



George Brown College

**Field Trip and Activities off Premises
Policy for Lab Schools**

Philosophy

We believe that our program is enhanced when it reflects the resources and interests that are unique to our area and families. We believe the optimum learning environment is one that integrates the playroom with the home and community. Therefore, field trips can be rich learning opportunities when they are relevant to the children's interests and meaningful to the children's particular stage of development.

Ratios

Staff is acutely aware of the importance of adequate coverage on all trips. The normal ratios will be augmented with students, volunteers, and families. Whenever there is inadequate supervision the trip will be cancelled.

Identification

Each child and adult is required to wear identification such as a safety vest/t-shirt/hat to maximize visibility as well as to identify the centre's name and telephone number.

Family Participation

Families are always welcome to accompany the Staff and children on a field trip. Families will only be responsible for their own child when on a field trip unless a Vulnerable Sector Screening has been completed and a copy has been made available to the centre's Manager as per the requirements of the Ministry of Education.

Preparation for the Trip

All fieldtrips and excursions must be pre-approved by the Manager.

- A great deal of thought is given to the trip destination and the suitability of the trip site is carefully considered. There must be shady areas for rest periods and accessibility to washroom facilities. The amount of walking must be appropriate to the age of the children. Strollers may be taken to alternate children when necessary.
- Families will be informed of the trip in advance.
- A first aid kit will accompany each group of children.
- Each group will carry the emergency sheet for each child and Staff who goes on the trip.
- Staff carry a documented list of food allergies/food restrictions and children's names.
- Necessary extra clothing and diapers will be taken.
- The Centre Cook/Caterer will prepare a picnic lunch if required. The necessary food will be carried in a thermal bag to maintain it at the proper serving temperature.
- Staff will survey the area to identify any possible hazards (i.e. stairs, escalators, water, etc.).
- Centre Managers will accompany the Staff and children on any trip involving swimming in large water facilities or lakes.
- Staff will ensure that all children are appropriately dressed for the weather (i.e. sun hats and sunscreen in the summer; hats, mitts, and scarves in the winter, etc.).
- Once the destination has been reached, a designated safe area (customer service area) will be arranged in the event that the groups get separated. Staff will assess the trip site upon arrival to identify "hot spots" (where Staff need to position themselves for necessary supervision)
- In the event of extreme weather (cold, heat, humidity, or air quality), the trip will be re-scheduled.
- A cell phone will be taken on the trip. The cell phone number will be written on the trip form that is left in the office.

Traveling by School Bus or T.T.C.

George Brown College Lab Child Care Centres require that the buses being used for field trips have seat belts.

1. The bus will be boarded only when the bus driver is present.
2. Children must be counted before the trip, whenever changing locations, during the trip and before returning to the centre.

3. While on the bus children, must wear seat belts, are to be seated with their backs against the seat, and are not permitted to stand or kneel or sit on someone's lap.
4. If at any time there is a dramatic change in weather, or an unsafe situation arises, the bus driver will be notified if he/she is at the location, or the Manager will be notified and arrange for pick-up.
5. Subways should be used with extreme caution. Trips using subways should have high adult/child ratios. If the subway is used, children will wait for the train at the yellow Designated Waiting Area with their backs to the platform wall. This is also where they will board the train so the signal person can clearly see the Staff and children.

Walking Trips

1. Children in strollers must always be secured with their shoulder and lap belts.
2. When crossing a street, driveway, or alleyway, Staff must always lead the stroller by walking in front to check for traffic first before crossing.
3. When walking with the children, keep to the inside of the sidewalk whenever possible.
4. Staff will wait for the beginning of a green light before crossing the street, and will be aware of the lights in the community that change quickly. When crossing at lights or crosswalks, Staff should be aware of sirens that indicate emergency vehicles and yield as needed.
5. When approached by strangers on a walk, Staff is to be polite, but continue with their walk.
Children's photos are not to be taken by strangers and no one is to accept food when away from the Centre.
6. Whenever possible, walking routes are planned to avoid main thoroughfares or busy streets. In the case of air quality warnings and/or extreme weather (either very hot or very cold) trips or walks are to be shortened or cancelled.
7. Walking routes **must** be recorded in the daily log. A map indicating the route is helpful.

Things to Remember When Preparing for a Trip

1. Choosing the Trip

- Consider interest and developmental levels of the children in the group.
- Are there appropriate activities to involve the children?
- Is the environment safe?
- Are there any difficulties presented by transportation to the site?
- Has at least one Staff member visited the site before the trip?

2. Preparing the Families

- Give the families advance notice of the trip verbally and in written form.
- Families will sign the trip form to authorize their child's participation in the trip.
- Explain how the children will be transported and what activities they will engage in during the trip.
- Invite families to accompany their child.

3. Preparing the Children

- Curriculum must provide a context for the field trip.
- Children must be prepared through the curriculum for where they are going and what might see.
- Children will be divided into small groups and each Staff must be aware of the of children in their group.
- Encourage children to discuss what to expect on the trip, as well as involve them in problem solving regarding safety and emergency situations.
- If a child with special needs has some distinguishing feature, integrate that feature into the trip activities. For example, a child who needs to be carried in a wagon: take two wagons so that other children may take turns in the wagon.

Emergency Measures

Injured Children

1. One Staff will call an ambulance and the Centre to report the incident. The Manager will contact the families immediately and if necessary, meet the families at the hospital.

2. One Staff will stay with the injured child and administer first aid. If necessary, they will accompany the child to the nearest hospital with the child's emergency information.
3. The remaining children should be kept as calm as possible and be reassured about the situation; they should return to the Centre as soon as possible. Transportation will be arranged to take the children back to the Centre.
4. Serious Occurrence procedures will be followed (if applicable).
5. The above procedure would apply to a Staff member if injured on a field trip. Emergency phone numbers for Staff should be taken on field trips.

Lost child

1. Staff should remain calm. Keep the group together while one Staff member retraces the steps. Alert on-site security (follow their protocol). Inform all Staff that a child is missing.
2. After a thorough check of the area, if the child is not found, call the Police.
3. Call the Manager at the Centre. Manager will notify the family and follow Serious Occurrence Protocol. The Director of ECE will be notified.
4. Report as a Serious Occurrence through CCLS.

Sick Child

1. Staff will take a health assessment of the children on a daily basis.
2. Staff will determine the health and readiness of the child before he/she goes on the trip.
3. If a child becomes ill on a trip, a Staff will comfort and attend to the sick child.
4. One Staff will call the Manager, who will contact the child's families and/or arrange for the child to return to the Centre.

Trip Checklist

We have:

___ reviewed the rules of the excursion prior to the trip.

___ informed the Manager of the field trip/ excursion.

___ ensured all the children and adults are wearing identification (i.e. name tag, hat, T-shirt, safety vest).

___ a copy of the detailed description of each child's clothing form to take on the fieldtrip, and provided a photocopy with the Manager in the office at the Centre.

___ family permission forms that have been signed before the trip for each child, indicating key activities (i.e. rides).

___ packed food and water (if necessary).

___ packed emergency cards for each child and Staff.

___ packed a first aid kit for each group, money and a cell phone.

___ a list of food allergies and restrictions (Epi-pens/puffers and other medications as needed).

___ packed a change of clothes and diapers if necessary.

___ given the School-Aged children the cell phone number used by the Staff on the trip.

___ taken attendance, counted the children before leaving the Centre, and again once they have boarded and mode of transportation.

___ counted the children each time we change locations (e.g. picnic tables to the park).

___ counted the children again upon re-boarding the mode of transportation.

___ called the Centre to inform the Manager that we will be returning later than planned, or to inform of any accident or incident (if applicable).

___ counted the children upon returning to the Centre.

Guidelines for Families and Volunteers on Field Trips

Let your child's educator know one week prior to the trip if you'll be able to attend.

The Staff will be able to determine in advance if there is a sufficient amount of adults in order to ensure the safety of the children on the trip.

Our goal is that you share in the field trip experience with your child within the group. Additional adults also enhance the adult-child ratio and ensure that all children get their immediate needs met in a timely fashion.

If a family member or volunteer wants to come on a fieldtrip, The Ministry of Education requires families/volunteers to provide a clear Vulnerable Sector Check as they will be responsible for their child as well as another child.

Check with Staff before the trip to see if you need to bring any special equipment or dress (i.e. comfortable clothing, bathing suit, walking shoes, etc.).

Wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather and field trip location.

If you have any food restrictions or allergies, be sure to let the Staff know as soon as possible.

The Lab Child Care Centre provides packed lunches for the people going on the trip, and will be able to inform you of the menu that day. If your allergies are very specific, you may need to bring your own lunch.

Please remember that treats for your child should not be given during the field trip.

Some children have specific allergies, and the Lab Child Care Centre packs a nutritionally balanced picnic lunch that takes allergies and food restrictions into account. If your child receives a treat that is not shared by the others, the rest of the children will not understand, and it may pose a health risk for you to bring treats for the group.

All children must be supervised within a pre-planned area, and not taken to another place during the field trip.

Staying with the group is a safety issue, as all children must be accounted for at all times. The children also find it confusing if they know that some children are allowed to play in an area to which they are not given access.

It is important to keep both hands free so that the adult can attend to any child in need.

Some of the children do get tired and would like to be carried, but when you have two children under your supervision, this becomes a safety issue.

Arriving a bit earlier than the departure time is a requirement as sunscreen, extra clothing, and packing the picnic lunch takes time and organization. Any assistance is welcomed.

If you know in advance that you will be leaving the group early and not coming back to the Lab Child Care Centre, please pre-arrange this with the Educators.

In order to ensure safety, a high ratio of adult to child is needed, especially on the trip back to the Centre when the children are fatigued. Before the trip is undertaken, the Staff must be sure that they will have a sufficient number of adults to assist with all parts of the trip.

Smoking is not permitted while on field trips and personal cell phone use is prohibited.

In order to ensure consistency, we ask that families follow the Staff's lead with regard to behaviour guidance.

Thanks to all the families who have helped us on field trips!