

FIELD TRIPS, INCLUDING OVERNIGHT TRIPS

The Cohasset School Committee recognizes that Field Trips can provide students with useful learning opportunities. The School Committee expects staff to give appropriate consideration to student grade levels, maintaining time and learning standards, and student health and safety when planning and conducting Field Trips.

- I. Definitions. The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy:
 - a. **Academic Field Trips** include all off-campus trips that are organized as part of a class curriculum. Participation by all members of the class is expected.
 - b. **Extra-Curricular Field Trips** are those off-campus trips that are organized by a school-sponsored club or group. Participation is voluntary. Away games or matches that are part of the athletic program are considered Extra-curricular Field Trips under this definition.
 - c. When an **Academic Field Trip** or **Extra-curricular Field Trip** is planned to occur between midnight and 6 a.m. or to require a student to stay overnight away from home, the procedures for planning and approving **Overnight Trips** apply.
- II. Approval Process
 - a. The building Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, is responsible for the approval of all Field Trips that do not constitute Overnight Trips. Staff must seek and obtain such approval before Trip arrangements and/or fundraising plans are finalized. For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups who routinely travel as part of their activities, the coach or advisor need submit only one proposal for the season.
 - b. Preliminary approval by the School Committee is required for all Overnight Trips. Once such preliminary approval is granted, the teacher, adviser, and/or athletic coach must obtain final approval from the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop administrative guidelines for all preparations to be in place prior to granting of final approval. Such preparations will include at a minimum, all logistical details involving transportation, accommodation arrangements and fundraising efforts.

Where practicable, final approval must be sought from the Superintendent no less than 30 days prior to scheduled Trip dates.
- III. Transportation for Overnight Trips
 - a. The Cohasset Public Schools generally will contract with a commercial carrier to provide the **primary** transportation for Overnight Trips. The Superintendent or designee will conduct a pre-trip check of companies, drivers, and vehicles. Only carriers that are licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and do not have a safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" will be used. Where the primary transportation planned for an Overnight Trip is other than by commercial carrier, the form of transportation will be noted on the Consent/Waiver forms set for in Section VII (Consents and Waivers).

- b. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced in above in paragraph (a) of this section.

IV. Chaperones, Background Checks, and Trip Planning

- a. The level of chaperone coverage for Field Trips is subject to the approval of the Principal.
- b. The Superintendent shall ensure that a CORI check has been conducted for all individuals (including parent volunteers and drivers) who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students while on a Field Trip as set forth in M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38R.
- c. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements. Whenever practicable, Trip schedules should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m..

V. Student Behavior

Students participating in any Field Trip are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the Trip, including but not limited to adhering to general school rules and codes of conduct, as well as rules that have been established for the Trip. In the event a student fails to meet this expectation, the school staff may contact the student's parents, and staff shall have the discretion to send the student home. The student's parent or guardian shall be responsible for any additional expense incurred in such circumstances. Students may also be disciplined in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct.

VI. Fundraising

- a. Fundraising events and activities may be planned to offset the costs of Field Trips. Any such fundraising shall take place in accordance with the Cohasset Public Schools' policy on fundraising.
- b. Where an individual fee is charged for an Academic Field Trip, the Principal may provide a partial or full scholarship to a student if, due to financial hardship, such scholarship is necessary to allow a student's participation. However, no student is guaranteed a full or partial scholarship for the purpose of attending any Field Trip.

VII. Consents and Waivers

- a. A consent form signed by the student's parent/guardian is required prior to a student taking part in an Academic Field Trip.
- b. A consent and waiver form signed by the student (if appropriate) and the student's parent/guardian is required prior to a student taking part in any Extracurricular Field Trip. The waiver will include any and all claims related to or arising out of the Field Trip as well as those claims related to/arising out of cancellation by the Superintendent as described in Section VIII below. For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups that routinely travel as part of their activities, parents/students may submit one consent/waiver form to cover all events for the season.

- c. The consent forms set forth in Paragraphs a. and b. above must contain appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.

VIII. Cancellation

The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel any field trips up until the time of departure for any reason. In such event, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed.

IX. Non-school Sponsored Trips

Teachers and other school staff sometimes privately conduct educational tours or trips involving the participation of Cohasset students. The School Committee neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school system.

Teachers and other school staff are expected to clearly state that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the Cohasset School Committee and the Cohasset Public Schools do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37N; 71:38R
603 C.M.R. 27.00

CROSS REFS.: **[Insert relevant policy references], e.g., FUNDRAISING**

ADD'L RESOURCES: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)
<http://www.fmcsa.gov>
United Motorcoach Association - Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide (includes "Motorcoach Safety Checklist")
<http://www.uma.org/consumerhelp/studentguide.asp>
Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers
<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>

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