Medicine Hat Public School Division

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MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATING AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"

SECTION 700 – Educational Program

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

PROCEDURE CODE:	*720 AP 001*
Policy Reference: 720 – Off-Site Activities	**Exhibits:** 720 E 001 – Consent for Off-Site Activities 720 E 002 – Consent for Recurring Curricular Off-Site Activities 720 E 003 – Consent for National-International Off-Site Activities 720 E 004 – Health Certification and Consent (Extracurricular) 720 E 005 – Swimming Ability Form 720 E 006 – Alpine Skiing and Snowboarding Form 720 E 007 – Off-Site Activity Risk Assessment Template 720 E 008 – Volunteer Registration Form 720 E 009 – Volunteer PIC and CSIRC Form 720 E 010 – Volunteer Attestation Form 720 E 011 – Volunteer Acknowledgement of Risk and Consent Form 720 E 012 – Automobile Driver Authorization 720 E 013 – Travel Accounting Template 720 E 014 – Travel Declaration for National-International Trips

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

To articulate the Superintendent's requirements for the organization, supervision, documentation and approval of off-site activities to ensure a focus on student learning outcomes and the safety of students.

DEFINITIONS

Off-Site Activity: an approved school activity that occurs outside of school property. This definition includes off-site activities, excursions, Division sponsored student exchange programs, classes, programs, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, national and international tours that occur outside of school property. It excludes work study, work experience, registered apprenticeship programs, job shadowing, or dual credit courses as per Policy 718 – Off-Campus Education.

Extracurricular Activities: Organized student activities connected to broader educational goals of a social, sports-related, or cultural nature (i.e. band, drama, basketball, football). All extracurricular activities taking place off-site are considered under the guidelines of this policy.

Academy Activities: Dual focus programming designed to achieve student excellence while immersing students in a sport or specific topic of study (dance, STEM, etc) environment.

Local Off-Site Activity: any school activity occurring within the city of Medicine Hat and the surrounding areas but not occurring any farther than 50 km from the nearest city limit.

Provincial Off-Site Activity: any school activity that occurs within the province of Alberta and more than 50 km outside the city of Medicine Hat. Includes provincial day trips or overnight trips. Note: Cypress Hills Saskatchewan is considered as a provincial trip for the purposes of this administrative procedure.

National Off-Site Activity: any school activity that occurs outside Alberta but within Canada.

International Off-Site Activity: any school activity that occurs in whole or in part outside of Canada.

Teacher-Leader: The teacher directly responsible for the planning, coordination, and implementation of the off-site activity.

Level of Risk: The level of risk for any activity will be established by the School Physical Activity Chart provided by the Division's insurance provider. The activities are listed by low risk (green), medium risk (yellow), higher care risk (orange) and high risk (red) activities. All high risk (red) activities are prohibited, without exception.

Supervisor: Includes any staff members and other adults over the age of 18 years who are not a high school student, who have been selected by the teacher-leader and approved by the principal to assist on an off-site activity.

Parent/Guardian: A person as defined in the Education Act section 1(1) and (2). Includes all legal guardians and independent students.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Division Office will be responsible for providing advice and assistance to support principals in meeting all requirements of this procedure and exercising due diligence on behalf of the Division to ensure student safety. Division Services will:
   - identify best practices, and develop common forms, templates and processes to support schools in meeting the requirements of this regulation; and
   - review (by the Occupational Health and Safety Officer) any provincial, national and international off-site activities and any medium (yellow) to higher care (orange) off-site activities on behalf of the Superintendent; and

- support the process for international trip submissions that need to be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval (OH&S, Finance and Superintendent).

2. Principals will be responsible for:
   - ensuring adequate preparation and supervision of all off-site activities;
   - ensuring all potential supervisors have been orientated for supervision and if they are non-staff supervisors, the principal has approved each supervisor through the 720 E 007 Volunteer Registration Form. If the supervisor is a coach, it is an overnight trip, the supervisor is driving students or it is an activity where the supervisor will be with students out of regular line of site from the staff member, then a police check and child intervention check is required. Note: 720 E 009 Attestation can be used for two years following the submission of a valid police check and intervention check.;
   - ensuring all Division approved off-site activity applications, consent or ability forms and templates are used in preparing the off-site activity package;
   - designating a teacher-leader to be in charge of each off-site activity on the principal's behalf to ensure planning, supervision, communication, and approval follows this procedure;
   - ensuring parents/guardians have been provided with an Off-site activity Consent Request applicable for the activity. 720 E 001 applies for general activities, however, if the activity involves swimming, then Ability Form 720 E 005 must be used, and 720 E 006 must be used if the activity involves alpine skiing or snowboarding. Note: The Division does not permit liability waivers that seek to waive a minor student's right to pursue legal action for negligence. If a provider requires this, please contact the division's Occupational Health and Safety Officer to see if the Division can work with the provider to build an acknowledgement of risk and consent form instead.
     - *Hotel pools are included in this expectation and must be listed as an activity, even if it is not the primary activity. A supervisor must be present in the pool area if students are swimming. Hotel pools are often small and shallow, which reduces potential risk of drowning, however, shallow diving, slips and horseplay are the main hazards if left unattended.
   - providing final approval for local, low risk (green) off-site activities; and
   - approving medium (yellow) activities and provincial activities for OHS Officer to provide final approval; and
   - approving completed packages for both national/international off-site activities and higher care (orange) off-site activities for Division Office (OHS Officer, Superintendent, Secretary-Treasurer [International only] or Board of Trustees [International and national trips (that exceed three (3) school days) only], as appropriate) to make the final approval. Note: High-risk (red) activities are prohibited.

3. Principals can work with Student Services to identify appropriate accommodation for student needs. While every effort will be made to support participation, there may be circumstances where a particular activity is not suitable for a student. When a principal denies access to an off-site activity, they must provide rationale to the parents/guardians and an alternative plan for the student.
4. The Superintendent will be responsible for:
   - approving all off-site activities involving higher risk (orange) activities; and
   - approving all national and international off-site activities.
5. The Superintendent of Schools reserves the right to cancel or alter an off-site activity at any time. No request for compensation will be considered, however, if the Division is reimbursed for costs, these will be passed along if/as appropriate.

PROCEDURE

1. Each off-site activity will have received the appropriate level of vetting and approval, including where appropriate, the Occupational Health and Safety Officer and/or the Superintendent, prior to:
   - any information being sent home to parents/guardians or commitments being made to students and parents;
   - any contracts being signed, or commitments being made, to vendors or service providers;
   - any funds being expended; and
   - any money or deposits being collected from, or on behalf of, students and/or parents/guardians.
2. For all local activities classified as low risk (green), approval may be granted by the Principal. If the local activity is at medium risk or higher, the OHS Officer will also need to approve.
3. For all provincial off-site activities, the principal will review arrangements submitted by the teacher-leader and confirm approval on the online form, if the trip criteria is met. Schools will also keep an in-house record of the signed consents and all primary communication to parents/guardians. As per Division Document Retention Requirements, signed consent and primary communication must be retained for two years after the end of the school year the activity takes place. The application should be completed with all necessary approvals at least one week prior to the date of the off-site activity. The Principal and the OHS Officer shall approve all provincial activities.
4. For all national or international off-site activities, the principal will review arrangements and confirm approval of the application submitted by the teacher-leader in the appropriate online form, if appropriate criteria are met. Schools will also keep an in-house record of the signed consents and all primary communication to parents/guardians. As per Division Document Retention Requirements, signed consent and primary communication must be retained for two years after the end of the school year the activity takes place. The Principal, OHS Officer, and Superintendent approve of national trips with the Secretary Treasurer and Board of

Trustees being additional approvers of international trips and national trips exceeding three school days.

5. The expectations for completion of applications are as follows:
   - A minimum of 10 days prior to departure for local off-site activities that are medium risk (yellow);
   - a minimum of 30 days prior to departure for all provincial off-site activities; and
   - a minimum of 60 days prior to departure for off-site activities involving either higher-care (orange) activities or for national off-site activities; and
   - approval in principle must be completed 1 year in advance of the trip for international off-site activities.

A: SUPERVISION:

1. No teacher will be assigned instructional time specifically to organize off-site activities.
2. Each off-site activity will have a designated teacher-leader in charge. The teacher-leader will be in attendance for the duration of any higher care (orange); overnight; national or international off-site activity. For all other off-site activities, when a principal deems it appropriate, the teacher-leader may have an alternate assigned to be present on an off-site activity.
   a. The teacher-leader on all national and international trips will provide a daily update by phone, text or email to the school Principal.
   b. The teacher-leader will provide a report by phone, text or email to the Occupational Health and Safety Officer in the event of unusual circumstances resulting in a major modification to the itinerary of the off-site activity.
   c. The teacher-leader will immediately report any serious injury or illness, ambulance call out, or hospital visit to:
      - The principal who will inform their Site Executive Member; and
      - Occupational Health and Safety Officer.
   d. Whether or not the teacher-leader is present on an off-site activity, the teacher-leader must always have overall responsibility for the off-site activity to ensure compliance of the off-site activity with this procedure.
   e. The teacher-leader will ensure that supervision is always available and that supervisors are prepared to deal with any emergencies that may arise. The supervisory arrangements will consider:
      - the age, maturity, needs and ability levels of the students;
      - the inherent risks of the activity; and
      - the environment and circumstances of the activity.
   f. The teacher-leader will be familiar with, and conduct a safety assessment of, the proposed site for the off-site activity.

- Anyone planning and submitting for off-site activity approval is required to consult the School Physical Activity Chart and School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHEReS).
- Pre-visits are ideal, but if not possible or practical, alternatives such as human, internet and paper-based resources could be consulted to identify potential hazards or risks at the location(s).

g. The teacher-leader will ensure that training, preparation, orientation and expectations are provided to all students and supervisors.
   - Trips with multiple supervisors must ensure that all supervisors (both staff and non-staff) have a full understanding of the known potential risks, hazards, supervision expectations and itinerary so that they can support students;
   - All supervisors are expected to refrain from alcohol or drug use for the duration of the off-site activity;
   - In circumstances where the activity may not allow for the group to stay together as one, the teacher-leader will provide a safety plan that ensures students are not alone and are accounted for (e.g. buddy systems, wristbands, check-ins).

h. The teacher-leader will be responsible for ensuring, prior to travel beginning, that proof of additional medical coverage is collected from students and supervisors for international trips.

i. The teacher-leader will be responsible for ensuring that the following items are present and readily available on off-site activities:
   - list of student participants;
   - phone contact numbers of parents;
   - information regarding medication and Medi-alert needs of participants; and
   - an appropriately equipped portable first aid kit. Occupational Health and Safety Code provides information on the contents of first aid kits (see Schedule 2, Table 3). The type of kit required relative to the number of participants (see Schedule 2, Table 5) can be found by following the link (scroll down to see the free online version).

3. There must be at least one supervisor with first aid on any off-site activity that is higher care, considerable distance from emergency services, overnight and out of province. Sports teams must have at least one coach with first aid. For all other activities, teacher-leaders and administrators should consider proximity to the school, proximity to emergency services, and the level of risk for the activity in determining whether a supervisor with first aid is necessary.
4. On overnight off-site activities involving students of both genders, male and female supervisors will be present, and on other off-site activities when necessary.

5. For higher care (orange) activities, competent instruction and supervision in these activities are mandatory. Competence may be established by virtue of a certificate from a governing body for activities such as skiing and canoeing. In areas where certificates are not issued, competency may be recognized by virtue of experience and expertise in the activity.
6. A principal may authorize people other than teachers to provide supervision or instruction when warranted by the nature of the specific off-site activity, to meet the safety requirements of this regulation.
7. Only assigned teachers and authorized supervisors will accompany students on an off-site activity. Volunteers must be approved as supervisors by the principal and are required to complete the following forms as per 720 AP 005 Volunteers:
   - 720 E 007 Volunteer Registration Form;
   - where required Police Information Check and Child Services Intervention Check or 720 E 010 Volunteer Attestation Form if Police Check on record is within three years; and
   - 720 E 011 Volunteer Acknowledgement of Risk and Consent Form;
     A. If a person attending as a volunteer is an employee in another school (teacher/EA) and is not part of the trip leadership team in any capacity, they must also complete the form. They do not need to complete the Volunteer Registration Form.
   - where required, 720 E 012 Automobile Driver Authorization.
8. Where a school has only a small number of qualifying students for an off-site activity, a teacher from another Medicine Hat Public School which is also sending students, may agree, with their principal's approval, to be designated as the teacher-leader for the off-site activity and assume supervision of the one or two students. This could occur for off-site activities such as provincials for individual sport (e.g. badminton, wrestling) or a student leadership conference. This arrangement must be clearly communicated to parents/guardians before consent is provided.
9. When necessary, principals and teacher-leaders are expected to seek advice and assistance from experts in planning off-site activities and in assessing risk. The following are recommended personnel and publications:
   a. Personnel:
      - Occupational Health and Safety Officer
      - Site Executive
      - Division insurance contact (Finance)
      - other senior staff
   b. Publications:
      - *School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHERES)*
      - *Occupational Health and Safety Legislation and Regulation*
      - *Physical & Health Education Canada (PHE Canada)*

B: OFF-SITE ACTIVITY CONSENT FORMS:

1. Prior to each off-site activity, written parental consent will be obtained for each student participating. The Consent for Off-Site Activities is found in 720 E 001 on the Division website.
2. To ensure informed consent, the teacher-leader must utilize the standard Parental Consent and Authorization Form as prepared by the Division, and provide parents with the following information in writing:
   - purpose or educational goal of the off-site activity relative to the specific learner outcomes of the course the student is enrolled in;
   - proposed itinerary;
   - description of the activities or events proposed;
   - an indication of commonly known potential risks and hazards that may be encountered on the off-site activity;
   - safety precautions relating to equipment, instruction, supervision, etc. in place to deal with the potential risks and known hazards; emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;
   - method(s) of transportation to be used;
   - arrangements for supervision; and
   - cost to the student.
3. Parental consent forms will:
   - include consent from parents authorizing the supervisors to arrange for necessary medical treatment;
   - include contingency plans in the event of cancellation, adverse weather and road conditions, or other conditions that may require a change to the original itinerary;
   - specifically require parents, or a qualified instructor/assessor, to indicate a child's skill level in swimming, skiing or snowboarding and in any higher care (orange) activity.
   - provide for parents to be able to consent to activities, and withhold consent with respect to others in relation to the same off-site trip;
   - include information that the Superintendent of Schools reserves the right to cancel or modify any trip and that no request for compensation will be entertained, however if appropriate, any reimbursement received by the division will be passed on to the participants; and
   - include notification to parents that photos or videos of students attending or participating in an off-site activity, that is open to the general public, may be taken by participants, others, or the media, and that Medicine Hat Public Schools cannot control or prevent the further distribution of these images.
4. Special provisions may be required when seeking permission from parents if language, literacy, or cultural barriers exist.

5. For school activities that involve more than one trip outside the boundaries of the school such as physical education classes, outdoor education classes, academies and interschool sports season of play, a single parental consent will suffice for the season of play or a unit/type of activity for PE, Academy or Outdoor Education classes where the appropriate information can be shared with each parent such as the specific risks of that activity and the required equipment needed. For athletics, the information to the parent must include both a league schedule and dates and locations of all tournaments, along with expected transportation. Should any of the activities be higher care (orange) activities, separate off-site activity parental consent must be obtained.
6. A single parental consent, identifying seasonal risks, will suffice for scheduled and unscheduled walking off-site activities in the neighbourhood of the school; however, parents/guardians should be notified when the walk occurs.
7. Supervisors should not entertain major deviations to the proposed itinerary of any off-site activity once parental consent has been received, without notifying the parents/guardians, if appropriate and seeking their informed consent for the change The teacher-leader is also responsible for consulting with the approvers of the off-site activity regarding the change.

C: OFF-SITE ACTIVITY RECORDS:

Schools will keep a record for two years of each off-site activity, which will include:

- a completed off-site activity application with all approvals in the online forms;
- all parental/guardian consents;
- all volunteer acknowledgement of risk and consent forms;
- a list of participating students;
- all primary communication provided to parents/guardians.

Off-Site Activity Guide:

Offsite Activity Type	Approval Required	Staff Form to Use	Notification Deadline
Local (within 50 km) and low (green) risk activity	School Principal	Local Off-Site Activity Request	No central notification required
• Local (within 50 km), medium risk (yellow) • higher care (orange) risk activity	• School Principal OH&S Officer • School Principal, OH&S Officer & Superintendent (orange)	Local Off-Site Activity Request (for yellow activity);	• 10 days minimum prior to departure (for yellow risk) • 60 days minimum (for orange risk activity)
• Regular season of play, tournament or club activity (day trip and low/green risk) • If medium (yellow) to higher care (orange) risk activity	• School Principal • School Principal, OH&S officer (yellow/orange), Superintendent (orange)	Extracurricular Off-Site Activities	• No central notification required • If yellow risk – 10 days minimum • If orange risk – 60 days minimum
• Greater than 50 km from city off-site activity or overnight extracurricular within the province • If higher care (orange) risk	• School Principal, OH&S Officer • School Principal, OH&S Officer & Superintendent (orange)	Provincial Off-Site Activity Request	• 30 days minimum prior to date of departure • If orange risk – 60 days minimum
Outside of the province, but within Canada (National)	School Principal, OH&S Officer, Superintendent	National Off-Site Activity Request	60 days minimum prior to date of departure
Outside of Canada (International)	School Principal, OH&S Officer, Secretary-Treasurer, Superintendent, Board of Trustees	International Trip Request – Approval in Principle	1 year prior to date of departure. Various time sensitive requirements to follow.

Approved: October 5, 2026