

**TRAVEL BY SCHOOL GROUPS****Background**

The Mt. Lebanon School Board and/or Administration frequently receive(s) requests for permission for travel by school groups. School personnel sponsoring such activities consider such travel as an aid to the school program. Questions arise as to whether there is sufficient benefit to justify such school group travel with due consideration given to time, distance, money, risks, and purpose.

The Mt. Lebanon School Board recognizes the value of first-hand experience provided through travel and considers field trips as part of the educational program. The Mt. Lebanon School District will sponsor field trips for students only when such trips specifically relate to curricula or extra-curricular activities.

Field trips that are planned as an integral part of the instructional program are permitted and encouraged. Although no specific number of trips is allotted to any teacher, class or school, trips will be limited by budgetary constraints, availability of transportation, conflicts during departure and arrival times, and frequency of requests. The School Board encourages field trips that are tied directly to instructional objectives of the District's curriculum and which offer significant learning opportunities and minimize lost classroom instructional time.

The health and safety of students and staff is the first priority of the District and should be given the utmost consideration in the planning and conduct of any trip.

**Objective**

The objective of this Policy is to establish methods for approval and control of travel by school groups.

**Definitions**

1. Travel by School Groups - includes school activities such as athletics, school-planned class trips, recognized extracurricular, co-curricular or curricular activities, field trips and tours, individual and small groups of students who participate in school-related events (e.g., academic competitions), and groups traveling with District employees as sponsors/chaperones during the school year.
2. Local Travel - trips confined to within a 50 mile radius of the Mt. Lebanon School District.
3. Non-Local Travel - trips exceeding a 50 mile radius of the Mt. Lebanon School District, but not exceeding a 250 mile radius of the Mt. Lebanon School District.
4. Extended Travel - trips exceeding a 250 mile radius of the Mt. Lebanon School District.

5. A “field trip” is a journey by students away from school premises, under the supervision of a teacher, which is an integral part of an approved course of study and is conducted for the purpose of affording a firsthand educational experience not available in the classroom.

Policy

It is the policy of Mt. Lebanon School District that:

1. Travel by school groups, including field trips, must be approved as follows:
  - A. Requests for local, non-local or extended travel required for participation in interscholastic sports must have the approval of the athletic director and the school principal. The interscholastic sports schedule must accompany the request and the travel itinerary must accompany requests for non-local travel. Requests for travel for interscholastic playoffs must be filed separately.
  - B. Local and non-local travel by school groups requires approval by the school principal. Approval will be granted when, in the judgment of the Administration, such requests will aid or be of special benefit to the participants.
  - C. All requests for extended travel by school groups require prior Board approval. All extended travel requests shall bear a principal’s signature and be submitted at least ten (10) days in advance of the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.
  - D. Board approval shall not be required for non-local travel requests; however, the Superintendent shall notify the Board of all approved requests for non-local travel. Board notification is not required for local travel.
  - E. Regardless of the distance to be traveled, all travel by school groups must be chaperoned by adequate responsible school personnel and appropriate insurance coverage shall be provided.
  - F. Travel during the summer or not within the scheduled student school year and which is not sponsored by the District, such as international trips that are sponsored or chaperoned by District employees outside the regular school year, and that does not involve a school group is outside the scope of this Policy. Any such employees sponsoring or chaperoning such a trip shall advise any parents and students, in writing, that such travel is neither approved by nor sponsored by the District, but rather is travel privately arranged between the employees, parents, and students.
2. Students participating in any travel by school groups pursuant to this Policy are required to adhere to general school rules and codes of conduct. Any student failing to meet expected rules and regulations will be sent home, at the chaperone’s discretion, with the student’s parent/guardian responsible for any additional expense or for actually picking up the student from the trip location. On return to school, further disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with policies governing student behavior.

3. It is the general expectation of the School Board that all travel by school groups will be well-planned, conducted in an orderly manner and safe environment, and will relate directly to the objectives of the class or activity for which the trip is requested.
4. Field trips are to be conducted according to the rules and regulations as set forth by administrative procedures. These field trips should be coordinated among grade levels and permission may not be granted if a field trip is not scheduled as far in advance as possible.
5. The teacher will obtain written permission through a Parental Consent form and provide the parents with information concerning the purpose and destination of the trip, transportation and eating arrangements, date and time of departure and estimated time of return. Students not participating in field trips will be provided appropriate alternate learning activities.
6. Student safety will be the primary consideration on all field trips. Adequate chaperone coverage must be provided on each field trip and must be approved by the Principal prior to the trip. The administration will enforce the school volunteer requirements as set forth in Policy IJOC.
7. Field trips are supplementary to the regular school program and are to be regarded as a privilege, not a right for students. If needed, all participating students must use school authorized transportation both going to and returning from field trips. Alternative transportation arrangements can be considered by the Principal, e.g., private transportation versus utilization of a school bus, provided that the students' health and safety is not jeopardized by such alternative arrangements.
8. Due to the limited number of District school buses and the cost of bus rentals, it is encouraged that field trips are scheduled to leave and arrive before or after normal bus timetables.
9. Unless provision has been made in the annual budget to finance the field trip, the sponsoring group/participant is to provide its own financing by charging fees or conducting fund-raising. However, every effort will be made to insure that no student should be denied a field trip opportunity because of financial hardship. Determination of financial hardship will be a confidential, discretionary decision by the principal.
10. All District personnel supervising any type of travel by school groups are expected to fulfill their professional responsibilities and duties throughout the duration of the trip to protect the safety and well-being of the students. Any non-District employee serving as a chaperone will have the appropriate and required clearances and function under the direction of the District personnel.

### Administrative Responsibility

It shall be the responsibility of the Administration to implement and enforce this Policy, prepare and review travel request forms, and to develop and implement any other administrative procedures necessary to implement and enforce this Policy.

Communication

This policy shall be communicated to:

1. All Mt. Lebanon School District staff.
2. All school personnel involved in implementation of this Policy.
3. Any school group which has submitted or is likely to submit a request for travel.
4. All students and parents/guardians of the District.

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