

STUDENT EXCHANGE, SISTER SCHOOL OR HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS (formerly AP 255)

Background

1. The district recognizes the educational merit and supports the objectives of Student Exchange, Sister School and Humanitarian Programs which promote learning, foster international understanding and cultural appreciation and provide educational advancement for all participants. Student Exchange, Sister School and Humanitarian Programs are also an important component of the district's International Education program. For the purposes of this Administrative Procedure, the following definitions are provided:
 - a. Student Exchange Programs provide students with affordable and practical opportunities to experience new and diverse settings in which to study and learn about other cultures and countries. Students will gain intercultural communications skills, develop lasting friendships and experience another way of life. Students will exchange educational experiences by both visiting and hosting students from another culture.
 - b. Sister School Programs provide opportunities to develop positive associations between two countries through the establishment of links between students, staff, schools and school communities. The opportunity to participate in a sister school relationship is open to any school with a desire to learn more about the languages and culture of countries other than their own. Sister school relations are agreements formed for the purpose of strengthening educational exchange, to enhance students' language skills and to promote mutual friendship.
 - c. Humanitarian Programs provide students with an opportunity to gain awareness of the developing world and its complex issues, with the goal of developing reflective, action-oriented, global-minded citizens. The intention of the program is to support student learning in this area through an interdisciplinary academic learning program, focusing on global education with hands on experiences both locally and internationally.
2. The district endorses in principle Student Exchange, Sister School and Humanitarian Programs for students during school time provided:
 - a. advantage is taken whenever possible of weekends and holiday periods.
 - b. the program has curricular relevance for participating students and is mutually beneficial to all groups.
 - c. the program is initiated by school staff and approved by the Principal and District Leadership Team.
 - d. the program is appropriately supervised.

Guiding Principles

1. It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the appropriateness of all programs and the planning for safety of students.

2. All Student Exchange, Sister School and Humanitarian Program proposals will be brought forward to the attention of the District Leadership team for discussion. The Assistant Superintendent for the school has the responsibility to approve proposed programs.
3. Programs offered through the school or school district must be under the general supervision of school district staff. Planning and supervision for the program are the shared responsibility of the Principal and the sponsor teacher.
4. The safety and welfare of students and staff is the primary consideration in planning and implementing the program. The supervisors of each such program must incorporate appropriate safety practices that consider factors such as the location to which the students are travelling, the nature of the activity in which the students are participating, the skill level of the students, the number of students and the age and development of the students.
5. Parents and guardians must provide informed consent for their child's participation in a program, including informed consent for activities undertaken in that program. Parents and guardians must be provided with all appropriate information regarding the date, location, arrangements, levels of supervision and known inherent risks specific to the program in order to give informed consent.
6. Volunteer supervisors are a valued resource in the school community and in assisting with programs. Volunteers will take direction from the sponsor teacher or Principal. Volunteers must provide background, reference, and Criminal Record Checks and may be required to provide a Driver's Abstract. (Refer to AP 495: School Volunteers).
7. All Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Programs must be planned to ensure that changes in travel plans, on short notice, to ensure the safety of students are possible without significant costs to participating students and/or their parents/guardians. Travel insurance plans and/or alternate destination plans are essential to Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Programs Trips proposals.
8. At all times the use of alcohol, tobacco or illegal substances by student participants, volunteers, supervisors or staff is strictly prohibited during all program activities and travel, regardless of the circumstances, the age of the participants, or local laws, customs and culture.

Procedures

1. Application for Approval
 - 1.1 A sponsor teacher proposing a program must submit an application to the Principal and Assistant Superintendent for approval prior to any communication to students or parents about the proposed program.
 - 1.2 Once approval is obtained from the Principal, Assistant Superintendent and District Leadership Team, the sponsor teacher may communicate the proposed program to parents and students.
 - 1.3 For programs outside British Columbia but inside Canada or the United States, approval from the Assistant Superintendent must be obtained at least six months prior to departure.

- 1.4 For programs involving international travel, approval from the District Leadership Team must be obtained at least six months prior to departure.
- 1.5 An application for a proposed program submitted by a sponsor teacher must:
 - a. demonstrate the curricular relevance, which would include the reciprocal cultural exchange benefits and details of the proposed program.
 - b. include a supervision plan appropriate to the nature of the program, the age and the development of the students, and the activities being undertaken.
 - c. provide details of any fundraising activities to be undertaken in support of the proposed program.
 - d. provide a plan for any special training necessary for participation in the program.
- 1.6 In considering whether to approve a program, the Principal and District Leadership Team will consider all relevant facts and in particular, will consider
 - a. the substantive educational rationale for the proposed program.
 - b. the reasonableness of the length of the proposed program, having regard to the number of school days that will be used and the age of the students.
 - c. the risks associated with the program and whether the application for approval provides an appropriate safety management plan.
 - d. the destination and the risks of travel to that destination **(the Principal and Assistant Superintendent will not approve travel to a destination where the Department of Foreign Affairs has published a travel warning which indicates “avoid non-essential travel” or “avoid all travel”)**.
 - e. the activities to be undertaken in the program.
 - f. the affordability of the proposed program for its intended participants
 - g. how the proposed program co-ordinates with overall school plans
 - h. contingency and emergency planning included in the application
 - i. the impact of the absence of attending school staff from the school
 - j. the supervision plan.
- 1.7 Students are not permitted to participate in field trips where the service providers requires a waiver to be signed as a condition of participation in the event or activity. Acknowledgement of Risk forms may be used by service providers to gather informed consent from parents by indicating the risks associated with the field trip activity. Acknowledgement of Risk forms must accompany the initial application for the Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Program (Form 253-1).

2. Conditions of Participation

- 2.1 Any School District No. 43 (Coquitlam) student in good standing is eligible to take part in a Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Program, subject to the criteria and guidelines of the program. Students who participate in a program must be currently enrolled in the school and must be known by the teacher undertaking the planning of the program.

- 2.2 Participation in a program is not a right. The Principal may determine whether a student may participate. Non-participation will not affect a student's standing or grade. As necessary, an appropriate educational program must be provided to students not participating in the program.
 - 2.3 All participants in a program must comply with the school and district Student Code of Conduct, abide by all laws and customs of the destination, and act as ambassador of the school district. When behaviour of a student in a program, in the opinion of the sponsor teacher, compromises safety of self or others and does not adhere to previously established expectations, that student will be returned home at the expense of the parents/guardians. If it is necessary for the student to be accompanied by a supervisor on the return home, the parents/guardians of the student will be responsible for the travel costs of that supervisor. Parents will be advised of this possibility as part of the program conditions. Prior to the student being sent home, parents will be notified.
 - 2.4 Student participants in a program must attend pre-program meetings at which the activities to be undertaken in the program, the risks associated with the program, and the expected standards of conduct and consequences of non-compliance with that standard of conduct are reviewed. No student may participate in a program without attending such a meeting and agreeing to comply with that expected standard of behaviour. Student participants must satisfy any academic responsibilities prior to and during a program.
 - 2.5 A sponsor teacher must provide detailed information to the parents/guardians of proposed student participants outlining the proposed activities to be undertaken in the program, including any known risks or dangers associated with that program, the educational purpose behind the program, the supervision to be provided in the program, and must obtain informed parental consent for each student participating in the program. The sponsor teacher will also communicate expectations to parents/guardians of responsibilities and expectations of student and adult participants and the consequences of failure to comply with the expected standards of conduct. A pre-program meeting must be held to provide parents information about the program, and parental attendance must be documented.
 - 2.6 Cancellation insurance or an alternate destination plan must be in place for the field trip. For reasons of student safety, a Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Program may need to be changed, postponed or cancelled. The cost for such a decision will not be covered by the school district.
 - 2.7 Should the school or school district require the field trip to change or return home, all field trip participants will be required to comply with this directive.
3. Volunteers and Supervision
 - 3.1 At least one of the volunteer supervisors, the sponsor teacher or a program director must have knowledge of the customs and culture of the country being visited.
 - 3.2 The minimum adult/student ratio for all trips is 1 to 10.
 - 3.3 If the students in the program are either male or female students, there must be at least one supervisor of the same sex. If the program includes both male and female students, then there must be at least one supervisor of each sex.

- 3.4 Staff and volunteer supervisors must be available to respond to the supervisory needs of the student twenty-four hours a day for each day of the event. All participants in a program must be in the role of supervisor or student. This includes all attending staff's spouses. Staff and volunteer supervisor's children are not permitted on the trip unless they are legitimately part of the curricular or extra-curricular program. In the case of extra-curricular trips where family members wish to be present to encourage the team, all travellers organized through the auspices of the school/school district must comply with the guiding principles and conditions of participation.
- 3.5 Volunteer supervisors must be informed of their responsibilities in writing. Volunteer supervisors must be screened for suitability and advised of the expectations of their role as outlined by AP 495: School Volunteers. The Principal will approve the participation of each volunteer supervisor. Volunteer supervisors must have the appropriate skills and knowledge to participate in the program. It is required that a meeting of the sponsor teacher, volunteer supervisors and the Principal is held to review the expectations and standard of conduct expected of volunteer supervisors in the program.
- 3.6 Any attending district CUPE employee is attending outside of their classification and is considered to be a volunteer and will not receive pay for the activity.

4. Financial Arrangements

- 4.1 Fundraising activities to support a program must comply with school district procedures and be approved by the Principal (refer to AP 197: Fundraising Activities Sponsored by Schools).
- 4.2 All financing arrangements for a program must be transparent, including the use of any "free" or discounted tickets associated with the selection of an organizing company, or the accrual of travel rewards benefits such as Air Miles related to the group travel. Sponsor teachers shall not place themselves in a financially compromising position or a conflict of interest with their students or with commercial agencies as a result of Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Programs. (For further information, please refer to AP 406: Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Employees). A summary of costs associated with the program shall be completed by the sponsor teacher and submitted to the Principal within two weeks of the completion of the program.
- 4.3 Programs are assumed by the teacher on a voluntary basis. There shall be no compensation for the provision of extra-curricular activities (Article D10 in the CTA collective agreement: Extra-Curricular Activities).
- 4.4 If a teacher on call is required as a result of the program, the cost of the teacher on call will be included in the students' cost of the program.
- 4.5 The school district will not be responsible for the costs of any Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Program. Parents/guardians must be advised before any funds are collected from parents or students, in writing, that should the travel have to be cancelled for any reason the school district is not responsible for any costs incurred.

5. Pre-Program Review

- 5.1 Not less than one month prior to departure on a program, the sponsor teacher will meet with the Principal to review and revise, as appropriate:
 - a. the critical incident plan to deal with health, financial or discipline emergencies, that includes a telephone tree and arrangements for two-way communication.
 - b. the supervision plan.
 - c. the list of student participants and volunteers.
 - d. the detailed itinerary.
 - e. the general state of readiness and preparedness for the Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Program.

6. Documentation

- 6.1 Prior to embarking upon the program, the sponsor teacher will provide the school administration a copy of all relevant documents for the program (the "Program File"), and specifically:
 - a. a list of all participants and volunteers, with medical and emergency contact information.
 - b. a copy of the informed consent form signed by the parent/guardian of each participating student.
 - c. a detailed itinerary, including transportation arrangements, accommodation, activities, with contact numbers and addresses.
 - d. emergency contact numbers for sponsor teacher and supervisors.
 - e. a copy of each student's valid passport and, if necessary, travel visa, if international travel is involved.
 - f. information about travel insurance and alternate destination planning.
- 6.2 A copy of the Program File will be kept by the Principal and provided to the Assistant Superintendent at least one week prior to the departure.

7. Health and Safety

- 7.1 All participants in a program, including students, volunteers and the sponsor teacher must provide confirmation of adequate health and hospital insurance coverage prior to departure.
- 7.2 All participants in a program must provide the sponsor teacher with information concerning any known medical or health condition that may require emergency attention during the program.
- 7.3 The sponsor teacher must carry with them during the program a copy of the relevant health information for students, including emergency contact information for parents/guardians and school district administration.
- 7.4 Prior to any international travel, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade must be consulted to determine if any travel warning has been issued. Should conditions require it, the sponsor teacher should register with DFAIT (www.voyage.gc.ca) prior to departure and activate the registration with the local Canadian Consulate upon arrival.

F250-2 Parent/Guardian Extra-Curricular Field Trip Information and Consent Form
F250-3 Student Vehicle Assignment
F250-4 Teacher Field Trip Checklist
F253-1 Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Programs Preliminary Application
F253-2 Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Programs Planning Update
F253-3 Student Exchange, Sister School or Humanitarian Programs File Final Checklist
AP 240 Charges for Course Fees/Activities/Materials
AP 250 Field Trips
AP 251 Non-Teaching (CUPE) Staff Participating in Off-Site Activities Involving Students
AP 252 Out of Province Educational Trips
AP 254 International Educational Trips
AP 255 Volunteer Drivers and the use of Privately Owned Vehicles
AP 257 Approved Vehicles for Conveying Students
AP 495 School Volunteers

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