2340a
OVERNIGHT DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRAVEL

The Board of Education recognizes that properly planned and supervised student travel, when directly connected to the instructional program or a Board-recognized co-curricular or extracurricular program, provides first-hand educational experiences that enrich classroom instruction and broaden student understanding. The Board also recognizes that overnight and international student travel carries significant responsibilities with respect to student safety, minimizing lost instructional time, fiscal accountability, vendor compliance, and adherence to applicable Federal and State law. Accordingly, the Board adopts this Policy to govern all Board-sanctioned overnight domestic travel and international student travel conducted under the auspices of the Princeton Public Schools.

For the purposes of this Policy, "overnight domestic travel" means Board-sanctioned student travel within the fifty states of the United States and its territories that requires students to be away from home overnight. "International travel" means Board-sanctioned student travel to any foreign country or destination outside the fifty states of the United States and its territories. "Trip Leader" means the certified district employee designated as the primary responsible adult for the planning and execution of an approved travel activity.

The Superintendent of Schools shall develop and implement administrative regulations necessary to carry out this Policy, including standardized forms for travel proposals, parental consent, medical authorization, chaperone agreements, emergency action plans, and post-trip reports. No overnight or international student travel activity shall be undertaken without prior approval as set forth in this Policy and the Superintendent's implementing regulations.

A. Educational Purpose

All Board-sanctioned overnight and international student travel must have a clear and demonstrable educational purpose directly connected to the district's adopted curriculum, the New Jersey Student Learning Standards pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-3.1 et seq., or a Board-recognized co-curricular or extracurricular program. Travel that is primarily recreational, social, or personal in nature shall not be approved. The educational purpose shall be documented in the travel proposal submitted to the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. The Board of Education shall approve of all travel in advance of said travel as per a schedule developed by the Superintendent.

B. Minimizing Impact on Student Learning

Recognizing that student absence from school is associated with learning loss, the Board establishes the following requirements to protect student instructional time:

1. Travel shall be scheduled, to the greatest extent practicable, to coincide with school breaks, holidays, or weekends in order to minimize missed instructional time.

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2. Overnight domestic travel shall not cause any individual student to miss more than three (3) consecutive school days. International travel shall not cause any individual student to miss more than three (3) consecutive school days (e.g. Thursday, Friday, Monday; or Wednesday, Thursday, Friday). Requests to exceed this limit require written approval of the Superintendent, or their designee, and shall be granted only upon documented extraordinary educational justification.

3. Chaperones shall provide substitute plans for any classes they may miss as a result of travel.

4. For any graded course in which there is an opportunity for overnight travel, an alternative assignment of comparable educational value shall be made available to, but not required of, students who do not participate. Students shall not suffer an academic penalty solely as a result of participation in an approved travel activity; and overnight travel may not be required for credit in a course.

C. Approval Requirements

All overnight and international student travel requires prior written approval as follows:

1. Overnight domestic travel shall be approved by the building principal, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education. The travel proposal shall be submitted to the building principal not less than sixty (60) calendar days prior to the proposed departure date to permit adequate time for Board consideration at a public meeting. The Assistant Superintendent may grant expedited approval for trips resulting from qualification through competition or other special circumstances.

2. International travel shall require formal approval by the Board of Education by recorded vote at a public meeting. The travel proposal shall be submitted to the Superintendent not less than one hundred eighty (180) calendar days prior to the proposed departure date.

Each travel proposal shall, at a minimum, include the following:

a. A written statement of the specific educational objectives and connection to curriculum or Board-recognized program;

b. The destination, dates, and proposed detailed itinerary;

c. An estimated cost per student and total trip budget, with itemized vendor costs;

d. The number of school days students will miss;

e. The identity of all proposed vendors, travel agents, and service providers, with confirmation that each is registered to do business in the United States;

f. Identification of the Trip Leader and proposed chaperones, including the proposed chaperone-to-student ratio and nurse coverage plan;

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g. Draft parent permission and medical information forms;

h. All parents must purchase travel insurance; and

i. All proposed sources of funding.

The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee shall prescribe the format for travel proposals in the district's administrative procedures.

D. Vendor Requirements and Purchasing Compliance

All vendors, travel agents, tour operators, transportation providers, lodging facilities, and other third-party service providers engaged in connection with Board-sanctioned overnight or international student travel shall comply with the following requirements:

1. **United States and New Jersey Requirement.**

   a. All vendors, travel agents, and tour operators engaged by the district shall be registered to conduct business in the state of New Jersey. Travel agents and tour operators shall hold all required licenses and registrations under applicable Federal and state law.

2. **New Jersey Purchasing Law Compliance.**

   a. All contracts for the provision of goods or services related to overnight or international student travel shall be procured in full compliance with the Public School Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq., and the implementing regulations at N.J.A.C. 5:34-1 et seq. The Business Administrator/Purchasing Agent shall be responsible for ensuring that all procurement methods comply with applicable thresholds and requirements.

   b. Prior to the award of any contract in connection with student travel, each vendor shall provide the following documents, as applicable, to the Business Administrator/Purchasing Agent:

      1. A copy of the vendor's New Jersey Business Registration Certificate, as required by N.J.S.A. 52:32-44;

      2. A Non-Collusion Affidavit, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq.;

      3. A Stockholder/Ownership Disclosure Statement, as required by N.J.S.A. 52:25-24.2;

      4. A Political Contribution Disclosure (Chapter 271) form, where required by N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.26, for contracts not awarded through a fair and open process and exceeding $17,500;

      5. A Disclosure of Investment Activities in Iran Certification, as required by N.J.S.A. 52:32-55 et seq.;

      6. A certification of non-involvement in prohibited activities in Russia or Belarus;

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7. An Affirmative Action Compliance Certificate or Employee Information Report (Form AA302), as required by N.J.S.A. 10:5-31 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 17:27 et seq.; and

8. Certificates of insurance demonstrating the vendor's general liability, workers' compensation, and, where applicable, professional liability and errors and omissions coverage in amounts approved by the ~~Board Attorney~~ Board's insurance Risk Manager.

3. **Contract Review.**

a. All contracts with third-party vendors for overnight or international student travel shall be reviewed by the Board Attorney prior to execution. Contracts shall include provisions for cancellation or refund in the event of cancellation due to safety concerns, public health emergencies, or changes in the applicable United States Department of State Travel Advisory, as well as data privacy protections consistent with FERPA, 20 U.S.C. §1232g, and applicable New Jersey law.

b. The engagement of a third-party vendor does not diminish the supervisory authority of the Trip Leader or the district's obligations under this Policy.

E. Parental Consent and Student Eligibility

Written parental or guardian consent is required for all overnight and international student travel. No student shall participate without a signed parental permission form on file with the school. The permission form shall identify the trip, the trip's daily itinerary, dates, purpose, transportation and supervision arrangements, emergency contact information, current medical information, and authorization for emergency medical treatment if the parent or guardian cannot be reached. The consent form shall require the parent to acknowledge that they shall be responsible for the cost of a student having to return home prior to the scheduled end of the trip due to a violation of school rules or a medical or other emergency. Consent forms shall comply with FERPA, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Students must be currently enrolled in the school district and must have submitted all required permission and medical documentation to be eligible to participate. Student participation may be conditioned upon meeting academic or behavioral eligibility criteria established by the building principal, provided such criteria are applied consistently and without unlawful discrimination. Students with disabilities shall be afforded the opportunity to participate with necessary accommodations consistent with their Individualized Education Programs or Section 504 Plans, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. §12101 et seq., Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794, and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination, N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.

Any student who violates the school code of conduct while on a trip may be required to return home on their own at their parent's expense.

F. Financial Considerations

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All expenses for any overnight trip shall be borne by the trip's participants. These expenses shall include, but not be limited to, transportation, lodging, meals, nursing services, costs for substitute teachers for trip chaperones, gratuities, and insurance. The district is committed to ensuring that financial hardship does not categorically prevent eligible students from participating in Board-sanctioned travel activities. Every permission slip must include the following language, "*Princeton Public Schools will not deny students' access to field trips due to lack of funds. Please contact the trip's organizer to arrange accommodations for your student*." The district shall offer financial assistance options, which may include a plan to subsidize a certain number of trip participants through the overall charge to full-paying students, district-sponsored scholarship funds, booster organization assistance, and community grants, in a manner that maintains student confidentiality consistent with FERPA, 20 U.S.C. §1232g. Fund-raising activities shall comply with applicable Board policy. The cost of travel activities shall be kept reasonable and proportionate to the educational value of the activity. The trip organizer shall inform parents of the itemized costs associated with the trip, including but not limited to the cost of flights or other transportation, lodging, substitute and nursing costs, and incidental expenses. The trip leader is responsible for ensuring that the collection and disbursement of all funds complies with all applicable district policies and regulations.

G. Supervision, Chaperones, and Student-to-Chaperone Ratios for Overnight Trips

All Board-sanctioned overnight and international student travel shall be supervised at all times by a certified district employee designated as the Trip Leader, who shall be the primary responsible adult for the planning and execution of the activity, as well as a minimum of one other district staff member. All trip chaperones shall be either district staff or Board-approved volunteers who have completed all requirements for the supervision of students. The following supervision requirements apply:

1. **Chaperone Ratios.**

a. In accordance with best practices for overnight and international student travel, the minimum chaperone-to-student ratios shall be:

1. Elementary school students (grades K–5): the Trip Leader plus one (1) chaperone for every five (5) students;

2. Middle school students (grades 6–8): the Trip Leader plus one (1) chaperone for every ten (10) students;

3. High school students (grades 9–12): the Trip Leader plus one (1) chaperone for every ten (10) students.

b. At least one (1) male and one (1) female adult chaperone shall accompany any trip on which both male and female students participate. For overnight trips, chaperone gender assignments shall correspond to the gender of assigned student room groups.

c. The Superintendent's regulations shall establish higher ratios where the nature of the activity, the needs of individual participants, or the requirements of a student's Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan so require. The Board

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authorizes the Superintendent to increase ratios when the nature or complexity of the travel warrants.

2. **Selection of Chaperones — Impact on Student Learning.**

a. Chaperones who are employed as classroom teachers or other instructional staff shall be selected in a manner that minimizes disruption to student learning for those students who are not participating in the travel. The building principal shall confirm that adequate instructional coverage is in place before approving any instructional staff member to serve as a chaperone. The number of instructional staff members serving as chaperones shall be limited to the extent necessary to maintain required supervision ratios. Finalized chaperone lists for all overnight travel shall be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction at least 30 days prior to the trip, and the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction shall maintain a record of chaperone assignments. The Assistant Superintendent may deny the inclusion of chaperones based on overall attendance patterns and prior chaperone assignments.

b. Incomplete chaperone lists shall result in the denial of future trips for the specified group.

3. **Chaperone Qualifications.**

a. All chaperones who are not employees of the district shall be subject to a criminal history background investigation in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et seq., the standard district employment background history required of staff members, as well as other district-required training for the supervision of students, prior to serving in a supervisory capacity over students.

b. Only PPS students and board approved chaperones are permitted to participate in scheduled trip itineraries, including transportation and meals.

4. **Trip Leader Responsibilities.**

a. The Trip Leader shall maintain a complete roster of all student participants and shall account for all students at each point of the itinerary. The Trip Leader or designated school nurse shall carry emergency contact information and current medical records for all participants.

H. Health, Nursing Coverage, and Safety

1. **Medical Documentation.**

a. Prior to any overnight or international travel, the district may require submission of a current health history and medical authorization for each student participant. Students with significant medical conditions, as determined by the school nurse in consultation with the treating physician, shall provide written physician certification of fitness to travel before participating.

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b. All required medications shall be submitted to the school nurse with authorization to administer forms consistent with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12.3 et seq. The designated nurse or Trip Leader shall carry required medications, authorization forms, and treating physician contact information during travel.

2. **School Nurse Coverage — Nurse-to-Student Ratios.**

a. Consistent with the position statement of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) on school-sponsored trips and best practices for student health care on overnight and international travel, a licensed, registered professional school nurse (RN) shall accompany all overnight and international student travel when:

1. The student group includes any student with a significant or complex health care need, a student requiring daily nursing services or medication administration, or a student whose Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Plan requires the presence of a nurse; or

2. The school nurse, in consultation with the building principal, determines that the health needs of the student group require nurse presence.

b. When a school nurse accompanies overnight or international travel, the nurse-to-student ratio shall be determined by the school administrator, in consultation with the school nurse and based on the assessment of the health needs of the student group.

I. Student Conduct

Students participating in Board-sanctioned overnight and international travel are subject to the district's Student Code of Conduct and all applicable Board policies at all times during the travel activity, regardless of the location. Students shall remain within designated supervision areas, follow all instructions of the Trip Leader and chaperones, and conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Policy 5600 and all aspects of the school Code of Conduct . Students shall not possess or consume alcohol, tobacco products, or any controlled substance in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-9 et seq. and shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations of the jurisdictions visited. Violations of the Code of Conduct during travel may result in removal of the student from the trip at the parent or guardian's expense and in disciplinary action upon return, consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1 et seq.

J. International Travel — Additional Requirements

International student travel requires formal Board approval by recorded vote at a public meeting and is subject to all requirements of this Policy generally applicable to overnight travel and to the following additional requirements.

1. **Eligible Destinations**

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a. The Board shall approve international travel only to destinations for which the United States Department of State has issued a Travel Advisory at Level 1 (Exercise Normal Precautions) or Level 2 (Exercise Increased Caution) at the time of Board approval and at the time of departure.

In the event that the Travel Advisory of the United States Department of State changes or there is any other extenuating circumstance affecting the destination country or countries, the Superintendent shall have the authority to cancel the travel and shall report the cancellation to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The district shall not bear any responsibility for the cost of the canceled trip.

2. **Travel Documents**

a. All students who are citizens of the United States participating in international travel must hold a valid United States passport with an expiration date not less than six (6) months after the scheduled return date. The parents or guardians of students who are not United States citizens shall be responsible for ensuring they hold appropriate travel documentation for the destination country. The district shall not be responsible for ensuring that students who are not United States citizens possess the required documentation for travel outside of the United States and the district shall not be responsible for ensuring the re-entry to the United States of a student who is not a U.S. citizen.

b. The Trip Leader shall carry certified copies of all student passports and emergency travel documents in a secure location separate from the originals.

3. **Health and Immunization**

a. Travel health insurance providing emergency medical coverage of not less than $100,000 per person and emergency medical evacuation and repatriation coverage of not less than $250,000 per person shall be required for all student participants. Proof of coverage shall be submitted to the district prior to departure.

4. **Communication**

In the event of any deviation from the approved itinerary, the trip leader shall communicate said change to the district and all parents as soon as practicable.

5. **Third-Party Vendors — International Travel**

a. In addition to the vendor requirements set forth in Section D of this Policy, any third-party travel company or tour operator engaged for international travel logistics shall be registered and in good standing with the United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA), the American Society of Travel Advisors (ASTA), or an equivalent professional association, and shall carry student group travel insurance in amounts acceptable to the Board's Insurance Risk Manager.

b. The district shall verify, prior to contract execution, that the tour operator maintains errors and omissions insurance and carries a consumer protection or surety bond consistent with applicable Federal or state requirements for tour operators.

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6. **Cancellation Policy.**

a. The district shall establish and publish a written cancellation and refund policy for each approved international trip. The district shall make good-faith efforts to recover deposits and partial payments from vendors in the event of district-initiated cancellation due to safety concerns. Families shall be advised in advance that certain non-refundable costs, including airline change fees, may not be recoverable in all circumstances.

b. Trip Cancellation and Interruption Insurance shall be required for all trips. As a condition of participation in Board-sanctioned international student travel, each student participant shall obtain trip cancellation and interruption insurance providing coverage of not less than the total non-refundable cost paid by the family for the trip, inclusive of airfare, deposits, and program fees. Such coverage shall include trip interruption benefits sufficient to cover the cost of return transportation to the United States in the event a student must leave the group early due to illness, injury, or family emergency. The district shall not be responsible for reimbursing families for non-refundable trip costs.

K. Policy Violations

Violations of this Policy by district staff may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, consistent with applicable collective bargaining agreements and New Jersey employment and tenure law, N.J.S.A. 18A:6-10 et seq. and N.J.S.A. 18A:28-5. Violations by non-employee chaperones shall result in revocation of chaperone authorization. The district reserves the right to exercise any and all other remedies available under the law, and as mandated by law, for chaperone conduct that violates this policy or New Jersey statute. Violations by students shall be addressed pursuant to the district's Student Code of Conduct and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.1 et seq.

The Superintendent of Schools shall prescribe procedures to ensure that all district staff responsible for student travel activities are aware of the requirements of this Policy.

Adopted:

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