TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

TO: **BUILDING & DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATORS**

FROM: **LISA MYERS**

DATE: **SEPTEMBER 2025-rev. 9/8/25, 3/16/26**

RE: **FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES**

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Attached please find important information regarding field trip procedures for the 2025/2026 school year. Please share this with any staff who may be responsible for scheduling a field trip.

*** The cost of a MC bus increased to $82 per bus per hour**

**** There is a limit of <u>five (5)</u> Middle Country buses per day assigned to field trips. It is <u>imperative</u> that you get your trip request in TripDirect early.**

***** Out-of-state and overnight field trips should be booked directly with a charter company. They are no longer done with MC school buses.**

****** Effective April 21, 2025, all passengers ages eight (8) and older must wear a seat belt while on a charter bus.**

******* Contracts with outside vendors for transportation should include a stipulation that they cannot sub-contract for buses.**

********No trips on NYS testing days-grades 3-8 and NYS Regents days in June**

cc: R. Gerold
J. Singer
B. Rella
Arrow Security
Directors & Coordinators

FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES
2025-2026

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Anyone who is anticipating a field trip, must submit the TripDirect Form at least three (3) weeks prior to the trip date. Please call the Transportation office at (631)285-8880, 6:00am-1:00pm two (2) days prior to your trip to confirm transportation.

Please review procedures before you take your trip. **You must return to the school at the time indicated on your TripDirect request.** If you run over your allotted time with an outside vendor, you will pay extra for late charges. The area marked "Trip Return Time" must be adhered to due to the fact that afternoon dismissal schedules are affected. **The "Trip Return Time" is the time you are expected to be back at the school, not the time you expect to leave the destination.** Departure from trip sites must be timely. If it took one (1) hour to get to your destination, at least one (1) hour must be allowed for the return trip.

*** Middle Country buses are available between 9:30AM and 1:15PM only. Any trips outside that timeframe should be booked directly with a charter company.

The route to be followed by the bus must be available to the office dispatching the bus. A driver is not to leave the yard without knowing where he/she is going, having written instructions for the route to be followed when there is any doubt. It is the driver's responsibility to get the group to its destination following the safest, most direct route.

Side trips of any kind are not authorized. Any change of route or destination requested once the bus has started the trip is not sanctioned by this office. The driver's immediate response should be NO. If the person in charge of the trip insists, he/she may call their building principal who will then call the Transportation Supervisor. Drivers are only authorized to transport as directed by the Transportation Office. All information must be included in the TripDirect request. Drivers are authorized only to make stops requested and scheduled via the TripDirect form. Drivers are instructed to return students to their home building and nowhere else. The chaperone/coach/person in charge is responsible for gaining access to the building for telephones, restrooms and shelter; be sure the group has access before leaving.

All of the basic safety rules for transportation to and from school are to be followed, including behavior and discipline. **Eating or drinking while the bus is in motion is prohibited. Standees are illegal.**

Any field trip with a destination in excess of 50 miles from the district requires the driver to complete a log book. This is required by the New York State Department of Transportation.

Out-of-state and overnight field trips should be scheduled directly with a charter company. Contracts with outside vendors for transportation should include a stipulation that they cannot sub-contract for buses. Effective April 21, 2025, all passengers ages eight (8) and older must wear a seatbelt while on a charter bus.

A list of authorized carriers is contained herein. Bus drivers must be certified, company insurance policies checked and statements of legal requirements necessary must be obtained before a bus company is authorized to transport students. We furnish each company with the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency. Only carriers listed in this memo are authorized to transport Middle Country students.

If local field trips are to be canceled, the transportation provider must be notified by you at least **four (4) hours prior to your scheduled departure time**. Failure to comply will result in a late charge; currently $150.

PLEASE NOTIFY THE TRANSPORTATION OFFICE IF ANY FIELD TRIP IS CANCELED OR POSTPONED

PROCEDURE

A TripDirect form must be submitted for approval whether or not the district or an outside contractor is providing transportation. Trip organizers are to contact the bus company directly for booking of trips with an outside contractor.

LOCAL FIELD TRIPS

Our 2025-2026 contractor, Suffolk Transportation, should be considered when booking a field trip that starts before 9:30AM and/or ends after 1:15PM. You can reach them at (631)732-3200. If they are unable to accommodate your request, please refer to the list below of approved bus companies.

FIELD TRIPS REQUIRING A COACH BUS

A Middle Country Transportation 19A-certified employee will obtain and review driver abstracts from the bus company prior to your departure date. District or BOCES personnel will perform a pre-trip observation of the vehicle before departure. If the vehicle does not meet safety standards, it will not be permitted to transport students.

By law, coach bus companies must have necessary insurance papers filed with this office before any trip is approved. **The only coach bus companies certified to transport students are:**

Coachman Luxury Transport
1907 Broadhollow Rd
Farmingdale, NY 11735
(631)390-9003

Hampton Jitney
30 County Road 39A
Southampton, NY 11968
(631)283-4600

M & V Limousine Ltd
1117 Jericho Turnpike
Commack, NY 11725
(631)543-0908

Suffolk Transportation Svc
10 Moffitt Blvd
Bayshore, NY 11706
(631)665-3245 x4324

Beacon Mobility
75 Commercial St
Plainview, NY 11803
(516)790-2198

If you wish to use a transportation provider not listed here, please notify the Transportation Office at X8880 <u>BEFORE</u> you schedule your trip to ensure NYS DOT information and insurance certificates are on file prior to you reserving the transportation.

If a bus arrives at your building for a school-sponsored trip and there is some question as to the condition of the vehicle and/or driver, please do not allow the children to board the bus and call the Transportation office immediately.

When contracting with outside vendors for transportation, the contract should include a stipulation that the contracted vendor cannot sub-contract for buses.

**Prior to the trip, the Transportation Office must receive all pertinent information. Please provide the name of the carrier, date(s), destination and an itinerary. This office will contact the carrier, obtain the name and motor vehicle abstract on your designated driver(s). The carrier will be advised that their driver's records and bus are subject to review.

<u>PAYMENT</u>

Charges for field trips are based on miles to and from the school of attendance and the number of hours involved. Therefore, two (2) schools visiting the same destination could possibly be charged different amounts. Payment may be made by:

1. District budget
2. Student/Organization paid
3. Payment to an approved provider should be made in accordance with district procedure for paying an outside vendor

Questions regarding payment should be directed to Annette Dickerson in the Business Office.

<u>Middle Country Buses: $82 per hour per bus</u>

<u>INSURANCE GUIDELINES</u>

New York State has very strict guidelines for the driving of a school bus/and or coach bus. Part of these guidelines include 19A Certification and the abstract of a driver or drivers when transporting students. The states surrounding New York do not have these requirements. In order to protect students, teachers and parents when participating in a trip, vendors must be based in New York and the following guidelines should be adhered to:

1. A Certificate of Insurance should be mailed or emailed to this office at least one (1) week prior to the trip.
2. The Certificate of Insurance must state:
   CERTIFICATE HOLDER:
   Middle Country Central School District as "ADDITIONAL INSURED"
   8 43rd Street
   Centereach, New York 11720
   Attn: Lisa Myers
3. The bus company must provide this office with abstracts of the drivers at least two (2) days before the trip.

If they refuse to provide either, they are an unacceptable carrier.

<u>DO NOT LEAVE THE DISTRICT WITHOUT APPROVAL FROM THIS OFFICE</u>

DISCIPLINE

Commissioner's Regulation - 156.3 - charges the bus driver with the responsibility of "reasonable behavior of pupils in transit". When on a trip, the coach/chaperones are expected to assist with this responsibility. Driver and coach/chaperone must communicate and upon signal or request from the driver, the coach/chaperone should attempt to correct behavior problems. If necessary, the coach/chaperone could request the driver pull over to allow him/her to better gain the attention of the students.

If at any time the coach/chaperone is unable to gain control over the students and the student behavior is distracting or dangerous, the driver is to pull over and not continue until proper order has been re-established. This method of control is only to be used in extreme cases. A FULL REPORT IS TO BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UPON RETURN TO THE DISTRICT.

Proper communication between the driver and coach/chaperone, before the trip, will ensure a joyful experience for all.

EMERGENCIES

Each bus driver has received instruction on procedures to follow in the event of an accident or vehicle failure. Prior to leaving the district, both the driver and the coach/chaperone should receive telephone numbers to call in the event of an emergency. If the bus is other than a district-owned bus, be sure the district and the contractor are both called or advised to contact the other party, giving telephone numbers to them for proper communication.

One of the most important items in the event of an emergency is proper communication. Both driver and coach/chaperone must be aware of who to call immediately. Caller should be able to give the nature of the problem, the type and extent of injuries, if any, vehicle condition, what type of help is needed or has been requested, location and who else has been notified of the problem.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Transportation Office	(631) 285-8880
Lisa Myers Cell Phone	(631) 708-8245
Arrow Security:	School in Session: (631)285-8830
	School Not in Session: (866)818-6200

If you should have any questions with reference to the above, please feel free to contact the Transportation office.