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**HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION**

**Policy Code:** HICA  
**Policy Title:** On-site and Off-site Activities  
**Cross Reference:** EEACAA, EEACAB, GBD, GFA, IHCD, IHCE, JHF

**POLICY HANDBOOK**

**Legal Reference:** Alberta Risk Managed Insurance consortium Activities Policy  
**Adoption Date:** Nov. 27, 1996  
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**POLICY**

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION SUPPORTS STUDENT ON-SITE AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES FOR THE PURPOSE OF EDUCATING, COMPETING AND/OR PERFORMING PROVIDED THERE IS RISK MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVITIES DO NOT POSE UNNECESSARY RISK.

**DEFINITIONS**

Activity – for the purpose of this policy, an activity refers to structured opportunities planned by the school board including but not limited to sports, cultural or artistic endeavours, community services or team building.

Alberta Risk Managed Insurance Consortium (ARMIC) – A multi-school divisional insurance consortium that procures insurance on behalf of Horizon.

Emergency Action Plan refers to a plan of action specifically devised to address the risk of an activity and to enable an appropriate and timely response in the event of an incident or injury.

Prohibited Activities are activities that carry an unreasonable risk and which ARMIC does not allow under the insurance program. Subscribers engaging in prohibited activities must secure additional, first payer insurance.

Risk Mitigation or Risk Management refers to the process of identifying, assessing, and alleviating risk factors to reduce the likelihood of a negative outcome.

SPHERes refers to the School Physical Activity, Health & Education Resource for Safety (SPHERes) guidelines published by the Injury Prevention Centre of the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta.

Sponsored Activity means an activity arranged by the school board.

Third Party Vendor means any third-party hosting or providing a venue for activities;

## **Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities*, Cont’d.**

### **GUIDELINES**

1. Risk management protects ARMIC, students, staff, volunteers, third parties and assets.
2. The risk of injury or harm to students, staff, volunteers, or third parties and damage to assets should be considered for all operations.
3. ARMIC’s supports Subscriber’s responsibility to implement the Alberta Education curriculum, and to provide activities specifically identified in the curriculum.
4. ARMIC requires all Subscribers to follow the SPHEREs guidelines.
  - 4.1. SPHEREs Guidelines shall be used as the primary resource for assessing and mitigating risks associated with student activities.
5. The school division is responsible for upholding ARMIC objectives, the Subscriber Agreement, and all ARMIC policies.
6. School sponsored off-site activities must be authorized by the principal, or as the case may be, the superintendent or designate.
  - 6.1. Level of documentation, and authorization required shall be determined by the combination of risk level, destination, and classification.
7. The division shall not sign waivers for services on behalf of parents, students, or staff provided by third-party contractors.

### **REGULATIONS**

1. Distance Limits
  - 1.1. Early learning off campus trips will only be approved for in-province day trips.
  - 1.2. Elementary (Gr. 1 to 5) off campus trips will only be approved for in-province trips for a maximum of 2 overnight stays.
  - 1.3. Junior high (Gr. 6 to 9) off campus trips will only be approved for in Canada trips. International trips are prohibited.
  - 1.4. International trips
    - 1.4.1. Only senior high students or grade nine (9) students participating in senior high trips may be authorized to attend trips outside of Canada.
    - 1.4.2. International travel will not be approved for countries where the Canadian Government has determined official travel advisories (avoid non-essential travel, and avoid all travel).

## Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities, Cont’d.*

- 1.4.2.1. Countries where the risk level states, Exercise a high degree of caution; there are identifiable security concerns; travelers should be alert and vigilant to their surroundings) may receive approval depending on the unique circumstances of the identifiable security concerns.
  - 1.4.3. The “*International Field Trip Planning Guide*” (see **attachment E**) must be attached with the approval form (**attachment B**) when seeking permission for International Trips.
  - 1.4.4. A parent meeting that provides detailed information and opportunities for questions is a mandatory component early in the planning phase.
    - 1.4.4.1. Parent consent form (**attachment E2** is mandatory).
  - 1.4.5. The supervisor for any off-site activities outside of North America is responsible for contacting the appropriate recommended health authority in Alberta to determine immunization for supervisors and students for travel to the area.
  - 1.4.6. All students participating in international trips must have their vaccinations up to date as recommended by the health authority. Students are to submit copies of these records to the teacher in charge. Upon return, the copies will be returned to the student.
  - 1.4.7. Adequate travel and health insurance must be obtained for each participant, including supervisors.
  - 1.4.8. Cancellation insurance is required.
2. Authorization to approve
  - 2.1. Principals are authorized to approve non-prohibited (see **attachment A**) in province:
    - 2.1.1. day trips;
    - 2.1.2. trips that include 1 overnight stay; and
    - 2.1.3. trips that include 2 overnight stays (school co/extra-curricular athletic/music competition/performance only).
  - 2.2. All out of province trips and trips whose duration are greater than that specified in 2.1 require superintendent approval.
    - 2.2.1. Field trip requests made to the superintendent should be submitted 2 months prior to ensure time for review, inquiry and final approval.
  - 2.3. The principal must forward a copy of all field trip approval forms to the superintendent when such trips have students departing beyond jurisdictional boundaries.

## Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities*, Cont’d.

- 2.3.1. The exception would be day trips for extra-curricular athletics (e.g. basketball, volleyball etc).

### 3. Third Party Vendors:

- 3.1. In the event a school board chooses to use a third-party vendor to host an activity and/or provide specialized training, school boards must take the following steps:

- 3.1.1. ensure all instructors are appropriately certified;
- 3.1.2. ensure an appropriate number of chaperones; and
- 3.1.3. obtain a certificate of liability insurance.

- 3.2. In the event a third-party vendor refuses to provide a certificate of insurance, the school should consider avoiding the activity or choosing another vendor. Additionally, if the vendor requires a waiver of liability:

- 3.2.1. the school should consider avoiding the activity; and
- 3.2.2. schools cannot sign waivers on behalf of minors;
  - 3.2.2.1. parents may choose to sign a waiver, but this does not stop the child from making a claim at a later date if they are injured.

### 4. Unlisted or Unique Activities:

- 4.1. If a school board wants to engage in an activity that is not identified in SPHEREs, every effort should be made to compare the elements of the activity to recognized activities to identify and assess the risks.
- 4.2. If any element of the activity is prohibited by ARMIC, the whole activity is considered prohibited.
- 4.3. If the board remains uncertain of the risk and whether the activity might be prohibited due to some of its elements, the board should seek guidance from the Risk Management Committee.

### 5. Prohibited Activities:

- 5.1. Certain activities are prohibited by ARMIC due to the high risk of injury to students, staff, volunteers, and third parties, and the negative impact on ARMIC members if there is a catastrophic claim. These activities are listed in **Appendix A**.

### 6. Approval

- 6.1. The Board reserves the right to cancel any activity if it deems that it is in the best interest and safety of the students to do so. Therefore, it is incumbent on the teacher-in-charge and the

## Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities*, Cont’d.

principal to consider all inherent risks, and in the case of high cost activities, to recommend to parents/guardians that they obtain travel cancellation insurance.

### 6.2. Staff shall

- 6.2.1. consult with and obtain the approval of the principal or superintendent in principle before discussing the intention of undertaking off-site activities with students;
- 6.2.2. submit for approval a “*field trip proposal form*”;
  - 6.2.2.1. principal approval – **attachment B**, or
  - 6.2.2.2. superintendent approval – **attachment B**
- 6.2.3. no “Field trip proposal form” is required for low-risk day trips within the division;
  - 6.2.3.1. Teachers still require verbal approval from the principal and parent permission to take students off campus.
- 6.2.4. where practically possible and if it would enhance the welfare of students, staff should have visited the location of the off-site activity prior to the trip and be familiar with the seasonal conditions at the time of the trip;
- 6.2.5. ensure that, at minimum, one of the supervising adults or resource persons has the training and/or knowledge appropriate for conducting the trip;
- 6.2.6. select appropriate volunteers for the activity, and provide volunteers with direction as to the requirements of the trip and their responsibilities, before the departure of the off-site activity;
- 6.2.7. ensure that the appropriate trip documentation, such as trip itinerary, supervisor and student responsibilities, emergency contacts, etc., accompanies the teacher-in-charge, and that a copy has been filed with the principal;
- 6.2.8. advise students regarding trip hazards and appropriate safety procedures;
- 6.2.9. ensure that a precise attendance count is taken at all points of departure on the trip; and
- 6.2.10. file a student list with the school prior to departure.

### 6.3. No off-site activity may proceed unless it has received the appropriate approval. Before approving an off-site activity, the principal or superintendent must be satisfied that:

- 6.3.1. all inherent risks have been considered and there are procedures in place for managing the key inherent risks of the activities and environment. If there is any doubt, the principal shall contact the superintendent for a second opinion;

## **Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities*, Cont’d.**

- 6.3.2. the teacher understands the following policies and procedures defining the teacher’s responsibilities and duty of care;
  - 6.3.2.1. EEACAA – Private vehicles volunteer
  - 6.3.2.2. EEACAB – Division owned co-curricular activity vehicles
  - 6.3.2.3. GBD – First aid training
  - 6.3.2.4. GFA – Volunteers
  - 6.3.2.5. HICA – Off-site activities
  - 6.3.2.6. IHCD – Concussion
  - 6.3.2.7. IHCE – Student illness/injury
- 6.3.3. SPHERes guidelines have been met;
- 6.3.4. the students, teachers, staff, volunteers and parents/guardians will receive the appropriate information about the trip; and
- 6.3.5. arrangements are in place for covering all the financial matters, including a refund procedure, and an accounting for all expenditures.

## **7. Supervision**

- 7.1. A supervision plan is to be developed and implemented.
- 7.2. The plan should clearly indicate the supervision arrangements and responsibilities at the various locations and venues, including supervision of student travel to and from venues and locations.
- 7.3. The level and type of supervision which needs to be provided during a particular activity should be based on an assessment of numerous factors, including but not limited to:
  - 7.3.1. nature and location of the activity (prior inspection of the location may be required to identify potential dangers);
  - 7.3.2. number of students involved;
  - 7.3.3. age and maturity of students;
  - 7.3.4. qualifications and experience of the adult supervisors, including ability to provide first aid; and
  - 7.3.5. travel to and from the venue.

## Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities, Cont’d.*

- 7.4. The school should:
  - 7.4.1. inform parents or caregivers about the location, cost, mode of travel and supervision arrangements, activities to be undertaken and dismissal times; and
  - 7.4.2. obtain permission from parents or caregivers.
- 7.5. Every time a student or group of students change activities (for example, if a number of different activities are undertaken over the course of a weekly school sports program), the consent of a parent or caregiver should be sought.
- 7.6. Facilities or equipment should be appropriately supervised based on risk level of the activity, skill level of the participant, maturity of the participant and the participant’s ability to monitor the risk to themselves (see categories below) following initial skill instruction and after all safety concerns have been emphasized.
  - 7.6.1. **Constant visual supervision** means that a supervisor is physically present and watching the specific activity in question.
  - 7.6.2. **On-site supervision** entails supervisor presence but not necessarily the constant viewing of one specific activity.
  - 7.6.3. **Proximity supervision** means that the supervisor could be in the gymnasium or room while another activity is taking place in an area nearby the gymnasium or room. Note that in-the-area supervision is not adequate for Pre-Kindergarten/ECS Program students.
- 7.7. The number of supervisors will vary according to risk level of the activity, skill level of the participant, maturity of the participant and the participant’s ability to monitor the risk to themselves. **As a guide**, the acceptable standard of supervision for most off-site activities:
  - 7.7.1. for students in kindergarten, is one adult to 5 students;
  - 7.7.2. for students in grades 1 to 3, is one adult to 8 students;
  - 7.7.3. for students in grades 4 to 9, is one adult to 10 students; and
  - 7.7.4. for students in grades 10 to 12, is one adult to 15 students.
- 7.8. Where off-site activities include overnight stays, consideration should be given to include both female and male supervisors.
- 7.9. Additional supervision must be considered for off-site activities involving:
  - 7.9.1. increased risks;
  - 7.9.2. skill level of the participant; and

## Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities*, Cont’d.

7.9.3. maturity of the participant and the participant’s ability to monitor the risk to themselves.

7.10. Staff and responsible parents are preferred as supervisors.

### 8. Parent Permission

8.1. Parents/Guardians must be informed in writing of the following information about off-site activities (see sample “*Parent/Guardian Consent/Risk Acknowledgement Form*” **attachment C**):

8.1.1. the purpose and educational objectives of the off-site activity;

8.1.2. the name of the teacher-in-charge and a contact telephone number;

8.1.3. the date(s) of the trip;

8.1.4. the destination and, where possible, a map of the area;

8.1.5. a detailed itinerary, setting out the general nature and number of activities;

8.1.6. departure and return times;

8.1.7. mode of transportation;

8.1.8. financial arrangements;

8.1.9. safety precautions;

8.1.10. level of supervision;

8.1.11. the date of the parent meeting, if one is being held;

8.1.12. any risks associated with the activity, including official government travel advisories (official information and advice from the Government of Canada on situations that may affect their safety and well-being abroad);

8.1.13. a reminder that parents or guardians must inform the teacher-in-charge about any relevant medical conditions of the student including proof of immunization, if required (individuals in charge should be aware of students with **Policy IHCD: Medication to Students/Medical Conditions including attachment A: Medical Management Plan**);

8.1.14. emergency procedures to be followed in the event of injury, illness or unusual circumstances;

## **Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities, Cont’d.***

- 8.1.15. the need for additional medical coverage and cancellation insurance for out-of-province or out-of-country trips;
- 8.1.16. any other relevant information about the trip which may influence the parent’s or guardian’s decision to withhold permission, such as foreseen exposure to controversial material;
- 8.1.17. the standard of conduct expected of students and that a student may be sent home from activities at parent’s expense if the behavior of the student is unacceptable;
- 8.1.18. the superintendent reserves the right to cancel, and/or end trips early if the superintendent feels the risks are too great; and
- 8.1.19. the jurisdiction does not accept responsibility for any lost travel deposits or costs due to cancelled trips by either the jurisdiction or third party travel company for events beyond its control, including but not limited to instability in a destination country, acts of God, war (whether declared or undeclared), terrorist activities, incidents of violence, public health issues or quarantine, strikes, government restrictions, fire or severe weather conditions that make it impossible or unreasonable to conduct the trip.

8.2. One permission form is acceptable for a series of off-site activities or a number of distinct activities within the community, as long as all activities meet the requirements of 8.1 above and parents are notified of the activity within a reasonable time prior to the activity taking place.

## **9. Student’s Responsibility**

9.1. Each student participating in an off-site activity must:

- 9.1.1. comply with the rules of the school and the requirements of the school’s student code of conduct;
- 9.1.2. fulfill all the preparatory requirements at an appropriate level of performance;
- 9.1.3. dress appropriately according to the type of off-site activity;
- 9.1.4. cooperate fully with everyone authorized by the Board to provide education programs and other services;
- 9.1.5. participate in a responsible and cooperative manner during the trip;
- 9.1.6. account to the teacher in charge for their conduct;
- 9.1.7. respect the rights of others; and
- 9.1.8. carry out all follow-up procedures in an appropriate manner.

## **10. Volunteers**

## **Policy HICA – *Off-Site Activities*, Cont’d.**

- 10.1. Volunteers are expected to know the details of the off-site activity and their specific duties and authority prior to departure (see **Policy GFA**).
- 10.2. Volunteers must:
  - 10.2.1. submit a criminal record if required (see **Policy GFA**);
  - 10.2.2. consent/acknowledge risk/provide applicable medical information (see “*Volunteer Consent/Risk Acknowledgement Form*” **attachment D**);
  - 10.2.3. support and follow the school code of conduct;
  - 10.2.4. report any inappropriate conduct to the teacher-in-charge;
  - 10.2.5. adhere to the schedule or itinerary;
  - 10.2.6. dress appropriately according to the type of off-site activity; and
  - 10.2.7. fulfill their duties during assigned time.