The teacher sponsor and/or school administrator will notify parents or guardians in accordance with school protocol.

- c) The teacher sponsor will complete an incident form and submit it to the school administrator at the earliest opportunity. In the case of a serious incident, the school administrator shall also immediately notify their Director of Schools.

### 3.6 Transportation of Students

- a) Students may participate in various forms of transportation on field trips, including walking to destinations, or travelling by vehicle or bus.
- b) When travel by vehicle is required, teacher sponsors shall first consider the use of a regular school bus to transport students. This may include the use of a school bus operated by a private contractor, or a government-owned school bus. Schools must ensure compliance with the Field Trip Protocol as it pertains to the use of school buses versus motor coaches.
- c) School administrators may wish to consult with the Student Transportation Division when using a school bus, regarding hours of service, guidelines for drivers and other related matters.
- d) Students participating in a school-sponsored field trip shall normally be required to travel as planned by the school, to and from the designated site. Any alternate travel arrangements should be approved by the school administrator or designate prior to the trip and communicated appropriately to those involved.
- e) Ground transportation of students between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. is not permitted. In extenuating circumstances, approval to travel during those hours may be granted by the Senior Management Official (School Systems).

### 3.7 Private Vehicles

- a) School administrators shall only consider the use of private vehicles for student transportation if the use of a school bus is not feasible.
- b) School administrators shall approve all transportation for students in private vehicles that is arranged by their schools.
- c) An approved vehicle for student transportation on a road or highway is interpreted to be an enclosed mode of transportation such as a car, van or cab of a truck. It does not include open pickup truck beds, motorcycles, etc.

- d) The use of 15-passenger vehicles for the purpose of transporting students to and from school-sponsored events is strictly prohibited. This includes any vehicles that are donated or are hired for service.
- e) Vehicles must have enough seatbelts for all passengers and all students shall be secured by a seatbelt during travel; the number of passengers must not exceed the number of functioning seatbelts.
- f) Vehicles must have properly installed booster seats for the transport of children who require them as per the Highway Traffic Act.
- g) Winter tires shall be required on vehicles carrying students during the recommended months for winter tire use in Newfoundland and Labrador (November 1 to April 30).
- h) Smoking shall not be permitted in private vehicles when they are used to transport students for a school-sponsored activity.
- i) Any vehicle rented by a school or by an individual on behalf of a school, and used to transport students, must meet the criteria outlined in this policy and procedures.
- j) All drivers who transport students for school sponsored activities must have a valid driver's license according to provincial requirements.
- k) All non-staff (volunteer) drivers must be 25 years of age or older.
- l) Students are not permitted to transport other students.
- m) All non-staff (volunteer) drivers must have a satisfactory Criminal Record Check on file at the school as per the Volunteers in Schools policy
- n) Drivers must not have incurred any serious traffic offences in the last five years.
- o) Drivers shall not be permitted to operate a vehicle if there is a reasonable suspicion that they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol or otherwise impaired.
- p) A reporting form shall be completed for each trip, including name of driver, name of teacher sponsor and names of students travelling with each driver.

#### 4. Parent or Guardian Permission

- 4.1 Parents or guardians are to be advised of the relevant details of all field trips such as the date, time, activity and mode of transportation, if any. Parent or guardian permission for a student to participate in out-of-town field trips shall

be required in writing on an NLSchools approved form.

- 4.2 For field trips that are intended to be regular excursions (e.g., weekly excursions to a recreation activity), parents or guardians may be requested to complete a form consenting to a child's participation in the repeated trips.

## 5. Student Participation

- 5.1 Individual student participation in field trips shall be at the discretion of the school administrator.
- 5.2 Schools will support the participation of students in field trips/excursions, and other co-curricular travel to the extent possible, as outlined in the Administrative Procedures of the School Materials and Student Fees policy.
- 5.3 Students who do not participate in class excursions or other field trips should be accommodated in other classes or activities.
- 5.4 Students are expected to comply with the school's expectations for students during field trips, and the school's code of conduct.

## 6. Inclement Weather

- 6.1 When a school is closed due to inclement weather, school field trips shall automatically be cancelled.
- 6.2 Student travel shall not commence when a weather warning for the relevant area has been issued by an NLSchools contracted weather service.
- 6.3 Student travel shall not commence when road hazard warnings for the relevant area have been issued by the police or Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.
- 6.4 When a field trip has commenced and the weather deteriorates, the teacher sponsor is expected to err on the side of caution and to either terminate a trip early, or to remain at the location until the weather improves. Such decisions should normally be made in consultation with the school administrator and/or the bus foreman and/or Student Transportation Division.
- 6.5 If a group, due to no fault of its own, incurs extra travel expenses (e.g., weather problems, travel problems), parents or guardians are responsible for the extra costs.