

Field Trip Guidelines and Protocol- 2022-2023



100 Walnut Street • Newton, Massachusetts 02460

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I. Introduction

School-sponsored field trips are a valuable supplement to a student's educational experience. The purpose of the Newton Public Schools (NPS) Field Trip Guidelines and Protocol is to assist NPS staff members when planning a field trip; to ensure a safe and positive off-site learning experience for students; and a positive experience for staff members and volunteers that meet the educational and/or programmatic goals of the trip.

All overnight out-of-state and international field trips (see page 4 and 5), except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

It is the responsibility of the staff member organizing the field trip to discuss the possibilities of a field trip with the appropriate administrator prior to submitting a formal request for approval. Trips should be an outgrowth of the instructional or enrichment program and should be directly related to the program curriculum and goals.

Specific guidelines and appropriate administrative procedures have been developed to screen, approve and evaluate field trips and to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the safety of the participants.

The superintendent has established these Guidelines and Protocol to assure that:

1. all students have parent/guardian permission for trips,

2. all trips are properly supervised,
3. all safety precautions are observed,
4. all trips contribute substantially to the educational program, and
5. all trips allow equal access and reasonable accommodations, financial and other, by all interested students

Students are expected to comply with NPS Rights and Responsibilities expectations and behave appropriately while participating in field trips. Additionally, in some circumstances, students may not be allowed to participate in a field trip as a consequence for a disciplinary offense. Field trip participants must be currently enrolled students and actively attending an NPS school. Graduated seniors are not eligible to participate in school field trips.

ii. Definitions - Types Of Trips

DAY FIELD TRIP - an academic or extracurricular field trip which does not require a student to stay away from home overnight. Day field trips may be in-state or out-of-state.

ACADEMIC FIELD TRIP - an off-campus field trip that is organized as part of the class curriculum which occurs during the daytime. Full class participation is expected. This trip must be accessible to all students expected to attend. Provision for a comparable instructional experience during the school day must be made for students unable to attend.

EXTRACURRICULAR FIELD TRIP - an off-campus trip organized by a school-sponsored club or group. Participation is optional and voluntary. An extracurricular field trip must offer an educational benefit consistent with the club or group's focus and may not occur during regular school hours (special circumstances may seek Principal's permission).

OVERNIGHT DOMESTIC FIELD TRIP - an academic or extracurricular field trip which requires a student to stay overnight within the United States.

OVERNIGHT IN-STATE FIELD TRIP - an academic or extracurricular field trip which requires a student to stay overnight entirely within Massachusetts.

OVERNIGHT OUT-OF-STATE FIELD TRIP - an academic or extracurricular field trip which requires a student to stay overnight that occurs partially or entirely outside of Massachusetts. Requires School Committee Approval.

RECURRING OVERNIGHT OUT-OF-STATE FIELD TRIP - an overnight out-of-state field trip which has been approved and organized through NPS in a prior year, and will take place again with minimal changes to itinerary or format. Only requires School Committee approval, if itinerary or other details will be changing substantively from prior years.

INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIP - an academic field trip or exchange program which requires a student to stay overnight in a foreign country.

RECURRING INTERNATIONAL TRIP - an international field trip which has been approved and organized through NPS in a prior year, and will take place again with minimal changes to itinerary or format. Only requires School Committee approval, if itinerary or other details will be changing substantively from prior years.

NEW INTERNATIONAL TRIP - an international field trip which has not previously been approved or organized through NPS. Requires School Committee approval.

III. NPS Field Trip Policy - IJOA

To review the Field Trip Policy, IJOA, see our on-line policy manual, www.newton.k12.ma.us.

IV. Field Trip Approval Criteria

A. Field Trip Purposes

Staff members will work within the following guidelines in the selection of appropriate field trips:

1. Field trips that are integral to a specific curriculum unit

These field trips include a focused visit to locations such as a museum, a theatre production, the seashore, an historical location or government building.

2. Field trips that build group identity

These field trips might include an outward bound-type day trip or camping trip experience with an overnight commitment. Community building trips might reinforce relationships in an existing group of students; they might also prepare students for a significant transition into a new structure or community (e.g., students entering grades 6 and 9). The context of such field trips is to help children work collaboratively, make decisions, evaluate success, and prepare for the future.

3. Field trips that enrich general curriculum goals

These field trips might include visits to foreign countries for drama festivals or language immersion; visits to governmental bodies, such as the United Nations, would be viewed as extra opportunities for those students who are interested in participating on a voluntary basis.

4. Field Trips that celebrate or culminate group work

These field trips, for example, include a trip at the end of a school year for 8th grade students to mark the completion of their middle school years.

- B. Trips are appropriate for the age group involved in the activity.
- C. Trips are reasonable in terms of time, distance and cost.
- D. Trips are planned with careful consideration of student safety which includes, without limitation, an appropriate number of adult chaperones as specified in Section

VIII below and confirmation that all chaperones have approved criminal background checks on file with the Newton Public Schools.

- E. Trips are planned with equal access and reasonable accommodations, financial and other, by all interested students.

Detailed plans to provide appropriate support to meet all students behavioral or social needs.

- F. Provisions are made for medical emergencies.

- G. Transportation - see Section VI regarding transportation requirements.

- H. Costs associated with an optional/voluntary extra-curricular field trip will be the responsibility of the individual student/family. Where appropriate, fundraising may be organized to help defray costs. See Section XI regarding fundraising.

- I. Trips are not scheduled during any standardized examination periods for students taking those exams.

Students who attend field trips must be given a reasonable and adequate opportunity to complete assignments for other classes. Communication about school trips should occur between faculty members.

There is to be no solicitation of privately run trips by teachers, students, or other school personnel. Under no circumstances is school property or school time to be utilized in the promotion, advertisement or discussion of any privately planned and organized non-school sponsored trips.

Cancellation of Field Trips

The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel any field trip up until the time of departure.

V. Field Trip Approval Process

A. Day Field Trips

- Approval required by principal or his/her designee;
- Application for approval must be submitted to principal or his/her designee six (6) weeks in advance and will then be submitted to assistant superintendent for final approval;
- *NO* overnight travel involved;
- *NO* bus or automobile travel occurring between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.;
- *NO* trip requiring more than one driver per vehicle.

B. Overnight Domestic Field Trips

For IN-STATE overnight trips and recurring OUT-OF-STATE overnight trips, applications for approval must be submitted to principal or his/her designee six (6) weeks in advance and then submitted to the assistant superintendent for final approval.

For NEW OUT-OF-STATE overnight trips, approval required by principal or his/her designee, superintendent and School Committee before trip is announced or information is distributed to students or families (if recurring trip) and application for approval must be submitted to principal/vice principal eight (8) weeks in advance;

The school must schedule an informational meeting with parents prior to the trip.

Trip coordinators must file accurate itineraries and appropriate telephone numbers including hotel numbers and mobile numbers of trip leaders.

NO bus or automobile travel occurring between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

NO trip requiring more than one driver per vehicle.

C. International Field Trips

1. Recurring International Trips

For trips that have been approved by the School Committee in a prior year, coordinators should first notify the Global Programs Manager (GPM) via email the first week of school in September of the intent to renew, names of chaperones, proposed dates, and any substantive changes to the trip. The GPM will pass these notifications along to the Academic Standards Committee (North) and Global Programs Proposal Review Committee (South) for approval.

After approval is given by the appropriate committee, the official Application for Approval must be submitted three (3) months in advance to the department head, principal or his/her designee, and finally the superintendent's office.

Approval is required by the school principal, superintendent (and School Committee, if any substantive changes are being made to the program) before the trip is announced or information is distributed to students or families.

The school must schedule an informational meeting with parents prior to the trip.

Trip coordinator must file accurate itineraries and appropriate telephone numbers with the vice principal including hotel numbers and mobile numbers of trip leaders no later than three weeks before departure date.

NO bus or automobile travel occurring between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

2. *New International Trips*

New programs should craft a program proposal following the guidelines here:
<https://www.newton.k12.ma.us/Page/2683>

The proposal must be submitted to the Global Programs Manager (GPM), who will assist trip leaders in readying the proposal for review.

Once ready for review, the GPM will submit the proposal to the Academic Standards Committee (North) or the Global Program Proposal Review Committee (South). Proposal must be submitted no later than four (4) months in advance of the proposed trip date.

Once a proposal has been approved by the relevant committee, the proposal must be submitted for signature to the department head, vice principal, and then superintendent's office three (3) months in advance.

Approval required by principal or his/her designee, superintendent and School Committee before trip is announced or information is distributed to students or families;

The school must schedule an informational meeting with parents prior to the trip.

Trip coordinator must file accurate itineraries and appropriate telephone numbers with vice principal including hotel numbers and mobile numbers of trip leaders by no later than three weeks before departure date.

NO bus or automobile travel occurring between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

VI. Transportation

Domestic Transportation

The Office of Transportation manages the procurement of the contracts for school transportation. This includes regular daily busing, athletic trips and field trips. The Office of Transportation will provide information to teachers and staff planning school trips and will confirm that all contractors meet all Newton Public Schools specifications. This includes confirmation that each company complies with all state and federal transportation rules and policies that pertain to vehicle safety and driver requirements.

All teachers planning day trips must work with the school system's Office of Transportation to secure school sponsored transportation whenever possible. Planning and consideration must be made with respect to any students that may require specialized transportation.

Rental vans will not be approved to transport students.

As set forth in Section VIII(B), all volunteer drivers must be approved through an application process for private automobile transportation to be utilized for day field trips. Elementary school field trips may not utilize volunteer drivers. Additionally, a "Volunteer Driver Consent Form" must be obtained by the parent/guardian of any student that will be transported in a private automobile by an approved volunteer driver prior the trip. A Student who is 18 years of age and has a valid Massachusetts driving license may drive themselves to the trip after completing the requisite release form. Under no circumstance may a student provide transportation to another student to, from or during a field trip.

Teachers planning overnight trips should utilize common carriers or school contracted transportation and may not utilize private automobile transportation. Teachers should contact the Office of Transportation for information on recommended motor coach providers to obtain an approval code for motor coach transport.

International Transportation

Please reference the international field trip approval application or contact the Global Programs Manager for policy details.

Vii. Required Consents

A. Parent/Guardian Consent

Trip leaders must obtain the applicable signed parent/guardian consent and release forms including Overnight Medical Information Form (if applicable) for each participating student. If the student is 18 years or older, consent and release forms must be obtained from the student.

B. Parent/Guardian Consent for Volunteer Driver for Middle and High School Field Trips

A middle or high school day field trip may utilize private transportation in automobiles driven by approved, responsible, volunteer adults that have completed the requisite paperwork and criminal background checks as set forth in Section VIII (B) under Volunteer Drivers. A signed "Volunteer Driver Consent Form" from the parent/guardian of the student that would be transported in this manner must be obtained prior to the trip.

C. Water Activities and Swimming Consent

As set forth in Section X, all field trips involving water activity and/or swimming require additional parent/guardian consent for the specified water and/or swimming activity. The Swimming Addendum to the Parent/Guardian Consent Form must be obtained for each and every student prior to the field trip or the student cannot participate in the water and/or swimming activity.

VIII. Chaperones and Volunteer Drivers

A. Chaperones and Supervision

The chaperone-student ratio must be appropriate to the age level of the student. Parents may be used as chaperones, but the coordinating teacher must assume the leadership and responsibility for the trip.

The coordinating teacher will prepare a list of students participating in the trip and will use that list to check attendance at the beginning and end of each activity.

Guidelines for numbers of trip chaperones:

Elementary: Eight (8) students per adult chaperone

Middle Schools: Ten (10) students per adult chaperone

High Schools: Twelve (12) students per adult chaperone

All chaperones must fill out a Volunteer Chaperone Form and submit and pass a criminal background check that will be on file with the Newton Public Schools.

B. Volunteer Drivers

All volunteer drivers, including staff and/or parents, must be responsible adults who have completed a Volunteer Driver Registration Form, provided proof of a valid driver's license, current vehicle registration, and requisite automobile insurance, agreed to a CORI/SORI check if one has not already been conducted, and agreed to comply with the Rules for Volunteer Drivers. A student, who is 18 years of age and has a valid Massachusetts driving license, may drive themselves to the trip after completing the requisite release form. Under no circumstance may a student provide transportation for another student to, from, or during a field trip.

C. Waivers

Any waivers for exceptions to the "Field Trip Guidelines and Protocol" relative to drivers, use of public transportation or private vehicles and number of chaperones must be submitted to the principal or designee in writing using the Field Trip Waiver Request Form.

IX. Safety and Medical Guidelines

In order to plan a field trip that is safe for every student, the following guidelines must be

followed. Safe and equal access must be provided for all students. For all day and overnight field trips, the school nurse must be notified 4 weeks in advance of the trip. May require additional, trained chaperones for behavior support or specialized transportation.

If any student has any medical or allergy needs, consult with the school nurse regarding allergy management (which may include restricted foods on the trips), daily and emergency medications, and, if applicable, to ensure staff members trained to administer the medication (such as epinephrine) attends the field trip.

In some circumstances, a physician's recommendation may be necessary to ensure that it is safe for a particular student to attend a field trip. This is based on the distance or time from an emergency response, severity of a medical need and risk to student's safety. Please consult with the school nurse if there are any concerns regarding the appropriateness of a particular trip for a student.

Overnight Field Trip Medical Information Forms must be obtained for all students attending an overnight field trip (including in-state/ out-of-state/international trips) prior to the overnight trip.

Request a first-aid kit from the school nurse, bring a list of students with any medical or special needs, and a list of parents' emergency contact phone numbers on the trip. If a student on the trip may require emergency administration of epinephrine, a trained staff member must accompany the student at all times.

X. Swimming and Water Activities

Swimming and water activities (e.g. kayaking, canoeing) are not permitted without specific approval. Each swimming experience must be approved by the appropriate administrator. This includes multiple swimming experiences during one extended field trip. All field trip applications contain a section specifically for approval for swimming and water activities. For all domestic field trips (which does not include international field trips), each swim site must be staffed with adequate lifeguard supervision at all times.

The Swimming Addendum to the Parent Consent Form must be obtained for a student to participate in the swimming/water activity.

XI. Field Trip Costs and Fundraising

Cost of Field Trips

The estimated cost of all field trips and sources of funding must be provided in the Field Trip Application for approval. Consideration must be given to costs associated with providing access to all students such as special transportation, additional chaperones, and nursing staff.

Whole Class Curriculum Trips

Teachers will provide information on costs, supervision, dates, and all other logistics in writing to students and parents. Trip cancellation insurance will be arranged for overnight or international trips. When financial assistance is required, the teacher will work with the principals or curriculum coordinators to access available funds. *No student shall be denied access to any school trip due to financial constraints.* In such cases, parents should contact the principal.

Voluntary trips

When trip expenses are more than \$500 per student, the following steps will be taken to ensure equal access to all interested students:

- The teacher will propose a trip for the principal's approval three months in advance of the trip. Once the trip is approved, eligible students and their parents will receive formal notification of trip specifics, as well as the availability of scholarship money.
- The teacher coordinating the trip will be available to parents and students to answer questions and assist families in developing viable financial arrangements.

Fundraising

Fundraising events and activities may be planned to offset the costs for trips. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students' obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs. Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets.

Any fundraising shall take place in accordance with Newton Public Schools policies and practices and must be identified on the field trip approval forms and approved by the school principal.

XII. List of Forms and Documents

Applications for Field Trip Approval:

☞ Application for Day Field Trip

☞ Application for IN-STATE Overnight Domestic Field Trip

☞ Application for OUT-OF-STATE Overnight Domestic Field Trip

☞ Application for INTERNATIONAL Field Trip

Checklists:

☞ Checklist for Day Field Trip

☞ Checklist for Overnight In-State Domestic Field Trip

☞ Checklist for Overnight Out-of-State Domestic Field Trip

☞ Checklist for INTERNATIONAL Field Trip

Consent Forms:

- ✦ Parent/Guardian Consent and Release for Day Field Trip
- ✦ Parent/Guardian Consent and Release for Overnight/International Field Trip
- ✦ Adult Student Consent and Release for Day Field Trip
- ✦ Adult Student Consent for Overnight/International Field Trip
- ✦ Parent/Guardian Consent for Volunteer Transportation

Other Forms:

- ✦ Overnight Field Trip Medical Information Form
- ✦ Chaperone & Volunteer Driver Application including Guidelines and Rules
- ✦ Waiver Form
- ✦ Disclosure Forms