

# A Message about OWLS

## (Optional Wednesday Learning)



We have been doing OWLS for the past 9 years at U-Connect and have had some very fun and educational adventures to a lot of different places! Over that time, we have developed an OWL registration and attendance process that has ensures that OWLS run as smoothly as possible. Please read the following processes to ensure that you are following all the procedures in place so we can continue to effectively offer OWLS as part of our program.

### Registration Process:

- **Registration Open** - When the bulletin goes out, the registration will be open.
- **Registration Deadline** - **Please pay attention to the registration deadlines.** Unless the venue asks for more time, I generally close registrations for events at 3:00 pm on the Wednesday prior to the event. We have had some families ask to join the OWL after the registration deadline and even some show up without registering. This causes organizational and supervision challenges on our end. To avoid disappointment, please register in the age/grade appropriate OWLS you would like to attend by the registration deadline.
- **Registration Accountability** - Please take note if you have registered for an OWL. I do get a fair number of “did I register for that” emails which become time consuming to check. They have made some additions to the registration portal so you should get an auto response when you register.
- **Transportation** - Over the years we have had several different approaches to transportation with OWLS. Based on parent feedback, some years we have had parents driving their own children to the events, whereas others we have had busing only. Nothing seems to match all the individual family needs. With this in mind, for those adventures where there is a choice, I will be adding a “transportation choice” to the registration form where you can choose “Ride the Bus” or “Drive Myself”. Once you commit to whichever choice you make, that will be assumed to be the way you are going to get to the event. Quite a few times in the past years we have held the bus for those we thought were late but were in fact driving themselves to the venue but hadn’t told us or didn’t come to the OWL at all despite registering.

### Attending the OWL event:

- **Non-U Connect Students (including siblings)** – Unfortunately, most venues do not allow siblings to attend the field trips. It also becomes a transportation and liability issue for us at the school so we will not be able to accommodate non-U-Connect student on OWLS, including siblings of our students.

- **Arrival Time** - Please arrive early, whether you are taking the bus or are driving on your own. It is tricky to have people arriving late as we typically pay upon entry and sometimes requires certain group sizes. It can also be disruptive to the presenters who are running the workshops/events.
- **Parent Supervision** – For safety, we have implemented a parent supervision requirement for our littlest students. If your child is grade K-3, it will be required that they are accompanied by a parent/guardian for any **off-campus** OWLs. Outings like this are fantastic times to share with grandma or grandpa, aunt or uncle! It doesn't have to be a parent – just someone the child trusts who will ensure the safety and supervision of that child. Grade 4-12 students are not required to have a parent supervisor, unless past behaviour warrants it.
- **Permission Forms** – Other than Open Tutorial, I always send a confirmation email a couple of days before each OWL and if a permission form is required, it will be attached. Please ensure that you print it, sign it and bring it with you to the OWL. Sending it to me via email ahead of time adds to my workload and potentially causes a problem if it is sent too late to print for the trip. Legally, we can't take students to a field trip without a signed permission form.
- **No Shows** – We know that unexpected things happen that may prevent you from attending an OWL you have signed up for. Please email [mstatham@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:mstatham@sd35.bc.ca) prior to the OWL or call the office at 604-530-2361 on the OWL day if you can not attend. If you registered and we haven't heard that you are not coming, we assume you are. If you simply don't show up, it can cause problems when we hold the bus thinking you are attending.

### Departing from the OWL

- **Gratitude** – Saying thank you is an important skill to teach our children and one of the values we hold dear at U-Connect. Please make sure your child shows gratitude by thanking the presenter and even the supervising teachers. We work hard to provide these opportunities for students and the presenters appreciate hearing what your child liked about the adventure.
- **Say Goodbye** – Please let the supervising teacher know you are leaving if you have driven yourself to the venue as we are ultimately responsible for everyone on the trip and need to know when students have left. It's a bit terrifying for a teacher when they can't find a child because they have slipped away with a parent without telling the teacher.
- **Communication with Supervising Teachers** - If you are not at the venue and need to contact the supervising teacher for any reason (late picking up, message for your child etc), please call the school office and they will contact the teacher for you.

