

Field Trip Protocol

PURPOSE

To outline expectations and responsibilities involving school field trips to ensure the appropriate safety measures are in place.

SCOPE

This Protocol applies to all schools within the District as well as all active student transportation contractors and any 3rd party transportation providers. It also applies to:

- Contracted Services
- District-Operated Services
- All types of school purpose transportation (school buses and private vehicles)

RELATED GUIDANCE

This Protocol should be read and applied in conjunction with:

- District [policies](#) and [procedures](#)
- [Department of Education and Early Childhood Development \(EECD\) School Bus Transportation Policies](#)
- Individual [contracts](#) entered into between the District and a given contractor

DEFINITIONS

Field Trip

Any student transportation arranged either by the school, or on behalf of the school:

- This includes:
 - Travel for curricular, extra-curricular or co-curricular activities
 - Travel during and outside normal school hours
- For the purposes of this protocol, the following does NOT apply:
 - Service arranged by the District for everyday student transportation to and from school
 - Parent-arranged transportation
 - Air transportation
 - Out-of-Province transportation
 - Transportation by parents or volunteers of the school applicable to policy PROG 300 – Volunteers in Schools and its associated regulations and documents

Active NLESD Student Transportation Contractor

An entity or individual that/who holds an agreement with the District for Regular or Alternate student transportation in the current school year.

PROCEDURE

For safety purposes, only the following student transportation Operators are permitted to be used by a school for Field Trip services:

- District-operated transportation service (District owned buses and District employee bus drivers)
- Active NLESD Student Transportation Contractor

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Active NLESD Student Transportation Contractor shall use only NLESD-approved drivers and vehicles to deliver field trip transportation service to District schools.

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EXCEPTIONS

1) Coach Bus:

If one (1) of the following two (2) situations exists, a school is permitted to consider a Coach bus for transportation service:

Situation 1:

1. Age of Student
 - a. *Grade 5 or older*
2. Length of Trip
 - a. Travel from school to destination takes longer than 2 hours one-way

Situation 2:

1. Age of Student
 - a. *Grade 5 or older*
2. Excess Cargo
 - a. If extra cargo is required to be transported, for example: hockey bags, large instruments, luggage for overnight trips

**Necessary to be Grade 5 or older in order to ensure compliance with [Section 178 of the Highway Traffic Act](#) (requirement of a child up to 8 years old to be properly secured in child seat restraint system if a school bus has a seat belt assembly i.e car or booster seat)*

When a school is considering contracting for a Coach bus, the following is required:

1. First preference is to use an Active NLESD Student Transportation Contractor and NLESD-approved Driver
 - a. The District does not retain documentation on Coach buses therefore the school will be required to collect the following:
 - i. Proof of registration (not expired as of date of scheduled service)
 - ii. Proof of insurance (not expired as of date of scheduled service)
 - iii. Inspection dated within 6 months of the scheduled service
2. Seat Belts
 - a. Required to be installed in every seat throughout the Coach bus

In the event no District-operated service is provided in an area and no Active NLESD Student Transportation Contractor is willing to provide service in the general area at a reasonable price, the School Administrator may seek Coach bus service with a 3rd party service provider (i.e. not an Active NLESD Contractor). However, the School Administrator must obtain the following information from the 3rd party Contractor when obtaining quotes for service:

2. Vehicle Documentation:
 - a. Proof of registration (not expired as of date of scheduled service)
 - b. Proof of insurance (not expired as of date of scheduled service)

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- c. Commercial Motor Vehicle Inspection dated within 6 months of the scheduled service
3. Copy of company driver validation and certification protocol (which must include the requirement for the collection of a Criminal Record Check and Vulnerable Sector Check)
4. Existence of documents requires School Administrator's written approval prior to service being contracted
5. Documents to be retained and filed by the school to accompany the 3rd party invoice

2) Public Transportation:

Schools are permitted to use public transportation in situations where a student approved for alternate transportation has individual programming outcomes which promote safe and effective access and use of public transportation in order to build capacity with independent living. In these cases, these activities would be under the direct instruction of a teacher. The District relies on the municipality's vehicle and driver safety criteria to ensure safe bus service.

Note: Public Transportation includes Go Bus as the City of St. John's is the service provider

School Administrators are expected to comply with all applicable District policies related to school travel, safety and supervision.