

Bellingham Public Schools Guidelines for Volunteer Chaperones

Bellingham Public Schools believe that field trips provide a valuable educational experience for students. Without the help of volunteer chaperones like you, many field trips would not be possible. We thank you very much for giving your time and support to these important activities.

All field trip chaperones are required to complete the [volunteer application](#). No volunteer may chaperone a field trip until the background check is completed and they are approved Bellingham School volunteers.

Guidelines for Volunteer Chaperones

Prior to your field trip, the lead chaperone will provide you with information regarding the activities planned for the trip, expectations for supervising students, and emergency procedures. In addition, we have developed the following general guidelines to help you perform your duties as a chaperone. If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please contact the lead chaperone or the building principal/program manager.

Before the Field Trip

All school rules apply on school sponsored field trips. Chaperones are expected to comply with school policies, follow the directions given by the lead teacher, work cooperatively with other volunteers and school staff members, and model appropriate behaviors for students. The chaperone will follow the trip plan developed by the teacher.

1. To maximize safety and in order to comply with school policy, before or during the field trip, chaperones:

- a. may not use or possess alcohol or other drugs,
- b. may not use tobacco in the presence of, or within sight of students, and
- c. may not administer any medications, prescriptions or nonprescription, to students.

2. Family members under the age of 18 are not eligible to chaperone or participate on field trips as this presents a liability for the school.

3. Chaperones must wear appropriate attire on field trips as they are representing the school as well as setting an example for the students.

4. Chaperones with cellular phones should provide the number to the lead teacher for emergency contact information. Also, make sure that you have the lead teacher's cell number before you leave the school for the field trip.

During the Field Trip

1. Students must be supervised at all times. As a chaperone, you are there to help them learn, ensure safety and that they behave appropriately.

- a. Chaperones may be responsible for supervising small groups of students. They must always stay with you.
- b. Account for students regularly and before transitioning to a new activity.

2. Bathroom Protocols: Keep ALL students together at all times. If one student has to go to the bathroom, please advise the teacher. Oftentimes, designated bathroom breaks are integrated into the field trip schedule for all children at the same time. If a child needs assistance while in the bathroom, it is the teacher's responsibility to assist him/her.

3. Chaperones should not place themselves in and situation(s) in which they are alone with a student, for the protection of both the student and the chaperone.

4. Chaperones must always be available, be mindful of safety, and respond to students' needs. Do not use your cell phone for non-emergency or non-trip related purposes. It is not acceptable for non-field trip related business to be completed while you are supervising students.

5. Student behavior is the lead-teacher's ultimate responsibility. As a chaperone, you are expected to reinforce and redirect students to proper behavior based on school safety and field trip rules. If a student is misbehaving and you cannot redirect them, it is the responsibility of the teacher to discipline a student.

- a. If a student is misbehaving, redirect them with a calm voice (no yelling and absolutely no handling of a student at any time).
- b. If a student ignores your request for redirection, stop, gather your small group and ensure everyone's safety and then, contact the lead teacher immediately.
- c. Remember, it is the ultimate responsibility of the teacher to discipline a student.

6. Please, do not purchase anything for the students, including food, additional activities, trinkets, or souvenirs. Unless pre-arranged by the teacher, all items on a field trip are paid for by the school.

7. Eating and drinking are not permitted outside of designated areas and predetermined times.

8. Be sure to know what to do in an emergency (medical emergency, natural emergency, lost child, serious breach of rule, etc.). Know who is first aid trained, where the first aid kit is, where the cell phone is kept, and who has the copies of parental permission slips with emergency phone numbers and medical information.

9. Have fun! Enjoy the opportunity to spend some time with your son or daughter's class and thank you for ensuring the safety and success of the field trip.

Thank you for volunteering to chaperone!