



SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS
Independent School District 833
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610 FIELD TRIPS

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for student trips and to identify the general process to be followed for review 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 safe environment, and will relate directly to the objectives of the class or activity for which the trip is requested. Early communication with parents/guardians is required. Student trips will be categorized within three general areas:

A. Instructional Trips

Trips that take place during the school day, relate directly to a course of study, and require student participation fall in this category. **Students are generally required to attend instructional field trips regardless of attendance, behavior, or special needs. However, a parent may excuse a student from attending an instructional field trip. After considering the individual educational needs of a child with an IEP, the IEP team may also excuse a student from attending if the team determines that the trip would be inappropriate for the student. Neither cost nor inconvenience may be considered in determining whether a trip is appropriate for a student with special needs.**

These trips are subject to review and approval of the building principal, and will be financed by school district funds within the constraints of the school building budget. Fees may not be assessed against students to defray direct costs of instructional trips. (Minn. Stat. § 123B.37, Prohibited Fees)

B. Supplementary Trips

This category pertains to those trips in which students voluntarily participate. Examples of trips in this category involve student activities, clubs, and other special interest groups. **Supplementary trips are not for credit; they do not impact a student's grades; and they do not fulfill graduation requirements. Supplementary trips are voluntary. No student may be required to go on a supplementary trip.**

These trips are subject to review and approval of the building principal and/or activities director. Financial contributions by students may be requested. (Minn. Stat. § 123B.36, Authorized Fees)

C. Extended Trips

1. Trips that involve one or more overnight stops fall into this category. Extended trips may be instructional or supplementary, and must be requested well in advance of the planned activity. An extended trip request form must be completed and approved at each level: student, principal, Superintendent/designee, and School Board. Exceptions to the approval policy may be granted or expedited by the Superintendent/designee to accommodate emergencies or contingencies (e.g. tournament competition).
2. The School Board acknowledges and supports the efforts of booster clubs and similar organizations in providing extended trip opportunities for students.

III. REGULATIONS

- A. Rules of conduct and discipline for students and employees shall apply to all student trip activity.
- B. The school administration is responsible for providing more detailed procedures, including parental involvement and permission, supervision, and such other factors deemed important and in the best interest of students.
- C. Round trip transportation will be furnished through a commercial carrier or school-owned vehicle. Transporting of students by staff members to or from school activities/programs in a private vehicle is not acceptable practice.
- D. Staff members transporting students in a district approved vehicle will be required to have a motor vehicle driver's license background check.

E. All chaperones and volunteers must have an updated background check on file. Background checks must be updated every three years or more frequently as required by law. The building principal is responsible for determining the level of supervision, including the number of chaperones, required for a trip in light of all relevant factors, including the age of the students, the needs of the students, the number of students participating, the nature of the activity, the risks presented, and the general standard of care in the educational community.

F. This policy is in effect for Field Trips July 1, 2023 and beyond.

IV. Non School Sponsored Trips

A non-school sponsored trip is defined as a trip organized by an independent third party, which may include a school district employee, without the sponsorship of SoWashCo Schools. School district

employees may not organize, plan, or administer such trips during their duty day and may not use any school district resources in support of the trip. In addition, school district employees may not solicit students to attend the trip during their duty day.

If a school district employee sponsors, organizes, or participates in a student trip that is not school sponsored, the employee must notify, in writing, any students and parents who are considering participation in such a trip that the trip is not sponsored by the District. The employee must have the form, **Non-School Sponsored Trip Notification Verification**, completed and signed by the student and parent/guardian. The completed form must be submitted to the principal(s) of all students involved in the trip.

School employees wishing to distribute information concerning non-school sponsored trips must comply with District policies 904 and 905 and must also request permission through the principal's office. Promotional literature shall contain a statement indicating that the trip is not sponsored by SoWashCo Schools. A copy of any promotional literature shall be filed in the principal's office. District communication tools may not be used to distribute information regarding non-school sponsored trips.

V. SCHOOL BOARD REVIEW

The Superintendent/designee will regularly report to the School Board upon the utilization of trips under this policy.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.36 (Authorized Fees)

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

Minn. Stat. § 123B.49 (Cocurricular and Extracurricular Activities; Insurance)

Sonkowsky v. Board of Educ. for Indep. Sch. Dist. No. 721, 327 F.3d 675 (8th Cir. 2003)

POLICY ADOPTED: February 17, 2009

POLICY REVISED: September 25, 2014, June 17, 2021

