

Educational Field Trips and Off-Site Activities – Overnight Trips within Canada Procedures Manual 508-B



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1. Educational Criteria

When planning an overnight field trip, the teacher-in-charge, in consultation with the principal, must ensure that the trip:

- 1.1 has curricular relevance for the group of students concerned
- 1.2 has educational objectives that have been clearly defined by the teacher, including pre-planning, follow-up activities, and evaluation, where applicable
 - 1.2.1 The educational objectives must be clearly communicated to the parents of the students involved.
- 1.3 has educational value in relation to the energy, effort, time, and travel required by the programs or activities
- 1.4 lies within the competency and/or capability of all trip participants, including supervisors
- 1.5 activities are permitted as outlined in the Activity Risk Chart in Appendix A or as approved by the superintendent of education

2. Consideration of Students as Trip Participants

Before planning a field trip, teachers must take into consideration the needs of all eligible student participants.

- 2.1 Parents/guardians must be provided with the opportunity to excuse their child from any trip or any aspect of the trip.
 - 2.1.1 An alternate educational program will be provided for students who do not participate in a field trip.
 - 2.1.2 Where a student doesn't participate in a particular aspect of the trip, appropriate supervision will be arranged.
- 2.2 The accessibility and appropriateness of activities, transportation, student cost, and venues must allow for all eligible students to participate in a field trip, with accommodations and/or modifications if necessary. **If all students cannot be accommodated on a trip, then it is not a suitable field trip for that class.**

- 2.2.1 If a student participant has a medical Plan of Care (Policy 518), Safety Plan (413-3), Individual Education Plan (IEP), and/or a Behaviour/Mental Health Plan (413-2), it must be reviewed, and revised if necessary, in advance of the trip to reflect the necessary modifications and accommodations needed for the student to be successful on the field trip. Parents must review and approve any renewed plans and any accommodations for the trip.
- 2.3 In order to be considered for a field trip, students must have demonstrated a level of responsible behaviour appropriate for participation in the activity, as determined by the principal. The principal reserves the right to exclude a student from participating in a field trip if the principal believes the student's participation may pose unreasonable risk to the safety of themselves and/or the other participants, even with appropriate modifications or accommodations (i.e., Individual Education Plan, Safety Plan).

Student Behaviour on a Field Trip

- 2.4 Students participating in field trips must meet the same standards of behaviour that are required in the regular school setting, as outlined in the board's and school's codes of conduct. Students are also expected to observe the regulations established by the site they are visiting.
- 2.5 Students participating in field trips must be made aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
- 2.6 Parents must be notified that unacceptable behaviour of a student preceding a trip may compromise a student's participation in a field trip. Students may not be permitted to participate in the field trip. Reimbursement for monies paid is not guaranteed.
- 2.7 During the trip, students in serious violation of the school's code of conduct or board policies may be sent home. This decision will be made by the principal in consultation with the teacher-in-charge. Expenses incurred in sending students home shall be the responsibility of the parent/guardian, which may include the cost of an accompanying supervisor.
- 2.7.1 All incidents of this type must be reported by the principal to the appropriate superintendent of education immediately. A decision may be made by the principal regarding the need for further disciplinary action upon return to school.

3. Approvals

- 3.1 All requests for overnight field trips shall adhere to the timelines for requests to be submitted as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Approvals Timeline and Insurance Requirements for Overnight Field Trips within Canada	
Approval	principal and superintendent
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medical – mandatory outside of Ontario • trip cancellation – mandatory when using a tour operator
Forms and Timeline (due to superintendent a minimum of 2 months in advance of trip)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval/Information Form 508-1 • Overnight Trip Within Canada Approval Form 508-4 • Aquatic and Water-based Activity Approval Form 508-5 (if applicable)

* There may be exceptional circumstances where schools may not have advance notice of an overnight trip (e.g., DECA, OFSAA). In these rare cases, the principal must consult with the superintendent of education before approving the trip. Failure to comply may result in approval being withheld.

- 3.2 No overnight trips are to be proposed to students or parents/guardians without the principal’s approval.
- 3.3 All field trips with water-based activities must meet or exceed the minimum safety standards outlined in the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#) or [Regulation 565 for Class “A” pools](#).
- 3.4 **Weather and other events affecting travel**

Prior to departure and throughout the trip, relevant information on weather and road conditions between the school and destination should be monitored. In cases of doubtful road or unpredictable weather conditions, the decision to suspend or delay travel may be made by the superintendent, principal, vice-principal, teacher-in-charge, or the driver.

4. Supervision

4.1 General

Supervisors may include teachers, non-teaching employees (e.g., educational assistant) and volunteers who have been designated supervision responsibilities by the principal or teacher-in-charge.

4.1.1 Provision of adequate supervision is the responsibility of the principal.

4.1.2 Where several schools are involved in sharing transportation, supervision must be coordinated by the principals.

4.1.3 Trip supervisors must include at least one certified teacher employed by the board.

4.1.4 All supervisors on overnight field trips must be at least 21 years of age.

4.1.5 Employee and volunteer supervisors are not permitted to bring their children/partner/spouse, pet, etc. who are not either a student participant or supervisor on the trip.

4.1.6 If students of both genders are participating on an overnight field trip, supervisors must include adults of both genders.

4.1.7 In the case of 2SLGBTQIA+ participants, consultation should take place with students/parents/guardians to determine appropriate accommodation.

4.1.7.1 A transgender student's identity as a person who is transgender is never to be disclosed to staff supervising overnight trips, other students on the trip, their own parents/guardians/caregivers, or the parents/guardians/caregivers of any other students on the trip without the consent of the student who is transgender.

4.2 Supervision Ratios

4.2.1 All overnight field trips shall adhere to the supervision ratios outlined in Table 2. If multiple schools are combining for a trip, the ratio applies to the total number of students from all schools.

Grade	Ratio of supervisors to students	Ratio of supervisors to students for wilderness trips*
4-6	1:8 + 1 additional supervisor**	wilderness trips are not permitted
7-8	1:12 + 1 additional supervisor**	wilderness trips are not permitted
9-12	1:15 + 1 additional supervisor**	1:8 + 1 additional supervisor**

* A wilderness trip involves tent camping and non-motorized travel (e.g., canoe, snowshoe, ski) through wilderness or semi-wilderness areas.

** The additional supervisor is required for emergency purposes. For example, if a student needs to return home early, this will allow the supervision ratio to be maintained.

- 4.2.2 Supervision ratios are based on the number of teachers, staff and volunteer supervisors accompanying students (e.g., the bus driver, tour guide and camp staff are not included in the supervision ratio).
- 4.2.3 The minimum supervision ratio may need to be exceeded in circumstances such as the following:
 - 4.2.3.1 to give special consideration to the physical, emotional, medical and behavioural needs of any students participating on the trip
 - 4.2.3.2 when taking into consideration the nature of the activity including consideration of risks, or as mandated by the facility to improve student safety when deemed necessary
- 4.2.4 For trips involving physical activities, refer to the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#) as they may have higher supervision ratios than those stated in this policy, and must be followed.
- 4.2.5 When the required ratios must be adjusted due to an emergency, the principal shall be consulted to determine further action as soon as possible.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Superintendents of Education

Superintendents of education shall be responsible for the following:

- 5.1.1 review all overnight trip requests submitted for approval
- 5.1.2 shorten, cancel, modify or terminate an overnight field trip if the activity cannot proceed safely

5.2 Principals

Principals shall be responsible for the following:

- 5.2.1 review all overnight trip requests submitted for approval (508-1 and 508-4) and submit principal-approved requests to the superintendent of education as per the timelines in Table 1 in section 3.1
- 5.2.2 ensure that the procedures outlined in this policy and other relevant board policies are followed
- 5.2.3 ensure overnight field trips meet supervision and approval requirements, including adhering to the timelines
- 5.2.4 designate one certified teacher, employed by the board, as the teacher-in-charge for the trip
- 5.2.5 prior to approving the trip, review all contracts, waivers, insurance (medical, cancellation, trip delay and baggage), and relevant safety standards outlined in the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#) or equivalent, if required
- 5.2.6 for approved trips, review and sign any required documentation on behalf of the board
- 5.2.7 ensure employees organizing overnight trips have considered the use of holiday periods and/or weekends to reduce the impact on instructional periods not related to this field trip
- 5.2.8 ensure that consideration is given to the possibility that a trip participant may have to unexpectedly return home prior to the completion of the trip. Plans should be discussed in advance.

5.3 Teacher-in-Charge

The designated teacher-in-charge for an overnight field trip shall be responsible for the following:

- 5.3.1 prior to requesting approval for the trip, review all contracts, waivers, insurance policies and relevant safety standards or equivalent (note: all documentation must be signed by the principal)
- 5.3.2 ensure all required overnight field trip forms and checklists are completed
- 5.3.3 communicate a trip information plan to parents, once principal approval has been given for the trip
 - 5.3.3.1 A trip information plan will include the destination, a general overview of trip activities, student cost and timelines.
- 5.3.4 arrange an information meeting for parents/guardians/volunteers once principal approval has been given for the trip
- 5.3.5 determine the duties of all employees and non-employee supervisors in consultation with the principal, which may include specific supervision responsibilities
 - 5.3.5.1 The teacher-in-charge will notify all non-employee supervisors that all disciplinary and safety concerns must be referred to a teacher.
- 5.3.6 provide the principal with any updates to the names of students and supervisors immediately prior to departure
- 5.3.7 consider possible emergency situations and communicate a plan in the event of an emergency to all supervisors and students
 - 5.3.7.1 The teacher-in-charge will act as the main contact with the principal in the event of an emergency, when possible.
 - 5.3.7.2 Consideration must be given to students with accessibility needs as outlined in 2.2.1.

- 5.3.8 ensure students are instructed in the appropriate safety procedures before participating in a field trip
- 5.3.9 for all aquatic activities requiring a swim assessment, provide the current OPASSE standards associated with the relevant aquatic activity to the aquatic instructor

5.4 Teachers

All teachers, including the teacher-in-charge, involved in overnight field trips shall have the following responsibilities:

- 5.4.1 the supervision and safety of students during a field trip
- 5.4.2 ensure that students are aware the expected standard of behaviour on field trips is the same as during in-school programs
- 5.4.3 establish educational objectives for the trip early in the planning process
- 5.4.4 ensure that the procedures outlined in this policy and other relevant board policies are followed
- 5.4.5 ensure field trips meet approval and supervision criteria
- 5.4.6 prior to the trip, review all relevant safety standards or equivalent (note: all documentation must be signed by the principal)
- 5.4.7 ensure all required forms are provided to parent(s)/guardian(s), and signed forms are returned to the school **at least one week prior to departure**
- 5.4.8 identify the elements of risk on the consent forms for trips involving increased inherent risks. Risks can be identified by reviewing the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#) and the Activity Risk Chart in Appendix A.
- 5.4.9 ensure that all trip supervisors have in their possession at all times a list of student participants, pertinent emergency contact and student health information, and medication/equipment, if applicable (e.g., medical information, telephone numbers, health insurance, etc.).

5.4.9.1 All student information provided to volunteer supervisors is to be collected by teachers at the end of the trip.

5.4.10 ensure a list of participating students is left at the school office

5.4.11 ensure that accurate attendance counts are taken at all points of departure during the trip

5.4.12 ensure supervision is maintained at all times

5.4.12.1 Any unsupervised free time must be disclosed to parents in advance of the trip.

5.4.13 ensure that all employees and volunteers are aware that they cannot consume any alcoholic beverages or recreational cannabis while on the trip. There is to be no smoking or vaping by board employees or volunteers in the presence of students while on the trip.

5.4.14 communicate to the principal and parent/guardian as quickly as possible in the event of a health or safety concern for a student

5.5 **Non-teaching Volunteer Supervisors**

5.5.1 All **non-teaching** volunteer supervisors will:

5.5.1.1 adhere to this policy and all relevant board policies

5.5.1.2 carry out the duties assigned by the teacher-in-charge, in consultation with the principal, which may include specific supervision responsibilities. All disciplinary and safety concerns during the trip must be referred to a teacher.

5.5.2 All **non-employee** volunteer supervisors must abide by the policy and procedures for volunteers (Policy 205, 205-A), which includes the completion of the Volunteer Agreement (205-2).

6. **Health and Safety**

6.1 **General**

6.1.1 Health and safety shall be given the highest priority when planning and participating in field trips.

- 6.1.2 Attention to special health concerns of students is a required element of the planning process.
- 6.1.3 A minimum of one supervisor must have access to a communication device, cell phone, satellite phone, or appropriate means of communication.
- 6.1.4 Students must be informed about how to contact the teacher-in-charge or supervisor on duty at any time during a field trip.
- 6.1.5 The teacher-in-charge must ensure students are instructed in the appropriate safety procedures before participating in a field trip activity.
- 6.1.6 The teacher-in-charge, supervisors, and volunteers must be aware of the pertinent sections in the board's policies on Health Support Services ([Policy 509](#)) and Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions ([Policy 518](#)) regarding board-recognized first-aid procedures and life-threatening situations.
- 6.1.7 The teacher-in-charge, or supervisors, must visit or consult with each new site prior to participation in a field trip. As part of this research, potential health and safety hazards, and accessibility standards as may be required for any trip participant, must be identified and addressed in the planning for the trip.
- 6.1.8 For an overnight wilderness trip, the teacher-in-charge or supervisor shall complete a pre-trip visit within a recent period of time. This time frame will be influenced by the type of trip and the natural conditions present.
- 6.1.9 The teacher-in-charge, supervisors, and volunteers must be aware of the location of appropriate medical and lifesaving equipment such as first-aid kits, and the process to summon emergency assistance.
- 6.1.10 The teacher-in-charge must consider possible emergency situations and communicate a plan, in the event of an emergency, to all supervisors and students.
- 6.1.11 Vehicle passenger lists must be checked at each boarding.

- 6.1.11.1 If students or teachers/supervisors transfer from one vehicle to another, the passenger lists must be revised by the teacher-in-charge.

6.2 Inherent Risk of Field Trip Activities

- 6.2.1 All activities must adhere to the Activity Risk Chart in Appendix A.
- 6.2.2 The inherent risk of all activities must be clearly explained on the Parental Information/Consent Form 508-2.
- 6.2.3 The following resources must be consulted to determine specific health and safety needs:
- [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#), for elementary and secondary, curricular activities and interschool athletics
 - Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) and OSRA School Board/Snow Resort Safety Guidelines for Out-of-School Trips for Winter Sports Education Programs
- 6.2.4 Swimming and other water-based activities are not permitted on overnight field trips. Exemptions: water transportation (to be approved by superintendent); swim team; wilderness trips. Please refer to the Activity Risk Chart in Appendix A.

6.3 Medical and Emergency Information

- 6.3.1 Pertinent medical and emergency information about each student can be obtained from the board's student information system. Teachers must also refer to the Parental Information/Consent Form 508-2 for updated medical information.
- 6.3.2 All trip supervisors must carry the medical and emergency information for each student on the trip and a Field Trip Emergency Procedures Checklist.
- 6.3.2.1 All student information provided to supervisors is to be collected by the teacher-in-charge at the end of the trip.
- 6.3.3 A supervisor may need to carry the medication required for a student if outlined in the student's Plan of Care. Students requiring

an EpiPen™, reliever inhaler or diabetes kit should carry one on their person. Appropriate additional supplies may be carried by the supervisor.

- 6.3.4 Employees and volunteers are encouraged to disclose their own pertinent personal medical information as it pertains to the risks involved for the field trip.

6.4 First-Aid Procedures

- 6.4.1 First-aid kits must be available during all field trips.

- 6.4.2 The provision of immediate first-aid should be given by the appropriate supervisor nearest to the injured person.

- 6.4.3 For overnight field trips, there must be at least one supervisor having Standard First Aid C training, unless a more advanced certification is required under the OPASSE guidelines for the field trip activity(s).

- 6.4.4 In the event of injury or illness of any participant, medical treatment should be promptly sought and the school and parent(s)/guardian(s) notified as soon as possible. The OSBIE Incident Report Form must be completed at the first possible opportunity for students and volunteers. Employee injuries are to be reported to Human Resources.

7. Travel Arrangements

- 7.1 When transportation is required, school buses should be used whenever possible.

- 7.2 When transportation is arranged by the board for a field trip, it is expected that students will travel to and from field trips using the board-arranged transportation.

7.2.1 Alternate Student Travel Arrangements

In exceptional circumstances, students/parents may request alternate arrangements in advance of the trip (e.g., student being picked up by a relative during the trip and not returning to the school) and must have the permission of the principal. The following

information must be provided in writing, prior to the start of the trip, by the parent or adult student, after a conversation with the principal:

- name and contact information for approved adult
(A student will **not** be left unaccompanied until released to the approved adult.)
- meeting time and location

7.2 Trips for Two Days (One Night) or Less

7.2.1 For trips extending for two days (one night) or less, the use of a travel/tour operator is not required.

7.2.1.1 Proof of insurance must be obtained indicating that all venues on the trip itinerary carry liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$2 million.

7.2.2 When organizing bus transportation, arrangements must be made using board approved pre-qualified bus operators. (Refer to [pre-qualified operator list](#) on UGshare.)

7.3 Board-Owned Vehicles

Schools with board-owned vehicles used for field trips are required to follow the board's [Vehicle Guidelines](#) found in UGshare. Passenger limits must not exceed applicable legislation.

7.4 Privately-Owned Vehicles

7.4.1 Students can only be transported in privately-owned vehicles by employees or volunteers who are at least 21 years of age, possess a valid G license, and carry a minimum of \$1 million of liability insurance.

7.4.1.1 Drivers transporting students in privately-owned vehicles must have the authorization of the principal, in writing, on the [Transportation of Students in Privately-Owned Vehicles Form 508-3](#), prior to departure.

7.4.2 The principal shall ensure that:

7.4.2.1 the number of seatbelts installed in a privately-owned vehicle must match the number of students transported

- 7.4.2.2 the number of students transported in a privately-owned vehicle is limited to five

7.5 Rental Vehicles

- 7.5.1 Rental vans may only transport up to eight persons, including the driver. Rental vans transporting nine or more people (i.e., driver plus eight students) are not permitted for student transportation on field trips.
- 7.5.2 Contracts for vehicle rentals required for a field trip must be in the name of the board. For vehicle rentals in Canada, the board has coverage for liability damage to rented or leased automobiles. This coverage applies only to automobiles with a gross weight of 4500 kgs or less.

7.6 Insurance for Rental and Privately-Owned Vehicles

- 7.6.1 Board employees and volunteers should be aware that under the [Insurance Act](#) of Ontario, the insurance of the driver/owner of the vehicle is the primary policy accessed for claims. Drivers and vehicle owners should check with their insurance providers to ensure their policy permits them to transport students for “educational purposes”.
- 7.6.2 Should a motor vehicle collision occur resulting from use of an employee’s or volunteer’s privately-owned vehicle on board approved business, the vehicle owner’s Third-Party Liability insurance will be used as primary coverage. The board’s Excess Automobile Liability insurance comes into effect after the vehicle owner’s primary Third-Party Liability insurance limit has been exhausted.
- 7.6.3 When using a privately-owned vehicle on board-approved business, passengers who are injured recover accident benefit coverage from their own or a parent’s automobile policy. In the absence of a personal or family automobile policy, the passenger would then be eligible to recover benefits from the insurance policy covering the vehicle in which they were riding.
- 7.6.4 There is no coverage provided by the school board’s insurance for damage to volunteers’ or employees’ vehicles while they are being

operated for board activities.

- 7.6.5 When using a rental vehicle on board-approved business, the board's automobile liability insurance (under a special endorsement) will be used for primary coverage provided the rental agreement is in the board's name.

7.7 Travel/Tour Operators (2+ nights)

- 7.7.1 All overnight trips that are two nights or longer must be booked through a board-approved pre-qualified travel/tour operator. Refer to [Student Travel Tour Operators](#) (on UGshare).
- 7.7.2 Payments for trips should be made directly to the travel/tour operator, whenever possible.
- 7.7.3 Board employees cannot receive any personal gain or profit from arranging the trip, other than participating in the trip, tour or travel service. All benefits/incentives with the exception of possible costs of travel and lodging for teachers travelling with students as chaperones must be passed on to the students in the form of a cheque to the specific school or to the board.
- 7.7.4 Schools that wish to participate in an activity that is not offered by the travel/tour operator must obtain superintendent approval through the trip approval process. Proof of insurance indicating that the venue carries commercial general liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$2 million per occurrence must be obtained.
- 7.7.5 Itinerary changes are not allowed except in the case of an emergency. In the event of an emergency, when any change to travel plans are made during the trip, the principal, superintendent and the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be advised as soon as possible.

7.8 Accommodations

- 7.8.1 As a follow-up to 4.1.7 in these procedures, school staff will consider a student's needs/preferences when planning a trip. This may mean offering private accommodations to transgender students. Students must not incur any additional cost because of their gender identity.

- 7.8.2 Billeting of students (i.e., students staying/lodging with a host family in a private home) on a field trip or the use of online market place (e.g., Air BNB, Home Away, VRBO or like services) are not permitted.

Note: Student exchanges, where students participate in schooling outside of the board, are not considered field trips and are therefore not covered by this policy.

8. Insurance

8.1 Medical, Cancellation, Trip Delay and Baggage Insurance

8.1.1 When using a travel/tour operator, medical and trip cancellation insurance is mandatory for all participants, including employees and volunteer supervisors, and is not provided by the board. Trip delay and baggage insurance is optional where applicable.

8.1.2 There are two options for the purchase of medical, cancellation, trip delay and baggage insurance:

- through the board approved travel/tour operator
- through a board-approved student travel insurance plan

Note: The board assumes no financial responsibility for costs incurred that are not covered by the insurance option purchased.

8.2 Commercial General Liability

8.2.1 On approved field trips, board employees and volunteers are covered by the board's commercial general liability insurance for negligent acts while working within the scope of their duties on behalf of the board.

8.2.2 Proof of insurance must be obtained from all venues not part of a tour operator package, indicating the venue carries commercial general liability insurance in the minimum amount of \$2 million per occurrence.

8.2.3 It is assumed that all government or publicly-funded service providers carry appropriate commercial general liability insurance.

8.3 Employee Injury/Accidents

- 8.3.1 All employee injuries/accidents must be reported within 24 hours or as soon as possible to the human resources department.
- 8.3.2 The board does not carry medical or Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) coverage for volunteers or students.
- 8.3.3 The board does not carry Accidental Death and Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance for participants for accidental death, disability, dismemberment or medical/dental expenses that might occur as a result of accidents during their involvement in school activities, including sporting events and trips. It is the responsibility of all participants to ensure they have appropriate insurance coverage if desired.

9. Wilderness Trips (Secondary Schools Only)

A wilderness trip involves tent camping and non-motorized travel (e.g., canoe, snowshoe, ski) through wilderness or semi-wilderness areas.

- 9.1 All wilderness trips must follow the procedures above for all field trip activities, in addition to the following additional requirements.
 - 9.1.1 All wilderness field trips must meet or exceed the minimum safety standards outlined in the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#).
 - 9.1.2 When organizing a wilderness trip, the following additional items must be sent to the appropriate superintendent of education:
 - 9.1.2.1 detailed copy of the map showing the route, daily itinerary, specific lake names, portages, hiking trails and any other relevant information
 - 9.1.2.2 names of all teachers-in-charge and copies of current certificates stating canoeing, swimming, appropriate first-aid training and other relevant qualifications
 - 9.1.2.3 Aquatic and Water-based Activity Approval Form 508-5 (if applicable)
 - 9.1.2.4 date which the route was pre-tripped and by whom

- 9.1.2.5 date and place of the parents' meeting
- 9.1.3 Where park regulations or other circumstances require that students split up into separate groups, each party must include at least one supervisor with current board-approved first-aid training. Each group must carry/have access to a first-aid kit.
- 9.1.4 For all wilderness trips, the teacher-in-charge must ensure the equipment is checked and determined to be in good repair, and appropriate for the use intended.
- 9.1.5 All trips shall carry a communication device capable of initiating an emergency response (typically a cell or satellite phone).
- 9.1.6 All trips shall have sufficient access to a water purification process if drinking water is obtained directly from lakes or rivers.

10. Aquatic and Water-based Activities

10.1 Activities Near Water

Activities that occur **near** water (e.g., nature walks, stream or pond studies, splash pads), where there is no intent in the activity to enter the water beyond knee height (i.e. swim, bathe), and there is no fast-moving water, are **not** considered water-based activities under this section. This does not include swimming or bathing in shallow water.

Definition of near water activities: activities occurring within a close distance to water (e.g., stream or pond study, nature walk, water sampling, splash pads, overnight stay in a cabin near water, etc.) where there is no intent in the activity to swim/bathe, boat, or wade beyond knee height, and there is no fast-moving water.

10.2 General

- 10.2.1 All field trips with water-based activities must meet or exceed the minimum safety standards outlined in the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#) or [Regulation 565 for Class "A" pools](#).
- 10.2.2 For any aquatic activity on an overnight trip, Aquatic and Water-based Activity Approval form 508-5 must be completed and

submitted to the appropriate superintendent for approval, **at least two months in advance of the trip.**

- 10.2.3 All trip supervisors must be informed of any student participant having a life-threatening medical condition or any other medical condition that may affect the student's safety in water.

10.3 Supervision

- 10.3.1 For all aquatic or water-based activities, supervision shall meet or exceed the more stringent of the supervision ratios for the activity outlined in the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#) and [Regulation 565 for Class "A" pools](#).

10.3.1.1 Student participants may not be used as qualified lifeguards in determining the ratio for supervisors.

10.3.1.2 Qualifications for lifeguards must adhere to the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#).

- 10.3.2 The minimum supervision ratio should be exceeded whenever necessary, taking into consideration the characteristics of the students (e.g., special needs) and the nature of the activity including consideration of risks.

10.4 Swimming Assessment

- 10.4.1 **Prior to the start of an overnight field trip** with an aquatic-based activity, all students must participate in a swimming assessment given by a certified aquatic instructor as per the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#).

10.4.1.1 For trips that occur early in the school year, arrangements for the swimming assessment to be completed prior to the trip must be made in advance.

- 10.4.2 Students must **successfully complete** the appropriate swim test, **without a personal flotation device (P.F.D.)**, in accordance with the activity outlined in [OPASSE](#), in order to participate in the aquatic-based activity. The swim test is to be completed in its

entirety and in sequence. **Schools must ensure the swim test meets current OPASSE standards.**

10.4.3 Swim test results must be documented and communicated as needed to the student, parents/guardians, teacher-in-charge, principal, lifeguards, and other supervisors, where applicable.

10.4.4 All students must wear a P.F.D. (a lifejacket is recommended) at all times when near water and the depth of the water is deemed a risk.

10.5 Pools

10.5.1 Pool activities are only permitted at pools with the appropriate number of certified lifeguards on duty. Pools allowed include those to which the general public is admitted or that are operated in conjunction with, or as part of, a program of an educational, instructional, physical fitness or athletic institution or association, that are supported in whole or in part by public funds or public subscription.

10.5.1.1 Residential, hotel and campground pools are not to be used for overnight trips.

10.6 Boating

10.6.1 Non-Powered Watercraft (canoes, kayaks, rowboats, etc.)

10.6.1.1 Each student must **successfully complete** a swim test **without a P.F.D.** prior to taking part in boating training sessions or activities. See Section 10.3.

10.6.1.2 Prior to overnight trips using non-motorized watercraft, the appropriate section of the [Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\)](#) must be reviewed and adhered to.

10.6.1.3 Each student must wear a Canadian-approved personal flotation device (P.F.D.) of appropriate size.

10.6.1.4 Each watercraft must meet safety standards set by Transport Canada as outlined in its Safe Boating Guide.

- 10.6.1.5 Prior to any boating activity, students will receive instruction in the appropriate basic techniques and safety procedures as outlined in [OPASSE](#) for the specific type of boat.
 - 10.6.1.6 Camps that are used on any trip shall be O.C.A. (Ontario Camping Association) accredited and adhere to the safety guidelines set out by that association.
 - 10.6.1.7 White water (gravity driven) boating is not permitted. If whitewater is encountered on a trip, it shall be portaged. Boating on lakes with large whitecaps (wind driven) shall be avoided at all times.
- 10.6.2 Powered Watercraft (includes tour boats, ferries)
- 10.6.2.1 All powered watercraft must meet safety and inspection standards set by Transport Canada for the size and type of vessel. This includes carrying the necessary lifesaving equipment in appropriate sizes and numbers, and the operator providing safety instruction.
 - 10.6.2.2 All powered watercraft must carry appropriate general liability insurance coverage (see Section 8.2).
 - 10.6.2.3 Students shall not operate any powered watercraft.

11. Records Retention

All field trip documents shall be stored at the school for a period of one year from the return date of the field trip. If there is an incident on the trip, all trip information, including all forms, are to be submitted along with an OSBIE Incident Report to the board's insurance contact for records retention. Incident reports can be completed through OSBIE's website (www.osbie.on.ca) or Edsembli.