

FIELD TRIPS AND STUDENT TRAVEL

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to identify the requirements surrounding a school-sponsored trip and outline the general processes to be followed for consideration and approval of trip requests.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the general expectation of the school board that all student trips will be well-planned, conducted in an orderly manner, and held in safe environments. It is recognized that field trips may afford invaluable learning and life experiences for students. Such trips are encouraged to be relevant to the students' academic or extracurricular activity experiences.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. A 'Field Trip' is defined as a school-sponsored experience for a class or group of students that involves participants leaving the premises of their normal school building(s). It does not include regularly scheduled transition between school buildings for normal activities.
- B. Types of Field Trips:
 - 1. Curricular: a field trip that is a required part of any class' required curriculum.
 - 2. Academic Supplementary: a field trip of a single day or multiple days involving overnight stay designed to enhance students' academic experiences. This type of field trip would most typically encompass a class or grade level's travel to an experience such as an arts performance, nature center, governmental body, museum or cultural event. It is expected that these types of trips will be minimal and occur predominantly outside of the school day.
 - 3. Competitive Co-Curricular or Activity: a field trip that affords a sports team or group of activity participants to travel to a location where a meet, game, match, or other competitive event is being held.
- C. Extended Travel: destination is located more than 100 miles from the point of origin of the field trip and/or involves participants having an overnight stay irrespective of distance to the destination.
- D. International Travel: destination is located outside of the contiguous 48 states.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. All field trips must have an identified organizer in charge of the planning and execution of the activity. More than one person may serve as organizer but all must be clearly identified and agree to organizer status.
- B. Fees:
 - 1. No fees may be charged for a Curricular field trip.
 - 2. Separate fees are not generally charged for Competitive Co-Curricular or Activity trips. Rather, fees for such trips are anticipated to be covered by any normal activity participation fees. However, it is recognized that, occasionally, unexpected supplementary opportunities may arise that the coach / advisor, together with the Activities Director, deem desirable for team or group participation. In such a case, reasonable fees to cover the unexpected additional cost may be charged to participants. No group or team member shall be penalized in any fashion for not participating in such a supplementary opportunity. The phrase “supplementary opportunity” does not apply to post-season playoffs, championships, or similar types of opportunities, unless such opportunities require Extended Travel or International Travel.
 - 3. Reasonable fees may be charged to cover transportation, entrance, or similar expenses for Academic Supplementary field trips. Each building principal will encourage the building Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to consider the possibility of creating a fund to assist students in need with fees for such field trips. In NO event will any such student in need be personally identified to any member of the PTO. Irrespective of the availability of PTO assistance funds, no student currently identified as being eligible for free or reduced price lunch will be denied the opportunity to participate in an Academic Supplementary trip due to inability to pay fees. For the purposes of this paragraph, the term ‘PTO’ includes other similar district approved organizations that may be willing and able to supply funding.
 - 4. All fees gathered for field trips will be appropriately accounted for by the organizer and handled according to standard district practices. This includes appropriate documentation of receipt of fees being provided to each student as those fees are received.
- C. All Competitive Co-Curricular or Activity trips must be approved in advance by the Activities Director. Extended Travel must be approved, according to the district procedures, by the Superintendent at least one month prior to the field trip. International Travel must be approved, according to the district procedures, by the Superintendent at least six months prior to the field trip. All other types of field trips must be approved in advance by the building Principal. Either the Activities Director, building Principal or

Assistant Principal, as appropriate, will be responsible for ensuring that necessary communication has occurred with the district's transportation department.

- D. The district's transportation department will be presumed to be the provider of transportation unless: 1) the department is unable to provide transportation at the appropriate times; 2) the field trip requires International Travel; 3) the team or group will provide their own or parent-supplied transportation; or 4) other circumstances exist that make selection of an alternative mode of transportation desirable, subject to the approval of the Director of Business Services. In no event will students be transported by staff in their staff personal vehicles unless the requirements of the Transportation Policy 531 are met.
- E. Each student participant must have permission from a parent / guardian to participate in any field trip. This includes field trips to another in-district school building.
- F. The following provisions will be in place for any Extended Travel or International Travel:
 - 1. Any contract with an outside company to manage the travel must be reviewed by the school board's attorney prior to entering into the contract.
 - 2. The trip organizer and the responsible administrator will assess the district's and/or tour provider's liability coverage for adequacy.
 - 3. Information will be provided to students and chaperones clearly identifying what fees are refundable and under what circumstances.
 - 4. The trip organizer will consider safety or security risks at the destination, and will consult U.S. State Department advisories for all destinations outside of the United States.
 - 5. There will be a risk / crisis management plan in place for the trip. The plan will address all of the following areas and others as identified as necessary: Student injury; one or more students becoming separated from the group; plans for emergency evacuation of one or more group members.
 - 6. Any trip outside of the United States will be registered with the local U.S. Embassy.
 - 7. Students and chaperones must provide appropriate medical disclosures and releases. These documents must be reviewed by the school board's attorney.
 - 8. There will be at least one in-person mandatory informational meeting with students, parents and chaperones to cover information related to the trip, including expectations around standards of conduct.
- G. The standard minimum expectation for chaperones for field trips is at least one adult to each 15 students. A higher number of students to each adult may be considered based

upon the age and maturity of the students and the nature of the activity involved and must be approved in writing by the building Principal or Activities Director. A larger number of chaperones may be required based upon the age and maturity of students. Field trips involving students in grades K-2 will generally require a standard minimum expectation of at least one adult chaperone for every 8 students. When a field trip involves Extended Travel or International Travel, or if the trip so requires due to particular circumstances, the trip organizer will ensure appropriate ratios of chaperones, taking gender of participants into account. All chaperones who are not district employees must sign a copy of the Chaperone Guidelines, per district procedures, which will be held in the school office.

- H. For trips that require more than three chaperones, a minimum of 25% of the chaperones will be regularly-employed school district employees. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Principal or Activities Director if a large number of chaperones are involved. All school district expectations of employees shall apply at all times to all employees who are serving as chaperones. Volunteer chaperones must sign an agreement outlining expectations of behavior and consequences of not meeting those expectations. No adults will participate in the transportation or other activities involved with any field trip unless that adult is identified as a chaperone for the field trip.
- I. The field trip organizer shall carry appropriate student emergency health and contact information for all participating students.
- J. The student code of conduct applies in all respects at all times to students participating in field trips, as do all usual employee expectations, and local laws of any destination.
- K. The Superintendent has the discretion to cancel any field trip at any time if s/he determines that proceeding with the field trip may unduly jeopardize students' health or safety. In such a case, the school district will attempt to facilitate return of any previously-paid fees, but the school district is not responsible for reimbursing any fees to students or chaperones when those fees have already been paid to other organizations related to the trip. Students or chaperones participating in any activity involving substantial pre-payment of fees are encouraged to seek a reputable travel insurance policy.
- L. Any employee who organizes a trip with district students must clearly identify whether the trip is school-sponsored or not. To be a school-sponsored trip, all approval and other district procedures must be followed.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. §123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
Minn. Stat. §123B.36 (Authorized Fees)

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