

**POLICY TITLE:** Interpretive Pre-booked Programs

**BRANCH/DIVISION:** Parks and Protected Spaces /Recreation & Education Services

**Policy Number:** Park Directive 6.1.8

**Effective Date:** December 16, 2013

**Approved By:** Mike Gilbertson

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**INTENT** To outline procedures for the booking and conducting group programming, such as school/youth groups and adult tours, of the Interpretation Field Program within park districts offering this program.

**POLICY STATEMENTS** The goal of the Interpretation Program is to increase the public's understanding and to foster an appreciation of Manitoba's natural and cultural resources with the intent of encouraging the careful stewardship of these resources by the public, while also enhancing the enjoyment of their visit.

This policy will ensure fair and equitable access of school programs to teachers and group leaders and to provide guidelines ensuring high quality interpretive program design within provincial parks.

**AUTHORITY** The Provincial Parks Act states that one of the purposes of a provincial parks system is "to provide outdoor recreational and **educational** opportunities and experiences in a natural setting."

*A Strategy for Interpretation in Manitoba's Provincial Parks* (revised April 1994) provides guidelines for the management and development of an interpretation program in Manitoba's provincial parks.

**RESPONSIBILITY** Responsibility for booking group programming lies with the Head of Interpretation and Senior Park Interpreter. Senior Park Interpreters are responsible for the development and delivery of group programming in each programming district.

## DEFINITIONS

### **School/Youth Program**

Any organized interpretive program offered in parks to teachers, students and organized girl/boy groups.

### **Bus Tour/Adult Program**

Any organized interpretive program offered in parks to adult groups.

### **Extension Program**

Contact with the public or schools outside the park when information about the park and/or programs is presented.

### **Peak Months**

A month where there are more program requests than can be accommodated at a location (i.e. June in Birds Hill).

### **Inclement Weather**

Severe weather conditions such as lightning, hail, high winds, extreme windchill values, heavy rain or extreme cold/high temperatures. Inclement weather is weather that poses a possible danger to participants.

## BOOKING GUIDELINES

1. Bookings will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis and may be limited due to staff availability.
2. Groups may be limited to one booking per month during peak times and/or at prime locations to ensure equitable access to classes. In non-peak months, teachers may be accommodated for more than one booking per month, subject to booking space and staff availability.
3. During peak months school program opportunities will be provided as a priority in the programming districts (i.e. June).
4. Groups will be advised to have an alternate date in case their first choice date is already booked. Schools will be referred to other parks if their first choice is full.
5. Park Interpreters will maintain a waiting list that can be filled on a first-come first-served basis if dates become open. If a teacher is unable to make the open space, a call to the next teacher in line will be made until the spot is filled.
6. Whenever possible interpreters will provide an opportunity to book an alternate date for large groups, in case of inclement weather. This can be booked at the same time.

7. Extension Program bookings may be limited to non-peak months.
8. Bookings will be made through the Senior Park Interpreters at Birds Hill, Spruce Woods and Whiteshell Provincial Parks. Bookings for all other parks will be made through the Head of Interpretation.
9. Interpreters must be made aware of any allergies children and youth may have so they may be accommodated.
10. After confirming booking details by email or phone, a confirmation letter will be sent to teachers/group leaders within five working days. Confirmation letter templates can be found in the Interpretation Operational Manual. Confirmation letters can be sent through either email or fax.
11. Groups that have not pre-booked a space cannot be guaranteed access to programs or facilities. Drop-ins may be accommodated if staff levels or space allows.

## **CANCELLATION**

Cancellations by teachers/group leaders should be made 14 days in advance to accommodate anyone waiting to register. Teachers cancelling without notice will be placed at the bottom of the waiting list if they wish to rebook.

Park Interpreters will cancel programs only in unavoidable circumstances (emergencies, illness, injuries, inclement weather). All programs cancelled by park staff will be considered a priority to reschedule and placed at the top of any waiting lists.

Programs may be cancelled due to inclement weather only if the weather poses a safety hazard to the participants and there is no way to modify the program or location.

Group bookings may also be cancelled due to emergency situations including site problems (i.e. flooding, trail damage, travel restrictions), or staff emergency (interpretive staff is unexpectedly ill or away from the office).

In case of cancellation, group leaders must be phoned the morning of the program as soon as possible to cancel and/or reschedule the program. Directly after any cancellations are initiated by park staff, the District Park Supervisor and Head of Interpretation must be informed in writing.

In case of cancellation or absence of Park Interpreters, no other park staff are to conduct interpretive programming.

## **FEES**

All interpretive school/group programs are offered free of charge. Provincial Park entrance fees apply to all vehicles within provincial parks.

School groups from daycare to Grade 12 inclusive qualify for complimentary vehicle permits (Triangle Passes) up to and including the last Thursday of June. Exceptions may be made for school groups that operate during the summer season.

*Note: Please refer to Park Directive 4.2.2 for more information.*

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Teachers/group leaders are responsible for transportation.

## **GROUP SIZES**

One class is approximately 30 students. A single Park Interpreter should only conduct programming for one class at a time. Groups that wish to bring more than one class per available Park Interpreter may be able to rotate classes through the programs with the teacher/group leader providing an alternative activity.

## **SUPERVISION/ SAFETY**

School/Youth Groups are responsible for providing an adequate number of supervisors. The number of supervisors does not include interpretive staff. Additional supervisors may be required for students with special needs. Minimum guidelines are as follows:

- Pre-school and Kindergarten: 1 adult per 4 students
- Grades 1-3: 1 adult per 5 students
- Grades 4-6: 1 adult per 8 students
- Grades 7-12: 1 adult per 10 students

Teachers and group leaders will be responsible for the conduct and discipline of their students and must accompany their students at all times while in the park and participating in programs. Interpreters may ask teachers/group leaders to remove continually disruptive students back to the bus/visitor centre.

Groups that have repeated supervisory problems may not be able to book programs in subsequent seasons.

Students/teachers are asked to refrain from using cell phones and to turn off electronic devices during programs.

Most programming takes place outdoors and any student not dressed appropriately for the activities (including footwear), may be asked to stay behind with an adult for their own safety.

### **In case of Emergency**

Interpreters must know local emergency contact information and have some way to contact them, either by radio or telephone. In case of injuries to any participants, the Head of Interpretation and District Park Supervisor must be informed as soon as the injury has been handled and program is completed.

Sudden inclement weather during programs may cause programs to be modified or cut short for participant safety. Park Interpreters are required to have a back-up plan.

## **INCLUSIVITY/ MODIFICATIONS**

All interpretive school programs are to be based on Manitoba Education curriculum components and may be modified to fit what is being taught in class and/or any special needs. Park Interpreters should discuss with teachers any modifications they may need, including physical and mental challenges.

## **PROGRAM DESIGN**

All pre-booked interpretive programming must follow the interpretive Program Outline format as indicated in Park Directive 6.1.2.

**PROGRAM LENGTH** School programs are various lengths, ranging from 1 hour, to half day or full day excursions. Programs are to be modified to meet the needs of the class. Teachers should be aware of the length of the program including travel times to ensure they remain on schedule.

Late arrivals may have to be accommodated as best they can. Modifying program lengths or removing an activity may be necessary to keep on schedule.

**SETTING UP** Park Interpreters must set up before a program and clean up after programs in the designated work space. This includes:

- Picking up any garbage
- Properly extinguishing any campfires
- Putting tables/chairs in proper arrangements
- Putting out and cleaning up program supplies
- Vacuuming/mopping floors
- Cleaning bathrooms and wiping down work surfaces

**VOLUNTEERS, GREEN TEAM & STEP STUDENTS** Volunteers, STEP Students and Green Team Interpretive Assistants are available to assist the interpreters when necessary. They do not lead or supervise programs.

**CAMPFIRE LUNCHESES** Teachers and group leaders wishing to have a campfire lunch must bring their own supplies. A supervisor must be available to start and maintain the fire at all times and have a water supply to extinguish the fire. Program participants and group leaders are not allowed to remove any materials from the park to make the fire or roast food. Campfire lunches should be scheduled for additional times as they take longer to prepare.

**CAMPING** Group camping is available at many provincial parks. School/Youth groups may qualify for complimentary group camping. Park Interpreters may also provide programming directly at the group use site.

*Note: Please refer to Park Directive 4.1.5 for more information.*

**FRENCH PROGRAMS** French and bilingual programming is offered only at designated locations (St. Malo and St. Norbert Provincial Parks). All programs at these locations must have an English, French and Bilingual version.

All written materials for designated locations must be in French and English.

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluation forms are to be provided to the teacher/group leader to fill out at the end of the program for feedback.

Electronic evaluation forms are available from the Head of Interpretation to be sent to the teachers/group leaders. Completed evaluations are to be sent to the Head of Interpretation by the teacher/group leader. These are to be reviewed with the District Park Supervisor and the Senior Park Interpreter.