

I. TRIP APPROVAL

All school trips must be approved in advance by the principal. Trips involving an overnight and out of state stay must be approved in advance by the principal, the superintendent, and the Board of Education.

The superintendent has the discretion to approve field trips on an emergency basis when the timing is between regular Board of Education meetings. The superintendent shall notify the board at the next regularly scheduled meeting of any trips approved on an emergency basis and the rationale.

A. Approval Criteria

School trips must meet at least the following criteria to be approved:

1. have a trip sponsor who is currently a teacher in the school system;
2. be age appropriate, relevant to the course of study, and provide an effective method for accomplishing curriculum objectives;
3. keep to a minimum any disruptions of other educational programs and/or loss of instructional time;
4. be reasonable in terms of time, distance, and cost;
5. be planned with careful consideration of safety and security for students and all participants in all elements of the trip; and
6. ensure that all eligible students will be given an opportunity to participate and that no student will be denied participation because of the expense of the trip or because the student has a disability.

B. School Trip Requests

The trip sponsor must obtain prior approval for a school trip by filing the appropriate WCS Field Trip Request Form with the principal at least 15 days prior to the trip.

In addition to the information required by the trip request form, overnight trip requests must also include the following:

1. detailed itinerary with dates, times, locations, etc.;

2. a detailed description of how any requirements for transporting students with special needs or disabilities will be met;
3. detailed routing of the entire trip including all scheduled stops;
4. the name(s), address(es), and contact information for all lodging;
5. lodging details, including the number of students in each room, whether there will be a chaperone on each floor, room locations (e.g., block of adjacent rooms, separate floors for males and females, etc.), description of showering/restroom facilities, and other relevant information;
6. if all students and chaperones will not be lodged in a single building (e.g., different hotels, separate cabins, etc.), a detailed description of where the students will be in proximity to the rest of the group and to the chaperones.

The principal may grant preliminary approval if it will be impractical or impossible to complete all of the specific details of the request until permission to proceed has been granted. Final approval will be subject to receipt of all additional information required by the principal. In extenuating circumstances, the principal may extend the deadline for filing a trip request in advance.

C. Review Process

1. The principal shall review the school trip request subject to the criteria above and any other school-specific criteria. Incomplete requests shall be returned to the trip sponsor for correction.
2. The principal is encouraged to consult with the school system Finance Department and/or Transportation Department for trips that involve significant costs or complex travel arrangements.
3. The principal shall decide whether to approve the trip request and inform the trip sponsor of the decision within seven days of receiving the request.
4. The principal shall retain a copy of the request and return a copy to the trip sponsor.
5. For approved out of state and overnight trips, the principal shall forward the school trip request to the superintendent by the first day of the month for review by the Board of Education on the second Monday of that month.

II. PREPARATION FOR AN APPROVED TRIP

A. Contracts

Any contracts related to the trip must be signed and approved by authorized school officials in accordance with policy 6420, Contracts with the Board, and policy 6421, Pre-Audit Certification. The trip sponsor does not have authority to enter contracts on behalf of the school system.

B. Sponsor Responsibilities

1. Prior to the trip, the trip sponsor shall carefully review all applicable board policies and regulations on school trips.
2. After a trip is approved, the trip sponsor may finalize all reservations and other arrangements for the trip. No expenditures related to the trip may be made nor any fees or payments collected until after the trip has received final approval as specified in this regulation.
3. The trip sponsor shall request all required substitute teachers per school procedure.
4. The trip sponsor shall make arrangements for students who have elected not to participate in the school trip to receive alternate educational services throughout the duration of the trip.
5. The trip sponsor shall develop a plan for the event that a student needs to be removed from the trip for disciplinary reasons.
6. Preferably ten but no less than two school days before the trip, the trip sponsor shall submit the following to the principal:
 - a. a final schedule/itinerary with contact information (addresses, phone numbers, maps, etc.) for all destinations and lodging. The information must be detailed enough that the principal can contact the trip sponsor and/or students at any time during the trip.
 - b. a final roster of all students, school personnel, and chaperones participating in the school trip; and
 - c. signed and completed parental consent forms as described below for all student participants.

The principal is authorized to cancel the trip if information is missing or incomplete (see also Section V, below).

C. Student Attendance

Students suspended from school or assigned to in-school suspension on the day of a school trip are prohibited from participating in the trip.

D. Parental Consent

1. All students must provide signed parental consent forms to participate in a school trip unless a student is officially emancipated, in which case the student can sign on his or her own behalf. A student who fails to provide a signed consent form may be denied participation in the trip.
2. The standard parental consent form approved by the superintendent or designee shall be used for all school sponsored field trips.
3. No student's grade may be lowered if the student's parent or guardian refuses consent to participate in the school trip.

III. SAFETY AND SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

The principal and trip sponsor shall ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times, including at least the ratio of chaperones required by policy 3320, School Trips.

A. Chaperone Requirements

1. Chaperones must be current school system employees or volunteers, including parents, all of whom meet the standards established by Board policy, including background checks.
2. Chaperones must abide by all other applicable board policies, regulations, and school rules. At all times during a school trip, chaperones are strictly forbidden from engaging in any behavior that would violate board policy if an employee engaged in the behavior on school property. This includes, but is not limited to consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or tobacco products, or possessing a weapon. Principals shall ensure that chaperones receive written information explaining their responsibilities.
3. If applicable, a special needs student will be accompanied by a designated aide or nurse in accordance with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. The aide or nurse will not be considered a chaperone for purposes of meeting the required student-chaperone ratio.

B. Additional Chaperone Requirements for Overnight Trips

1. Separate accommodations for male and female students and chaperones must be maintained. In all cases, single showering and/or restroom facilities shall be used by males and females at different times.

2. Chaperones must be assigned to accommodations on every floor that is occupied by students.
3. Chaperones shall not stay in the same room or private accommodation as a student unless necessary to meet student needs identified in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan or the chaperone is the student's parent or guardian. If the form of accommodation is a group dormitory, this prohibition shall not apply.

C. Threat Assessment

The principal and superintendent or designee shall check and heed any travel advisories or restrictions that have been issued by the State Department or other governmental agencies.

D. Higher Risk Activities

The principal and trip sponsor shall develop a detailed safety plan for trips that involve a higher risk of injury due to the nature of the activity (e.g., water activities) or location (e.g., theme parks, fairs/carnivals). Notice of higher risk activities must be included on all parental consent forms.

Swimming and other water sports or activities (e.g., diving, boating, rafting, canoeing, waterslides, etc.) are not permissible without explicit approval from the superintendent and without a certified lifeguard on duty during the activity. The exception to this stipulation is wading and tubing in water knee deep or less. A detailed written plan for ensuring continuous supervision of all water-related activities must be approved by the principal prior to any school trips involving such activities.

E. Medical Treatment

School employees may administer medication to a student during a school trip only upon prior written request of the student's parent or guardian and prior authorization by the principal or designee in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students. A separate request and authorization is required for the administration of medication to students (or a request to self-administer medicine) during the trip when the scheduled dose falls outside of regular school hours.

In the event of a medical emergency, the trip sponsor or any other staff member may arrange for the emergency medical treatment of a student. The school system will not be responsible for the cost of any such treatment.

As soon as possible during or after a medical emergency, the trip sponsor shall notify the principal and fill out a written incident/injury report.

IV. TRANSPORTATION

The most appropriate and cost-effective mode of transportation will be used for all school trips. The principal shall work with the transportation department ensure that the arranged transportation will accommodate any students with disabilities who require accommodations.

The following modes of transportation are available for school trips.

- Regular school buses for trips during regular school hours, so long as this use will not interfere with the regular transportation program.
- Activity buses for trips during or outside of regular school hours.
- Commercial transportation (e.g., charter bus, commercial flight) with a pre-approved company for field trips involving longer distances and/or multiple days of travel.

Private vehicles (i.e., not school-owned and not commercial), are prohibited for school trips without:

- the advance written approval of the principal and of the parent/guardian of any child to be transported in a private vehicle
- a signed statement (from the person operating the private vehicle) acknowledging that the board's insurance coverage will not apply, that the board is not liable for any accident or injury, and that only the driver's private personal auto insurance coverage will be in effect

In compliance with State Board of Education Policy TCS-H-006, the bus driver or another school system employee will review the School Activity Trip Safety Statement with school bus passengers before every school-related field trip.

V. TRIP MODIFICATIONS AND/OR CANCELLATION

If any significant aspect of the trip changes after the initial approval has been granted, the trip sponsor must restart the process established in subsection I.B and submit a new school trip request to the principal. The trip sponsor shall notify all students and parents of any significant modifications to the trip arrangements or itinerary prior to the trip date. The principal or superintendent may cancel or postpone school trips when necessary if conditions change such that student travel is unsafe or otherwise impracticable under the circumstances. The trip sponsor shall notify all students and parents of such cancellation or postponement as soon as reasonably possible.

The principal and trip sponsor shall endeavor to refund any trip fees or deposits to the fullest extent possible but such reimbursements are not guaranteed.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A TRIP

A. Sponsor's Responsibilities

1. The trip sponsor and all chaperones shall be accessible by cellular phone at all times during the trip. The principal shall have the sponsor's contact information readily available.
2. For the duration of the trip, the trip sponsor shall keep a notebook or other record with the emergency contact information and parental consent forms for all participants.
3. The trip sponsor or designee shall store medication in a safe and secure location during the trip and shall administer medication to students in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicine to Students, except to a student who has been pre-authorized to secure and self-administer his or her own medication.
4. The trip sponsor is responsible for all activities during the trip and shall ensure that all activities conform to the approved itinerary.
5. The trip sponsor is responsible for enforcing applicable board policies, regulations, school rules, and the Code of Student Conduct. The trip sponsor shall impose disciplinary consequences for violations accordingly. The trip sponsor is encouraged to contact the principal prior to sending any student home from the trip early.
6. If any emergency occurs, the trip sponsor shall contact the principal as soon as possible. If the principal is unreachable, the trip sponsor shall contact the student services director or superintendent.

B. Student Responsibilities

1. Students must abide by all applicable board policies, regulations, the Code of Student Conduct, and school rules at all times during school trips.
2. Students must also abide by any additional rules established by the principal to govern the conduct of students during participation in school trips. Students will be notified of such rules in advance of the trip.
3. If a student is found to have violated any of these rules and regulations and the trip sponsor deems it necessary to remove the student from a trip or from an activity during the trip, the student must be supervised by a

teacher or chaperone at all times. If a student is sent home early, he or she must be accompanied by a teacher or chaperone until he or she is released to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian.

Cross Reference: Policy 3320, School Trips

Issued: February 8, 2016

Updated: April 16, 2024