



YORK REGION DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Policy and Procedure #675.0, Student Exchange Programs

Executive Summary

Policy and Procedure #675.0, Student Exchange Programs recognizes the educational advantage in well-organized and planned student exchange programs. Student exchange programs must provide equity of access and strive to ensure the safety and security of all students, staff and volunteers.

What has Changed?

Major changes to the document:

Reason for review: Due for second review.

Who is affected by these changes and what is the impact on current practice?

Implementation timelines: Immediate.

Lead Superintendent(s)/Subject Matter Expert(s): Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education.

Stakeholder Groups with Responsibilities under this Policy

- Board of Trustees
- Director of Education
- Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education
- Principals
- Principal International Education Services Exchange Organizers/Tour Operators
- Parent(s)/Guardians(s)
- Students

Relationship to Board Priorities

The Student Exchange Programs policy and procedure address the goal of enhancing student learning by providing exposure to learning beyond the classroom. This policy relates to the following Board priorities:

Student Achievement and Well-Being

Continuously increase student learning, achievement and well-being through a culture of caring and learning, which emphasizes: positive relationships among students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members; engagement of students, staff, parents/guardians, and community members in public education; student and staff mental and physical well-being.

Delivery of Effective and Appropriate Educational Programs

Deliver effective and sustainable educational programs to each student by: providing equitable access to differentiated and relevant learning opportunities, resources and programs; engaging students as partners in their learning.

Stewardship of Board Resources

Align human and financial resources with Board priorities by: demonstrating professionalism and accountability for high standards of practice in all Board operations.

Timelines and Next Steps

This policy was scheduled for second review at the September 13, 2022 Policy and By-Law Standing Committee meeting.

Providing Feedback

Questions about this policy and/or procedure should be raised with your principal, manager or supervisor. If additional clarification is required, principals, managers and supervisors may contact the lead superintendent and/or subject matter expert through Trustee Services.

In accordance with Board Policy #285.0, [Board Policies, Procedures and Supporting Documents](#), the Board welcomes all comments and suggestions on Board policy.

Input is an important component of the review process. If you feel a policy and/or procedure needs to be revised, feedback may be submitted through the school council or by submitting the on-line form. In your response please;

- outline clearly the specific section(s) of the policy and/or procedure in which you are not comfortable,
- suggest specific alternate wording to reflect your position, and
- identify the reason(s) for your concern(s).

Specific recommendations or questions about the review process should be submitted using the on-line form or sent to the Policy Officer via email at policy.committee@yrdsb.ca, or via telephone at 905-727-0022 extension 2570 or in hard copy at [The Education Centre – Aurora](#).

Legislative Context

[Education Act](#)

It is the expectation of the York Region District School Board that all employees, students and persons invited to or visiting Board property, or partaking/volunteering in Board or school-sponsored events and activities, will respect the policies and procedures of the Board.



Board Policy #675.0

Student Exchange Programs

1. Policy Statement

The York Region District School Board recognizes the educational advantage in well-organized and planned student exchange programs. Student exchange programs must provide equity of access and strive to ensure the safety and security of all students, staff and volunteers.

2. Application

This policy applies to all students, staff, trustees, parents, volunteers, exchange operators, equipment suppliers and private vendors who provide a service or participate in a student exchange program.

All Board policies and procedures shall apply to students, employees, parent(s)/guardian(s), volunteers and activity destination vendors during field trips, regardless of destination laws and customs (e.g., Policy 668.0: Caring and Safe Schools, Policy #261.0: Equity and Inclusivity, Policy #642: Field Trips, etc.). The buying, selling and/or use of alcohol, drugs, illegal substances or weapons by any participant is strictly prohibited regardless of circumstances, age and destination laws, customs and/or culture. Appropriate consequences will be applied. Inappropriate behaviour may result in the student being sent home from the field trip at parental expense.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- a) reviewing the Student Exchange Program policy in accordance with the priorities in the [Trustees' Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) and the approved policy review cycle; and
- b) understanding and communicating with members of the community about the Student Exchange Program policy, as required.

3.2 The Director of Education is responsible for:

- a) implementing the Student Exchange Program policy.

3.3 The Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education:

- a) approving student exchange programs, in conjunction with the Principal, International Education Services.

3.4 Principals are responsible for:

- a) Communicating with the Principal, International Education Services regarding any student exchange programs
- b) ensuring all Board policies and procedures are followed;
- c) ensuring that financial assistance is available for families identified as having a need for support, in a way that respects the dignity and confidentiality of all parties; and
- d) shortening, canceling or terminating the exchange at any time, if it cannot proceed or be completed in a safe or satisfactory manner.

3.5 Principal, International Education Services is responsible for:

- a) recommending the student exchange itinerary to the Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education for approval;
- b) coordinating and communicating about student exchange programs; and
- c) ensuring reciprocity in all exchanges to meet Ministry of Education requirements for waiving fees.

3.6 Exchange Organization/Tour Operators are responsible for:

- a) planning and organizing exchanges which enhance curriculum and provide a safe, accessible and appropriate learning experience for students;
- b) establishing the correlation of curriculum expectations to the objectives of the exchange, in the planning of program activities, and in the post-exchange activities;
- c) providing students and parents with a written description of the exchange, clearly identifying the curricular relevance of the exchange;
- d) providing students with strategies to deal with their academic responsibilities while on an exchange;
- e) ensuring that students understand their exchange program responsibilities.

4. Definitions

4.1 Student Exchange Programs

A student exchange program is a reciprocal educational program with a student or students from an education jurisdiction outside of Canada.

4.2 All student exchange programs must:

- a) be approved by the Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education Services before the exchange is booked
- b) accommodate, where possible, parental concerns related to religion, faith and culture;
- c) consider the effects of missed classes on student learning, and well-being;
- d) consider and account for the health and safety of all students, volunteer supervisors and staffmembers;
- e) outline the direct relationship between the Ontario Curriculum and the exchange's educational experiences including, but not limited to, the on-site activities and post-exchange activities;
- f) be accessible to all students, with parent(s)/guardian(s) approval;
- g) accommodate students with special needs, ensuring equal access and supervision for high-needs students in accordance with Student Safety Plans;
- h) outline in writing supervision expectations for staff members and volunteers;

- i) consider all relevant Board policies, procedures and supporting documents; and
- j) ensure the any private vendor or facility operator has the necessary certification and general liability insurance of at least \$2,000,000.

5. Contact

Community and International Education Services

6. History

Approved 1995

Revised 2001, 2005, 2008, 2014

Revised 2021, June 2022



Board Procedure #675.1 Student Exchange Programs

1. Procedure Statement

This procedure outlines the responsibilities associated with organizing, conducting and supervising student exchange programs that are directly connected to the Ontario curriculum and enhance the program of study for students.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 When Planning a Student Exchange Program

2.1.1 The Director of Education shall:

- a) allocate staff and resources to support Procedure #675.0, Student Exchange Programs.

2.2 The Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education Services shall

- a) approve, in conjunction with the Principal, International Education Services student exchanges in accordance with the information contained in the exchange program plan;
- b) provide system support regarding the implementation of the Student Exchange Programs policy and procedure;
- c) determine whether an exchange should proceed if unforeseen factors arise including, but not limited to, war, acts of terrorism, social unrest, environmental conditions, public health issues and labour unrest/sanctions; and
- d) ensure all incentives offered by tour operators are used to reduce the cost of the field trip for student participants only.

2.3 The Principal shall:

- a) create eligibility criteria for student exchange program participation;
- b) report on the benefits of the exchange and suggestions regarding best practices upon completion to the Principal, International Education Services; and
- c) ensure that all communication with students and parents about the exchange program clearly states 'Subject to Approval.'

2.4 Exchange Organization/Tour Operator shall:

- a) Submit a completed exchange program plan to the Principal, International Education Services detailing timeframe, duration, destinations and itinerary for approval.

3. Once the Student Exchange Program is Approved

3.1 Principal, International Education Services shall:

- a) receive information from the exchange organization/tour operator confirming participants, timeframes, duration, destination and itinerary;
- b) communicate confirmed participants, timeframe, duration, destination to Principals;
- c) in case of concerns regarding safety in the country/location or destination;
 - immediately contact the Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education and the exchange organization/tour operator to review the situation,
 - liaise with Principals, as required, to review the situation and to decide whether the exchange shall proceed be modified, rescheduled or cancelled if warranted, and
 - work with the exchange organization/tour operator to facilitate rescheduling and/or repackaging the exchange with a view to minimizing financial loss to the participants if an exchange is rescheduled.

3.2 Principals shall:

- a) ensure all students abide by the Caring and Safe Schools Policy and Procedures;
- b) ensure that students who are required to take prescribed medication inform the organizers;
- c) ensure that regularly scheduled information meetings are held for parents;
- d) ensure that students and parents understand that the exchange is a curriculum-based undertaking and considered an extension of the school program and students must comply with all established expectations;
- e) inform school staff of the dates of the study exchange and students who intend to participate;
- f) attend a parent/student meeting, led by the exchange organization/tour operator, approximately two weeks prior to the exchange, to address the final exchange overview; and
 - distribute parent and student information packages provided by the exchange organization/tour operator,
 - review departure expectations,
 - review the Caring and Safe Schools Policy and Procedures and the school code of conduct, and
 - answer final questions.

3.3 Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall:

- a) attend all information meetings and submit required documentation;
- b) review all printed material sent out by the organizing committee and complete/submit all forms within the required timeline;
- c) meet all requirements for travel by the student, such as, but not limited to, passport, immunization, medication and copies of prescriptions;
- d) submit payments/installments as outlined in the payment schedule;
- e) inform the principal or staff organizer immediately if, for any reason, the student can no longer participate;

- f) review behaviour expectations with their child(ren); as outlined in the Caring and Safe Schools Policy and Procedures and the schoolcode of conduct; and
- g) in case of concerns regarding destination safety, attend a meeting at which school staff will discuss re-scheduling or altering the itinerary for the exchange.

3.4 Exchange Organizer/Tour Operators shall:

- a) adhere to the agreed upon terms and conditions outlined in the agreement with the Board;
- b) develop a detailed itinerary that is affordable, meets curriculum expectations and minimizes free time;
- c) provide the Principal, International Education Services with a detailed list of requirements and timelines;
- d) plan and lead information meetings, as required, inviting the school Principal, parents and students; and
- e) in case of concerns regarding destination safety;
 - communicate immediately with the Principal, International Education Services to discuss rescheduling or altering the itinerary for the field trip,
 - work with school staff to minimize financial loss if a tour is rescheduled;
 - in case of concerns regarding destination safety;
 - attend a meeting at which school and/or Board staff will discuss rescheduling, altering or cancelling the exchange program, and
 - work with the school to minimize financial loss if a tour is rescheduled.

3.5 Students shall:

- a) submit all required forms within given timelines;
- b) attend all information meetings;
- c) plan ahead academically;
- d) comply with Board policies and procedures and the school code of conduct, regardless of local laws and customs including, but not limited to, the consumption of drugs and alcohol and confirm in writing their understanding that if behaviour requires them to be sent home, they and their parents are responsible for expenses;
- e) understand that the exchange is a curriculum-based and the duration of the exchange is considered to be an extension of the school program;
- f) follow all guidelines including, but not limited to, those regarding weight and size of luggage, carry-on contents, electronic equipment and packing list; and
- g) complete the administration of medication form, provide a copy of the prescription and bring any required medication.

4. During the Student Exchange Program

4.1 The Exchange Organization/Tour Operator shall:

- a) assume responsibility for all aspects of the exchange;
- b) ensure parent(s)/guardian(s) are contacted, as necessary;
- c) conduct the trip, adhering to the planned itinerary;

- d) contact Principal, International Education Services; if changes to the itinerary are necessary, and communicate any changes to parents
- e) contact Principal, International Education Services immediately in any emergency situation;
- f) contact the Principal, International Education Services immediately if an accident occurs during an exchange; and complete an accident report within 48 hours of the incident or as soon as possible upon their return to the school and forward it to the Manager, Administrative and Legal Services.
- g) take a precise attendance count at all points of departure and at regular intervals throughout the exchange;
- h) ensure that students are aware of and follow expectations regarding appropriate conduct.

4.2 Principal, International Education Services shall:

- a) respond to any concerns or emergency situation reported by the Exchange Organization/Tour Operator

4.3 Students shall:

- a) follow all expectations regarding appropriate behaviour and conduct.

5. Following the Exchange

5.1 Exchange Organization/Tour Operator shall:

- a) prepare a summary of the exchange including, but not limited to, suggestions for best practices and post-exchange activities conducted.

5.2 Principal, International Education Services shall:

- a) forward to the Superintendent of Education, Caring and Safe Schools and International Education, the summary of the exchange along with any issues that may have arisen, suggestions for best practices, and post-exchange activities conducted.

5.3 Students and staff shall:

- a) ensure that post-exchange activities are completed as per the exchange plan.

6. Definitions

6.1 Exchange Program Plan

Exchange Organization/Tour Operator must submit an exchange program plan to the Principal, International Education Services prior to the exchange. The plan should include:

- a) estimated number of participants
- b) destination
- c) timeframe, duration
- d) program itinerary

- e) financial considerations
- f) recruitment plan
- g) schedule of parent information sessions

6.2 Supervision

The minimum acceptable standard of supervision for student exchange programs is one supervisor to 10 students or the minimum standard as indicated by OPHEA, utilizing whichever provides greater supervision.

7. Contact

Community and International Education Services

8. Procedure History

Approved 1998

Revised 2005, 2008, 2014

Revised 2021, June 2022