



Risk Management Considerations for Field Trips

Participating in field trips helps students learn about subjects beyond traditional textbook, classroom and lecture based dialogue. It allows them to have firsthand experiences and reinforces ideas more concretely.

To mitigate risks and expenses, a formalized field trip procedure is recommended that considers the entire trip from transportation, approval and scheduling through planning the actual trip and post-trip activities.

Safety Policy

1. Parent/Guardian Consent Form - this form must be signed by every student who wishes to participate. It should include parent/guardian signature(s). The form should also include how the student is being transported.
2. Insurance - Schools typically carry insurance or make arrangements for the students to purchase coverage.
3. Mode of Transportation – Walking, cycling, passenger car, passenger van, school buses, tour buses, transit buses, watercraft, air or rail - transportation risk will always exist and should be considered in the planning stages.

Transportation Guidelines

- Use your own school buses or contracted transportation whenever possible.

- Staff/volunteers should not transport students in their own vehicles if possible.
- Use professional drivers and appropriate vehicles if possible.
- Drivers shouldn't be responsible for supervising students. Staff/volunteer must supervise students.
- All staff/volunteers must provide a Vulnerable Sector Screening report.
- You will need to consider an appropriate ratio of adults per students. This ratio depends on the age of the students, for example ages 3 to 8, one adult to 8 children; over age 8, one adult per 10 children.
- The group must remain under direct supervision in the event of an accident or breakdown.
- Head counts should be carried out before students get off the mode of transportation and before they depart from the location.
- Parents must give written consent for the students to be transported. If students are over the age of 18, they can give their own consent.
- Students must behave appropriately while travelling. If a student misbehaves, then appropriate disciplinary steps need to be in place for future trips.
- If any student has a medical condition e.g. epilepsy, diabetes or peanut allergy, the student should travel with a care plan and necessary medication. If a

staff member/volunteer is trained in administering medication, they should accompany the student. If not, the student must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

- Students with disabilities will need to have the appropriate mode of transportation provided. In some cases you may need to bring a nurse on the trip to accommodate these individuals.
- A student collection plan should be in place. This will allow supervising staff/volunteers to know what the agreed and understood plan is for collection at the end of the session.
- Drivers must follow the provincial requirements for allowable hours of operation.
- Pre-trip inspections of all equipment (circle checks) prior to departure must be followed as set out by your provincial regulations.
- Have a safety complaint document in place and any problems should be recorded. Initiate an appropriate response to the complaint and how you will effectively resolve it.
- Develop an accident and student incident report. The document should identify: the parties, the place, the event, the response and the consequences.

Use of Third Party Transportation Companies:

1. Do your research and hire a well-established company.
2. Check their references.
3. Check their accident history.
4. Any Third Party Company contracts should include the following:
 - An indemnification/hold harmless clause.
 - Proof of insurance in the form of a Certificate of Insurance.

Automobile Insurance

The operator shall maintain, in respect of each motor vehicle used for transporting students, automobile insurance with an insurance company licensed to do business in the province insuring the operator for public liability, passenger hazard and property damage, all inclusive, with coverage per incident. Check with your provincial regulations to see what limits are required.

General Liability Insurance Coverage

The operator shall provide comprehensive general liability insurance in the amount of no less than \$5,000,000 inclusive, and such policy shall name the entity as an additional insured. A certificate of insurance must be provided at least two weeks before the contract commences.

Volunteer Drivers:

1. Do not allow students to transport students.
2. Volunteer drivers should be over 21 years of age and have a full driver's license with no restrictions.
3. If you are going to use staff or volunteers to transport students to school activities they must sign a Volunteer Driver Form. This form will declare they are properly licensed and have valid insurance.

Rental Vehicles:

1. Make sure drivers carry the appropriate class of license.
2. Vehicles that you rent to transport students for school purposes may require a special class of license. It is important to know if you operate a vehicle with an improper class of license it is illegal and may void the insurance coverage.
3. Make sure the vehicle complies with the safety requirements under the provincial regulations. These vehicles may be subject to safety equipment and inspection regulations as set out by the provincial regulations.

Risk Assessment

Event organizers should be aware of the element of risk and to respect the standard of care owed to the students and their parent/legal guardians. Complete a Risk Assessment to identify any hazards, evaluate the associated risk and implement any control measures.

Risks can be categorized as follows:

Low - Risk can be identified, but is unlikely to occur or cause serious injury or damage. Low risk activities include; walking, low impact exercises, etc.

Medium - There is a known risk associated with the activity but it can be removed or reduced. Examples of a medium risk include physical contact sport, transportation of any kind, downhill sport (skiing, tobogganing), water activities (swimming, canoeing).

High Medium - This applies to activities where few losses have occurred, but when they do, they result in a catastrophic injury. Organizations should be careful when considering these excursions/activities. High medium risk activities need to be managed with greater caution. Some of these activities are rock climbing, extreme sports, wilderness excursions, etc.

High - These activities carry obvious hazards and a high probability of a loss with catastrophic results. You may decide that it is not an acceptable or comfortable amount of risk. Some high risk activities include: areas prone to natural elements – avalanche, mudslides, flash floods; fall heights exceeding 8 feet; exposure to weather elements; high speeds; exposure to wild animals; inexperienced volunteers; and visiting areas with political unrest.

Other Activities

Organizers focus on the main destination and overlook other activities that may occur during the trip. Attention should be placed on “ad hoc” activities that occur along the way such as dining, swimming/wave pools, amusement parks, go kart tracks, etc. Consider whether these incidental activities should be permitted.

Supervision

Caution should be exercised when relying merely on a numeric ratio to guarantee a safe level of supervision. Meeting the standard of providing “adequate supervision” for an activity should be based on a combination of factors. These factors will come from the predictability of the risk, the capability of the participants, experience, age and environmental factors.

Field trip organizers need to look at all of these variables when determining what level of supervision is required for the specific activity. If staff and volunteer resources are not available to provide adequate levels of supervision, the field trip should be cancelled or postponed.

Contingency Plan

You should also develop a contingency plan to provide appropriate supervision for students that may be injured or become ill, experience delays/ travel changes, or be detained by authorities. Students in these situations should never be left unattended.

While Intact Public Entities Inc. does its best to provide useful general information and guidance on matters of interest to its clients, statutes, regulations and the common law continually change and evolve, vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and are subject to differing interpretations and opinions. The information provided by Intact Public Entities Inc. is not intended to replace legal or other professional advice or services. The information provided by Intact Public Entities Inc. herein is provided “as is” and without any warranty, either express or implied, as to its fitness, quality, accuracy, applicability or timeliness. Before taking any action, consult an appropriate professional and satisfy yourself about the fitness, accuracy, applicability or timeliness of any information or opinions contained herein. Intact Public Entities Inc. assumes no liability whatsoever for any errors or omissions associated with the information provided herein and furthermore assumes no liability for any decision or action taken in reliance on the information contained in these materials or for any damages, losses, costs or expenses in a way connected to it. Intact Public Entities Inc. is operated by a wholly owned subsidiary of Intact Financial Corporation. Intact Design® and Risk Management Centre of Excellence® are registered trademarks of Intact Financial Corporation or its affiliates. All other trademarks are properties of their respective owners. TM & © 2021 Intact Public Entities Inc. and/or its affiliates. All Rights Reserved.

Volunteers

Volunteers can provide services that may not otherwise be possible due to personnel and financial restrictions. Many field trips rely on parent volunteers to assist in supervising. Remember, volunteers are there to assist, not discipline the students.

Develop a Volunteer Program

It is important to develop a comprehensive volunteer program. You wouldn't hire an employee without a job description, knowing what qualifications are required, or how the employee will be compensated and disciplined, so why would you accept a volunteer without knowing the above?

There are 13 steps in a volunteer plan:

1. Develop a volunteer policy and procedure
2. Create a volunteer job description
3. Communicate your intent to staff
4. Prepare screening criteria
5. Create an advertisement and distribute it
6. Conduct interviews
7. Screen potential volunteers
8. Develop a rejection procedure
9. Perform orientation and training with new volunteers
10. Ensure the volunteer has proper resources
11. Evaluate the volunteer and give feedback
12. Perform regular recognition
13. Keep records of volunteers and projects

Develop Protocols For

1. Medication, including Epi-Pens
2. Pick-up of children re: parent's late arrival
3. First aid kits
4. Emergency evacuation plan