



# Policy

Title: <b>Student Excursions and/or Exchanges for Educational Purposes</b>	Policy #: <b>PO512</b>
Policy Area: Program and Instruction	
Source: Superintendent of Education – Program	
Date Approved: January 5, 1998	
Dates of Amendment: January 24, 2005; February 9, 2015	

## 1.0 Introduction

It is widely recognized that students benefit from participating on excursions held off school property. The Durham Catholic District School Board believes that experiential learning that occurs during excursions within the expectations noted in the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and Ontario Curriculum enhances student achievement and personal and spiritual growth.

## 2.0 Definitions

**Excursions** are organized by school personnel, involve leaving the school property and are for educational purposes, and may also include spiritual, recreational and other components, and are directed by a teacher/educator team.

**Exchanges** involve another school, are usually more than one day and usually require transportation.

**“Qualified” supervision and/or instruction** can be provided by a person who has an Ontario Teacher’s Certificate and expertise/experience in a specific activity.

**“Certified” supervision** in a specific activity can only be provided by a person who holds certification from the respective Provincial or National organization.

**“Certified” instruction** can only be provided by a person holding certification in a specific activity.

**Coordinating Staff Member** – a Durham Catholic District School Board teacher or employee who serves as the principle organizing/coordinator of the excursion whether they attend the excursion or not.

## 2.0 Definitions (Cont'd)

“**Water activities**” are defined for the purposes of this Policy as activities occurring in, on, or around water that must be conducted only in the presence of a certified supervisor (e.g., lifeguard (National Lifesaving Society (NLS) or equivalent), boat operator with current and applicable watercraft license and/or certification(s) and that all activities in/on/or around water comply with the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines (OPHEA) 2018 specific to each water activity.

## 3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the approval of student excursions and/or exchanges for educational purposes, and may also include spiritual, recreational and other components, that are aligned with curriculum expectations and the enhancement of co-curricular activities of the school.

## 4.0 Application/Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, parents and school approved volunteers engaged in excursions and/or exchanges.

## 5.0 Principles

Excursions and/or educational exchanges:

- 5.1 are consistent with Catholic values and teachings;
- 5.2 have educational value with links to Catholic Graduate Expectations, and the Catholic curriculum expectations as outlined in the Ontario Curriculum documents, and connections to Pathways Program and Planning;
- 5.3 broaden the student’s experiences;
- 5.4 foster personal, spiritual and emotional growth and development;
- 5.5 allow for practical application of knowledge and skills;
- 5.6 enhance school and community spirit.

## 6.0 Requirements

- 6.1 Mass must be included in the itinerary of any excursion or exchange which includes or falls on a Sunday or other Holy Day of Obligation.
- 6.2 The school principal shall review and approve all excursions or exchanges of a one day duration as per the administrative procedure accompanying this policy. Principals are to maintain a file of each field trip taken by any group in the school, for a minimum of two calendar years. Each file shall contain the details of the trip, including copies of consent forms, and be available for review by the appropriate Superintendent.

## 6.0 Requirements (Cont'd)

- 6.3 The school principal, after reviewing and verifying that the planning and preparation for an excursion of more than one day duration is consistent with the administrative procedure associated with this policy, will recommend to the appropriate Superintendent, through the completion of the Application for Student Excursion More Than One Day Form (Form 5003), that the excursion or exchange be approved. The Superintendent's decision will be final.
- 6.4 All overnight excursions must include supervision by both male and female staff of which at least one is a teacher from the school. Parents and other principal-approved supervisors may add to the supervision supplement, but a minimum of one male and one female supervisor must be members of staff. Principals must ensure that supervisors who are non-staff members must provide an approved Criminal Background Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening, prior to requesting Superintendent's approval for the excursion.
- 6.5 Teachers must not deviate from an approved itinerary or program except when required for emergency or safety reasons.
- 6.6 For classroom excursions, the school must have the support in principle of the majority of parents, the teacher/staff involved and the principal. The goal for each excursion is to have 90% of eligible students participate. No student shall be excluded for reasons of affordability or accessibility.
- 6.7 Student trips shall be planned in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of all of the students.
- 6.8 Excursions may include student(s) who require accommodation/consideration for accessibility, transportation, medical care, feeding or sleeping arrangements. Every reasonable attempt should be made to include these students as part of the school field trips and excursions.
- 6.9 The principal/coordinating teacher/parent(s)/guardian(s) should meet well in advance of the planning of the excursion to discuss the excursion location and all considerations pertaining to the safety and physical/emotional/medical well-being of any student requiring special consideration.
- 6.10 Students who choose not to participate are expected to attend school. The teacher, with principal's approval, will provide suitable and appropriate material to meet the specific needs of the student(s) in such circumstances.
- 6.11 A comprehensive information package consistent with the administrative procedure accompanying this policy will be provided to all students and parents. In the case of overnight trips, this package will be given to parents at an information meeting convened in advance of requesting approval from the Family of Schools Superintendent.

## 6.0 Requirements (Cont'd)

- 6.12 A parental information package will contain information as specified in the administrative procedure. Principals shall ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) signature is obtained on the Waiver of Board Financial Liability for Student Excursion Form (Form 5005), and maintained on file for a minimum of a two year period beyond the completed excursion or exchange date.
- 6.13 International trips will be discussed with the Family of Schools Superintendent at least 8 months before any planning is initiated unless they are for extracurricular activities (e.g., sports events that are dependent on current year scheduling from governing bodies). The safety of students and staff must be assured and particular destinations may not be suitable for student excursions or exchanges due to local conflicts and other adverse conditions. School staff should consult Foreign Affairs and other Government Travel Advisories before discussing any prospective international excursions or exchanges. Only Board approved vendors are permitted to be used. International Trips of 'more than one day' cannot be longer than five (5) school days during the instructional year.
- 6.14 The Director may request a review of previously approved excursions and/or exchanges where the safety of staff and students could be in jeopardy. In such circumstances, approval may be withdrawn and the Board shall not be liable for any refunds.
- 6.15 The principal reserves the right to exclude the participation of any student or group of students for reasons including, but not limited to, safety.
- 6.16 Before any school activity is undertaken, the appropriate OPHEA (Ontario Physical Health Education Association) Guideline must be referenced and its requirements followed. The principal/coordinating teacher shall ensure that all planned activities are in compliance with the OPHEA Safety Guidelines for Elementary and Secondary Schools, including water activities, if applicable, and that all site certified staff are in compliance with said guidelines [ophea.net](http://ophea.net)
- 6.17 For excursions that include boat tours or cruises, the vessel owner/operator must provide a copy of their current marine insurance to the third party excursion provider, which must be shared with the Principal. The third party excursion provider will provide the Principal with details about the vessels safety equipment including but not limited to the number of life jackets and emergency evacuation devices or vessels and how these are accessed in the case of an emergency.

## 7.0 Sources

- Ontario Physical Education (OPHEA) Safety Guidelines, 2018
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Regulation 565 (Public Pools), 2018
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Regulation 503/17 (Recreational Camps), 2018
- Student Protection Act, 2002

## 7.0 Sources (Cont'd)

- Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession (Ontario College of Teachers), 2012
- Education Act, 1990
- Ontario Highway Traffic Act, 1990
- Occupational Health & Safety Act, 1990

## 8.0 Related Policies and Administrative Procedures

- Fundraising Policy (PO416)
- Anaphylactic Students (Protection of) Policy (PO608)
- Anaphylactic Students (Protection of) Administrative Procedure (AP608-1)
- Administration of Oral Medication Policy (PO609)
- Code of Conduct Policy (PO610)
- Code of Conduct Administrative Procedure (PO610-1)
- Student Discipline Policy (PO611)
- Student Discipline Administrative Procedure (AP611-1)