



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #350.0, Outdoor Education

Application

Board Policy and Procedure #350, Outdoor Education, outlines the Outdoor Education opportunities that are available to staff and students in the York Region District School Board. These opportunities include school visits to Outdoor Education Day Centres, stays at residential facilities and the loan of outdoor education equipment.

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities Under this Policy

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Associate Directors of Education
- Superintendents
- Superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Services
- Principal of Outdoor Education
- Principals
- Teachers
- Outdoor Education Centre Staff
- Outdoor Education Depot Staff
- Parents/Guardians
- Students

Relationship to the 2012-13 Board Priorities

Trustee Multi-Year Plan:

- Provide equitable access to differentiated and relevant learning opportunities, resources and programs.
- Embracing environmental awareness.
- Model continuous environmental sustainability.

Director's Annual Plan:

- Increase the number of schools and workplaces attaining gold level Eco Certification.
- Maintain focus on environmental sustainability in the curriculum.
- Enhance student engagement and learning through the implementation of innovative programming including inquiry and integrated digital literacy strategies.

Board Improvement Plan:

- Students will be more engaged through appropriate programming and learning experiences that are personalized, collaborative and differentiated.

Document History and Previous Versions

Approved 1993
Revised 1998
Revised 2003
Revised 2008
Revised February 2014

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Board Policy #350.0

Outdoor Education

Document Integration Project Format

Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board is committed to providing students with multiple opportunities to learn in, of and about the natural world through outdoor education. The Board believes that the ultimate goal of outdoor education is to empower participants to contribute towards a sustainable community. The Board is dedicated to promoting outdoor education learning opportunities that allow all participants to experience the restorative benefits of being immersed in nature. The Board is committed to enhancing the lives of all learners through experientially profound outdoor education experiences that are connected to the curriculum and delivered at Outdoor Education Centres, schools and within the community.

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- reviewing the *Outdoor Education* policy in accordance with the priorities in the Trustees' Multi-Year Plan and the approved review cycle; and
- understanding and communicating with members of the community about the *Outdoor Education* policy, as required.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- implementing and operationalizing the *Outdoor Education* policy.

Superintendents are responsible for:

- supporting the application of the *Outdoor Education* policy.

The Principal of Outdoor Education is responsible for:

- ensuring the implementation of the *Outdoor Education* policy.

Principals are responsible for:

- encouraging teachers to incorporate outdoor education experiences into their programs, where appropriate;
- informing teachers and parents of opportunities that exist for students at Outdoor Education Centres, within the community and at residential facilities;
- ensuring student participation in Outdoor Education Centre visits; and
- engaging parents in discussions regarding the nature and value of Outdoor Education programs.

Outdoor Education Staff are responsible for:

- developing and implementing curriculum-based outdoor education programming for students in Grades 2, 4 and 7 at the Outdoor Education Centres.

Teachers are responsible for:

- incorporating outdoor education into their instructional program where appropriate and safe.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for:

- encouraging their child's participation in outdoor education programs.

Students are responsible for:

- actively participating in outdoor education programs and activities;
- acting with reasonable care towards themselves and others in accordance with all Board and school policies and procedures during their participation in outdoor education programs to contribute to a safe and educational experience.

Definitions

Outdoor Education Centres

Outdoor Education Centres are Board-owned or leased facilities where qualified Board staff deliver an outdoor education program which supports the Ontario curriculum. These centres serve as a valuable resource offering one-day programs for staff and students in Grades 2, 4 and 7.

Residential Facilities

Residential facilities are sites where students can receive outdoor and environmental education in a more focused setting through teacher or facilitator-led cross-curricular activities connected to classroom programs. These facilities may be provided through partnerships with organizations such as conservation authorities, in order to share costs and provide a variety of environments.

Related Policies

[Policy #235.0, Environmental Policy](#)

[Policy #661.0, Anaphylactic Reactions](#)

[Policy #671.0, Student/School Fees](#)

Policy History

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This procedure outlines how outdoor education is supported, administered and delivered in the York Region District School Board.

Definitions

Natural Spaces

Natural spaces refers to areas for the study of ecology and conservation that are located on lands that may be privately owned. Natural spaces may also be parklands that are adjacent to schools.

Outdoor Education Depot

The Outdoor Education Depot is a Board facility in which resources and pieces of equipment are stored and made available to Board staff and students.

Responsibilities

The Director of Education shall:

- allocate staff and resources to support the *Outdoor Education* procedure.

Associate Directors of Education shall:

- review resources and the availability of funds for the outdoor education program annually.

Superintendent of Curriculum and Instructional Services shall:

- inform elementary principals and vice-principals each spring of the process for school visits to the Outdoor Education Centres and the optional booking of residential facilities for the upcoming school year.

The Principal of Outdoor Education shall:

- support the operations of Outdoor Education Centres;
- support residential facility operators with bookings and communications; and
- oversee Outdoor Education Depot operations.

Principals shall:

- encourage staff and students to participate in a wide variety of outdoor education activities;
- ensure that all Grade 2, 4, and 7 students are provided with an opportunity to attend an Outdoor Education Centre when assigned by outdoor education staff;
- ensure students with life-threatening allergies bring two, in-date epinephrine auto-injectors to Outdoor Education Centre visits;
- communicate to parents through various means such as, but not limited to, school newsletter or curriculum information nights of the opportunity for their children to take part in outdoor education programs;
- provide transportation to the Outdoor Education Centres through school funds;
- ensure that no child is denied participation in a residential facility program because of cost
- invite Grade 7 teachers to book a visit to a residential facility for their students for the following school year each spring;
- communicate to parents the costs associated with outdoor education residential facility programs such as, but not limited to, transportation and overnight accommodation;

- understand that cancellations of residential facilities must be made more than eight weeks before the date of the booking otherwise the cost will be charged to the school;
- sign completed [Outdoor Equipment Order Form](#) for ordering equipment from the Outdoor Education Depot after ensuring that all information has been completed and signed by the teacher;
- be responsible for covering the cost of broken, damaged or missing equipment from the Outdoor Education Depot and/or Outdoor Education Centre from school funds; and
- seek permission to use natural spaces if they are privately owned prior to school use.

Outdoor Education Depot Staff members shall:

- confirm orders for outdoor education equipment placed by staff;
- arrange for the pick-up and delivery of Outdoor Education Depot equipment; and
- repair and order equipment as needed.

Outdoor Education Centre Staff members shall:

- implement engaging and experiential curriculum programs;
- organize school participation for all Grade 2, 4 and 7 students;
- ensure all necessary paperwork has been submitted by schools before they visit the Outdoor Education Centre;
- communicate regularly with the principal responsible for outdoor education;
- provide support to Board staff with regard to outdoor education instruction and services;
- maintain positive partnerships with community partners to ensure the sustainability of natural spaces used; and
- ensure the safety of visiting groups by maintaining property, holding current first aid certifications, and updating York Region District School Board Outdoor Education Emergency and Crisis Action Plans.

Teachers shall:

- participate in programs at the Outdoor Education Centres when assigned;
- distribute and review Outdoor Education Centre information to students and parents/guardians;
- before visiting the Outdoor Education Centre, submit the required [program selection/confirmation form](#) to outdoor education staff;
- before visiting the Outdoor Education Centre, share student safety plans, related student accommodations as outlined in the Individual Education Plan, and medical needs with outdoor education staff;
- complete the [Outdoor Equipment Order Form](#) for ordering equipment from the Outdoor Education Depot, **at least one month before the activity is to take place**, ensuring that all information is completed and signed by the teacher and the principal;
- upon receiving the equipment ordered from the Outdoor Education Depot, check all items delivered and report any shortages or damages immediately to the Outdoor Education Depot;
- make sure students are aware of the proper use of Outdoor Education equipment in order to ensure that it is not broken or damaged;
- make sure equipment borrowed from the Outdoor Education Depot is ready the morning of the scheduled pick-up date;
- be responsible for returning all equipment to the Outdoor Education Depot if the material is not ready the morning of the scheduled pick-up date;
- make arrangements with the staff at the Outdoor Education Depot if picking up and returning equipment directly to the Outdoor Education Depot after the completed order form has been received; and
- ensure that students are aware of how to care for and respect natural spaces and outdoor education equipment.

Parents shall:

- review and ensure that they understand all material sent out by the school;
- pay expenses associated with their child's participation in outdoor education residential facility programs;
- complete/submit all forms and payment (where required) within the required timeline; and
- review all the behavioural expectations with their child when participating in outdoor education programs.

Students shall:

- comply with Board's Safe, Caring and Supportive Schools policy and procedures and the school's code of conduct and other related policies and procedures while at an outdoor education centre or residential facility;
- understand that the programs offered at Outdoor Education Centres are curriculum-based and an extension of the school program; and
- be aware of how to care for and respect natural spaces and outdoor education equipment.

Department

Curriculum and Instructional Services

Procedure History

Replaces NP 155 Outdoor Education Depot Ordering, January 1988

Approved 2008

Revised February 2014

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