

**POLICY TITLE:**

Safety for Outdoor Education and Field Trips

**Board Approval:** March 20, 2019

**Board Review:** April 25, 2023

**OBJECTIVE:**

The purpose of this policy is to guide Summit West Independent School (SWIS) staff, parents, and volunteers in ensuring continued safety for outdoor education and field trips.

**POLICY:**

Outdoor education comprises the multitude of student activities that occur outside the school building. The playgrounds where the students play should be safe and comply with CSA standards. Field trips are an integral part of student education and take place at various locations throughout the City of Calgary and Okotoks. Students are to be safe and cared for during the entire duration of their field trip. There is to be a specific procedure in place to assign accountability at individual and group level with clear lines of communication between Group Leaders, Trip Leader, the school, and parents. This policy follows the guidelines outlined in the 'Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools 2013'.

**Procedure:*****1. Outdoor Education***

Students should participate in outdoor education every day of the school year. However, teachers are advised not to take students outdoors when the temperature is below -20 degrees Celsius, whether through wind chill or otherwise. Any time there is a risk of or actual storm, rain, hail, unsafe conditions due to damaged playground or a lockdown, teachers are not to take the students in the playground.

While in the playground, at least three individuals must be present to supervise the students. Of those three individuals, at least one must be an Alberta Certified teacher. Students are to be constantly monitored so that they do not leave the playground, engage in bullying, throw pea gravel at each other, jump off high structures or try to climb the fence.

The play equipment and the pea gravel pit inside the playground must be professionally inspected once a year by a licensed play structure inspection company. Teachers on playground duty are encouraged to ensure the play equipment is safe by gently pulling on stairs, slides, support structures and checking for large rocks or unsafe objects in the play equipment pit. Any time a student comes forward with an issue regarding any of the play equipment; it must be promptly reported to the designated Health and Safety person at the school. In the absence of the person mentioned above, teachers on playground duty are required to promptly report to any member of the support staff and immediately supervise children away from the playground equipment.

## **2. Field Trips**

Parents must provide written consent if they wish to have their child go on a School Authority-sponsored field trip. These field trips must take place at pre-approved locations. Currently, Calgary Zoo, Telus Science Centre, Glenbow Museum, Rothney Astrophysical Observatory, Spaceport, Weaselhead Conservatory, Fish Creek Park, Heritage Park, Kayben Farms, Theatre Calgary, and the Military Museum are approved locations. Student ratios will be met for all field trips. Volunteers who directly supervise students must have their Local Police Department background checks. The term “chaperone” can be used to specify any individual who is accountable for one or more students for the duration of the field trip.

The approved method of transportation for students is school bus only. At least two teachers must supervise loading and unloading of students in a safe and caring manner. Each chaperone must have his or her cell phone number provided to the Field Trip Leader. It is the duty of the Field Trip Leader to ensure that all students who are booked for the field trip have boarded the bus both to and from the intended field trip destination.

Students on the field trip must return to the school prior to the end of the school day so that they can return home on bus or with their parents in a timely manner. Should a bus carrying students to or from the field trip get delayed; the parents must be notified by a member of the support staff forthwith.

**\* Refer to the “Safety Guidelines for Physical Activity in Alberta Schools 2013”**