Field Trip/Transportation Policy

The Lincoln Public Schools supports and encourages field trip activities which are a.) aligned to specific educational objectives, b.) carefully planned, c.) designed to foster equitable opportunities for all students d.) established in a way that imposes limited or no cost to the District and at no cost to students.

Definition

A Field Trip is a school-sponsored instructional activity and/or learning experience provided outside of the regular classroom environment, off school premises, and generally during at least some portion of the instructional day for the purpose of clarifying, reinforcing, and/or enriching a particular skill and/or concept embedded within the district's educational offerings, and designed to improve education results, consistent with the purpose of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Basic Education Program ("BEP"). See RICR 200-10-1.1.1.

Students, staff, and volunteer chaperones shall adhere to all district policies and procedures throughout the course of a Field Trip, including, but not limited to the Student Handbooks.

The district shall comply with any and all applicable laws, rules, regulations or district policies related to fees for school programs. In addition, the district shall maintain its obligations to comply with any and all applicable federal and state laws and regulations throughout the duration of a Field Trip, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Regulations Governing the Education of Children with Disabilities, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Accommodations

Written assurances are required that all accommodations needed for students with disabilities to participate in Field Trips are pre-arranged prior to the approval of the Field Trip. Failure to comply with this provision shall result in the cancellation of the Field Trip.

District Approval

Field trips with the following characteristics must be approved in writing by the building principal and Superintendent:

The round trip travel is less than 120 miles, and/or

- An overnight stay is not required, and/or
- Fundraising activity is not required.

Field trips with the following characteristics must be approved in writing by the Principal and Superintendent of Schools:

- The round trip travel is more than 120 miles but less than 400 miles, and/or
- A fundraising activity is required for the field trip.

Field trips with any of the following characteristics must be approved by the Principal, Superintendent & School Committee:

- Involve a round trip distance of more than 400 miles, and/or
- Requires overnight stay, and/or
- Require a fee charged to student/families, financial support from the school district subsidy in addition to fundraising activity.

Trips that require School Committee approval must be scheduled at least 90 days in advance unless there are special circumstances. Trips that require significant fundraising should be presented for approval well in advance of the 90 days. Trips arising due to special circumstances which cannot be approved 90 days in advance must be approved by the School Committee. The availability of funds for the trip does not ensure that the trip will be approved or conducted.

Transportation

The district shall provide adequate transportation for approved Field Trips through the district budget, fundraising, or in partnership with the community, such as the parent organizations/booster club or other organizations. The district shall comply with applicable laws, regulations, and district policies related to the transportation of students when providing Field Trip transportation. Under extraordinary circumstances, a parent or guardian may provide Field Trip transportation for their child, at the discretion of an appropriate administrator, and subject to the parent or guardian executing a district-promulgated release and/or waiver.

Field Trip Proposal forms shall be submitted to the appropriate school administrator in advance of the proposed trip, with time sufficient for district evaluation and approval, and for collecting executed permission slips from parents/guardians. The School Committee or appropriate administrator shall evaluate each Field Trip Proposal, and approve those that meet the criteria above.

In the event that the fee from a single Field Trip provider will be greater than $5000, the district must adhere to the bidding procedures and/or competitive negotiation procedures outlined in RI Gen. Laws § 45-55-1 et seq.

The district forbids the use of any vehicle outside the state which does not meet the district's insurance requirements. The use of any such vehicle is outside the course and scope of authority or employment of district employees, volunteers, independent contractors and students. The insurance coverage of the vehicle will be primary followed by the driver's coverages and all other applicable policies.

- District Vehicles: Without the prior, express, written authorization of the Superintendent or his designee, vehicles owned, leased, or in the care, custody and control of the district, will not be driven outside of the state.

- Commercial, Chartered & Public Transportation: By contract or any other means, district employees, volunteers, or students will not agree to have the district assume any liability for operation of commercial, charter or public transportation.

- Non-District Vehicles: Vehicles not owned, leased, or in the care, custody and control of the district may not be driven by any employee or volunteer on district business outside the state unless each such vehicle meets the district insurance requirements.

Parent/Guardian Approval

No student shall participate in any Field Trip unless, prior to the commencement of the trip, a parent/guardian of the student, executes and submits to the appropriate school administrator, a district-promulgated Field Trip permission form, which shall include a waiver of liability, assumption of risk, release/hold harmless, and indemnification provision.

Chaperones

Field Trips shall, at a minimum, adhere to the staff/volunteer chaperone-to-student ratios required by the district's insurance carriers.

The School Committee and school administrators reserve the right to require additional staff/volunteer chaperones to supervise Field Trips, depending on the circumstance. Parent, teacher, and community chaperones may not bring additional children on the field trip and must be dedicated solely to the supervision of students for the duration of the trip, including overnight trips.

Only volunteer chaperones who have obtained the requisite background checks and signed a district-promulgated waiver of liability, assumption of risk, release/hold harmless and indemnification form may be used to assist school staff on field trips. All chaperones must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate administrator.

Funding

The district's annual budget shall contain an allocation of Field Trip funds for each school. Students and schools may also participate in fundraising and accept voluntary contributions for the purpose of supporting a school's Field Trip allocation, as outlined in the LPS Gifts, Donations, and Memorials Policy.

No student shall be ineligible to participate in a Field Trip on the basis of their family's ability or willingness to pay, or on their level of participation in fund-raising activities. Field Trip participation may be limited by eligibility requirements based on performance (e.g., academic or athletic competitions), or by capacity requirements, in which case participation may be determined on a first-come, first-served basis.

Special Events and Club Activities

Social Events, such as prom, and club activities not defined as an instructional activity and/or learning experience provided outside of the regular classroom environment, off school premises, and generally during at least some portion of the instructional day for the purpose of clarifying, reinforcing, and/or enriching a particular skill and/or concept embedded within the district's educational offerings, and designed to improve education results, consistent with the purpose of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Basic Education Program ("BEP") are excluded from the prohibition of fees described in this policy. See RICR 200-10-1.1.1.

References:
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004)
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701, et seq.
RIGL § 16-38-6. Restrictions on commercial activity and fundraising in public schools
RI Gen. Laws § 45-55-1 et seq. Award of municipal contracts
200-RICR-20-10-1, et seq. Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Basic Education Program
Giannini v. Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (C.A. No: 2014-5240)
Lincoln School Committee Fundraising & Commercial Activity Policy KH (2020)

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TOWN OF LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE, Lincoln, Rhode Island