



**Field Trips Policy
Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry
November 2024**

RATIONALE

The Board of the Epiphyte Educational Society (“EES” or “the Board”) expects field trips to be organized in a manner that avoids unnecessary risk, mitigates risk, and addresses the safety and well being of the students.

DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy, an **educational field trip** is a direct extension of the curriculum involving a teacher and students outside of the school setting. Such trips should stimulate student interest and inquiry and should provide opportunities for intellectual, cultural, and social development.

POLICY

At all times, staff, students, and volunteer supervisors are expected to act as ambassadors of the Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry (“VISII” or “the school”).

The Board considers risk assessment to be a major consideration in approving field trips. It is the role of the teacher and the principal to ensure that activities are programmed appropriately.

Further, the school has a significant duty to communicate clearly and specifically to parents the activities associated with the trip and the level of risk that can normally be expected in each activity. It then rests with the parents to decide whether their child will participate.

PROCEDURES

The principal is charged with ensuring that all school field trips are appropriately planned, authorized, organized, and supervised.

All field trips are governed by this policy and may be approved only after giving due consideration to factors and procedures identified in this policy.

The following field trip documentation related to approval, planning, communication, and written informed consent are to be retained on file at the school as a record of the trip, and kept on file

until the end of the following school year.

- Field trip risk assessments and approvals
- Detailed itinerary for the field trip
- Informed consent documents signed by parents or legal guardians
- Student roster and home/emergency contact telephone numbers
- List of supervisors accompanying the teacher
- Emergency communication protocol and list of appropriate phone numbers

In addition to collecting and retaining the information listed above, the school will also develop, contextually appropriate to each trip, a communication protocol for school/parent/guardian communications in the case that an emergency develops on the trip (local or international) or at the school/home while the participants are away. The head teacher is expected to deal with emergencies on a school trip in the same way they would as if they were at the school. The head teacher, or a supervisor as directed, is to contact emergency services as required and is to inform the principal and school administrator as soon as possible of the emergency and the support required. The principal or school administrator will contact parents if required (i.e. a student is injured). The head teacher will assign staff to stay with any injured parties and accompany them to hospital if necessary.

All relevant emergency contact information shall be organized in such a way as to be able to access and share it in accordance with PIPA.

Relevant information should be kept in a way that it is also available to be shared (preferably proactively) with the Ministry of Education in the event that a school trip emergency develops.

Supervision Of Students

Vigilant supervision of students is mandatory during all school field trips.

Volunteer supervisors must be screened by the principal or designate for suitability in providing supervision, and advised of the expectations for their role.

Student conduct is governed by the school's Code of Conduct.

The principal must be satisfied that the teacher and other supervisors will provide adequate supervision and competent instruction, and follow recognized safety procedures for the planned activities in order to mitigate potential risks and address the safety of students and supervisors.

Other Safety And Health Concerns

The principal must be aware of students with medical and/or legal alerts who are participating in the field trip.

The teacher(s) supervising the trip must ensure that students with medical conditions bring their required medicines and are supported in the same way as if they were at school. A copy of the school's health plan, for any student who has one, shall be brought along on the trip.

The teacher is to ensure students with legal alerts are kept safe in the same way as if they were at the school.

In cases where buses are used for field trips, a bus evacuation drill shall be undertaken at the start of the bus portion of the travel. That is, before the bus transports staff or students, an evacuation drill shall be carried out.

All supervising teachers and staff on a school field trip must carry an up-to-date list of emergency contacts for all participating students and staff. This list must include parent/guardian contact information, relevant medical information (e.g., allergies, medical conditions), and any additional emergency numbers.

Teachers and staff must also have a reliable means of communication, such as a fully charged mobile phone or radio, accessible at all times during the trip. Backup communication plans must be in place for areas with limited or no cellular reception.

For Transportation To And From Field Trips

Most field trips will use public transit or be within walking distance of the school. Parents may be given the option to drop off or pick up their student at the field trip location. Additionally the school may ask for parent volunteer drivers or use contracted services.

A) Car and Driver

In cases where privately owned cars are used to transport students who are not the driver's dependent, only students older than 12 will be allowed to sit in the front seat, and the following documentation must be on file in the school in respect of the driver:

- Driver's \$2,000,000.00 Insurance Liability (minimum), with underinsured motorist coverage
- Criminal Record Check through VISII
- Valid Driver's License
- Driver's Abstract (<https://onlinebusiness.icbc.com/clio/>)

A copy of the roster of drivers and Passengers form (Attachment 1) will be completed for each car and is filed in the office and carried by the teacher.

B) Bus or Other Permitted Vehicle

It is the responsibility of the principals, vice-principals or field trip supervisor to ensure:

- That the inspection certification on the vehicle is current and valid prior to students boarding the bus.
- The vehicle must have a school bus designation if the seating capacity is 10 or more people and the driver must have a Class 4 license.
- A Bus Passenger List form (Attachment 2), is completed for each bus and is filed in the office and carried by the teacher.
- PERMISSION FORM - CONTRACTED TRANSPORT (see Attachment 3), must be completed prior to use.
- Supervision ratio 1:15

Out Of Province/Out Of Country

All out-of-province/country field trips require Board approval.

Field trip itinerary must not include areas where the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has published a travel advisory (see: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>) or travel health advisory (see: <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notices>) indicating that travel is prohibited or at health risk level 3 (“avoid all non-essential travel”).

Group or individual medical/hospital insurance coverage, permission form for treatment by a doctor in a foreign country to treat an under-aged student, and trip cancellation insurance must be in place for all out-of-country field trips.

A field trip proposal may be denied, based on the outcome of a risk assessment.

When organizing a field trip with moderate or high-risk activities, the school must collect documents and details of communication related to the acquisition of informed consent from parents/guardians. These records are evidence of due diligence in the home communication process and are to be kept on file at the school until the end of the following school year.

Epiphyte Educational Society

Revised 2024 -18-11

Adopted: 2021-12-05

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