

# **Field Trip Protocol**



## **PURPOSE**

To outline expectations and responsibilities involving school field trips to ensure the appropriate safety measures are in place.

## **SCOPE**

This Protocol applies to all schools within NLSchools as well as all active student transportation contractors and any 3<sup>rd</sup> party transportation providers. It also applies to:

- Contracted Services
- Government-operated Services
- All types of school purpose transportation (school buses and private vehicles)

## **RELATED GUIDANCE**

This Protocol should be read and applied in conjunction with:

- NLSchools [policies](#)
- [School Bus Transportation Policies](#)
- Individual contracts entered into between NLSchools and a given contractor

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Field Trip**

Any student transportation arranged either by the school, or on behalf of the school:

- This includes:
  - Travel for curricular, extra-curricular or co-curricular activities
  - Travel during and outside normal school hours
- For the purposes of this protocol, the following does NOT apply:
  - Service arranged by NLSchools for everyday student transportation to and from school
  - Parent-arranged transportation
  - Air transportation
  - Out-of-Province transportation
  - Transportation by parents or volunteers of the school applicable to – Volunteers in Schools policy and its associated regulations and documents

### **Active NLSchools Student Transportation Contractor**

An entity or individual that/who holds an agreement with NLSchools for Regular or Alternate student transportation in the current school year.

## **PROCEDURE**

For safety purposes, only the following student transportation Operators are permitted to be used by a school for Field Trip services:

- Government-operated transportation service (NLSchools owned buses and NLSchools employee bus drivers)
- Active NLSchools Student Transportation Contractor

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**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Active NLSchools Student Transportation Contractor shall use only NLSchools-approved drivers and vehicles to deliver field trip transportation service to NLSchools.

## EXCEPTIONS

### 1) Coach Bus:

If one (1) of the following two (2) situations exists, a school is permitted to consider a Coach bus for transportation service:

#### Situation 1:

1. Age of Student
  - a. \*Grade 5 or older\*
2. Length of Trip
  - a. Travel from school to destination takes longer than 2 hours one-way

#### Situation 2:

1. Age of Student
  - a. \*Grade 5 or older\*
2. Excess Cargo
  - a. If extra cargo is required to be transported, for example: hockey bags, large instruments, luggage for overnight trips

*\*Necessary to be Grade 5 or older in order to ensure compliance with [Section 178 of the Highway Traffic Act](#) (requirement of a child up to 8 years old to be properly secured in child seat restraint system if a school bus has a seat belt assembly i.e car or booster seat)*

When a school is considering contracting for a Coach bus, the following is required:

1. First preference is to use an Active NLSchools Student Transportation Contractor and NLSchools-approved Driver
  - a. NLSchools does not retain documentation on Coach buses therefore the school will be required to collect the following:
    - i. Proof of registration (not expired as of date of scheduled service)
    - ii. Proof of insurance (not expired as of date of scheduled service)
    - iii. Inspection dated within 6 months of the scheduled service
2. Seat Belts
  - a. Required to be installed in every seat throughout the Coach bus

In the event no Government-operated service is provided in an area and no Active NLSchools Student Transportation Contractor is willing to provide service in the general area at a reasonable price, the School Administrator may seek Coach bus service with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party service provider (i.e. not an Active NLSchools Contractor). However, the School Administrator must obtain the following information from the 3<sup>rd</sup> party Contractor when obtaining quotes for service:

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2. Vehicle Documentation:
  - a. Proof of registration (not expired as of date of scheduled service)
  - b. Proof of insurance (not expired as of date of scheduled service)
  - c. Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspection dated within 6 months of the scheduled service
3. Copy of company driver validation and certification protocol (which must include the requirement for the collection of a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check)
4. Existence of documents requires School Administrator's written approval prior to service being contracted
5. Documents to be retained and filed by the school to accompany the 3<sup>rd</sup> party invoice

## **2) Public Transportation:**

Schools are permitted to use public transportation in situations where a student approved for alternate transportation has individual programming outcomes which promote safe and effective access and use of public transportation in order to build capacity with independent living. In these cases, these activities would be under the direct instruction of a teacher. NLSchools relies on the municipality's vehicle and driver safety criteria to ensure safe bus service.

Note: Public Transportation includes Go Bus as the City of St. John's is the service provider

**School Administrators are expected to comply with all applicable NLSchools policies related to school travel, safety and supervision.**