

Regulation Code: 3320-R School Trips

I. TRIP APPROVAL

All school trips must be approved in advance by the principal. Out-of-state and/or overnight trips must also be approved in advance by the superintendent or designee. International trips are subject to more stringent guidelines per Board Policy 3220 and require advance approval by the Board of Education.

A. Approval Criteria

School trips must meet at least the following criteria to be approved:

1. have a trip sponsor who is an employee currently employed in the school system;
2. be relevant to the course of study and provide an effective method for accomplishing curriculum objectives;
3. be consistent with the educational goals of the board;
4. keep to a minimum any disruptions of other educational programs and/or loss of instructional time;
5. be appropriate for the age group involved in the activity;
6. be reasonable in terms of time, distance, and cost;
7. be planned with careful consideration of student safety; and
8. ensure that all eligible students will be given an opportunity to participate and that no student will be denied participation because of the expense of the trip or because the student has a disability.

B. School Trip Requests

The trip sponsor must obtain prior approval for a school trip by filing a written school trip request with the principal, at least two weeks prior to the trip date. The school trip request must include the following information:

1. trip sponsor's name and contact information;
2. purpose of the trip, including a detailed explanation of how the trip will coordinate with grade appropriate school curriculum;
3. explanation of which courses, classrooms, grades, etc. will participate in the trip and the estimated total number of students who will participate;
4. cost per student and how costs will be addressed;
5. detailed itinerary of the trip, including dates, times, location, schedule, etc.;
6. mode of transportation to be utilized and a detailed description of how any requirements for transporting students with special needs or disabilities will be met;
7. estimated number of chaperones accompanying the students;
8. statement explaining how students with disabilities will be accommodated to ensure their full participation in the trip; and
9. statement indicating whether or not the trip site(s) is/are accessible to students with disabilities.

In addition to the required information listed above, out-of-state and/or overnight trip requests must also include the following:

10. detailed routing of the entire trip including all scheduled stops;
11. the name(s), address(es), and contact information for all lodging accommodations;
12. lodging details, including the number of students in each room, whether there will be a chaperone on each floor, where the rooms are located (e.g., block of adjacent rooms, separate floors for males and females, etc.), description of showering and restroom facilities, and other relevant information; and
13. if all students and chaperones will not be lodged in a single building (e.g., different hotels, separate cabins, etc.), a detailed description of where the students will be in proximity to the rest of the group and to the chaperones.

The principal may grant preliminary approval if it will be impractical or impossible to complete all of the specific details of the request until permission to proceed has been granted. Final approval will be subject to receipt of all additional information required by the principal. In extenuating circumstances, the principal may extend the deadline for filing a trip request in advance.

C. Review Process

1. The principal shall review the school trip request subject to the criteria above and any other school-specific criteria.
2. The principal is encouraged to consult with the school system finance department and/or transportation department for trips that involve significant costs or complex travel arrangements.
3. The principal shall decide whether to approve the trip request within 5 days of receipt.
4. Once the principal makes a decision, the principal shall inform the trip sponsor whether the trip request was approved or denied.
5. The principal shall retain a copy of the request and return a copy to the trip sponsor.
6. For approved out-of-state and/or overnight trips, the principal shall forward the school trip request to the superintendent or designee for approval. **Note that out-of-state and/or overnight trips require approval from both the principal and the superintendent or designee.**
7. The principal shall return incomplete school trip requests to the trip sponsor for correction.

II. PREPARATION FOR AN APPROVED TRIP

A. Contracts

Any contracts related to the trip must be signed and approved by authorized school officials in accordance with policy 6420, Contracts with the Board, and policy 6421, Pre-Audit Certification. The trip sponsor does not have authority to enter contracts on behalf of the school system.

B. Sponsor Responsibilities

1. Prior to the trip, the trip sponsor shall carefully review all applicable board policies and regulations on school trips.
2. After a trip is approved, the trip sponsor may finalize all reservations and other arrangements for the trip. **No expenditures related to the trip may be made nor any fees or payments collected until after the trip has received final approval as specified in this regulation.**

3. The trip sponsor shall request all required substitute teachers per school procedure.
4. The trip sponsor shall make arrangements for students who have elected not to participate in the school trip to receive alternate educational services throughout the duration of the trip.
5. The trip sponsor shall develop a plan for the event that a student needs to be removed from the trip for disciplinary reasons.
6. Before the trip, the trip sponsor shall submit the following to the principal/designee:
 - a. a final schedule/itinerary with contact information (addresses, phone numbers, maps, etc.) for all destinations and lodging (the information must be detailed enough so that the principal can locate or contact the trip sponsor and/or students at any time during the trip);
 - b. a final roster of all students, school personnel, and chaperones participating in the school trip; and
 - c. signed and completed parental consent forms as described below for all student participants.

The principal is authorized to cancel the trip if information is missing or incomplete (see also Section V, below).

C. Student Attendance

1. Students who are suspended from school or assigned to in-school suspension on the day of a school trip are prohibited from participating in the trip.
2. Participation in an approved school trip will be considered an excused absence. However, the student must make up missed assignments as required by the student's teacher(s).

D. Parental Consent

1. All students who participate in a school trip must provide signed parental consent forms to participate, unless a student is officially emancipated, in which case the student can sign on his or her own behalf.
2. A student who fails to provide a signed consent form may be denied participation in the trip.
3. No student's grade may be lowered if the student's parent or guardian refuses consent to participate in the school trip.
4. The consent form or other documents in possession of school officials must include all of the following:
 - a. a description of the trip and activities planned, including a detailed itinerary;
 - b. the purpose of the trip;
 - c. the supervision to be provided throughout the trip;
 - d. the method of transportation to be used;
 - e. the arrangements for any meals that will take place during the trip;
 - f. a statement, signed by the participating student, indicating that the student understands that all school rules, the Code of Student Conduct, and any additional rules established by the principal for school trips are in effect during the school trip;

- g. notice of any potentially dangerous activities or situations (e.g., swimming) that may arise on the trip;
- h. a section for the parent to include any special instructions regarding his or her child's allergies, disabilities, swimming ability, etc.;
- i. a section for the parent to note whether the student is currently being administered medication or self-administering medication during school hours in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students, and/or to request that medication be administered outside of regular school hours, if medically necessary during the trip;
- j. notice that the parent may be responsible for transporting his or her child home from the trip, at the parent's expense, immediately upon request of the trip sponsor if the child violates school rules and/or the Code of Student Conduct in such a way that requires the student to be removed from the group or activity for the remainder of the trip;
- k. notice that the board may not carry insurance coverage for the trip or for injuries to the student and that the parent or guardian is strongly encouraged to procure their own insurance through the board's student insurance program or through a separate insurance carrier;
- l. the parent or guardian's emergency contact information;
- m. notice and acknowledgement that the trip may be cancelled or postponed and that a refund of fees or deposits paid in advance is not guaranteed;
- n. a signature of the parent or guardian consenting to the child's participation;
- o. a signature of the parent or guardian consenting to the trip sponsor taking, arranging for, or consenting to any emergency medical procedures or treatment that may be required during the trip, and acknowledging that the parent will be responsible for the costs of any such treatment; and
- p. a signed release of liability and waiver.

5. If a private vehicle is authorized as the means of transportation for a school trip, a parent/guardian must submit a written request or authorization for their child to travel in private vehicles.

III. SAFETY AND SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

The principal and trip sponsor shall ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times during the school trip.

A. Chaperone Requirements

1. All school trips require adequate supervision with an appropriate number of chaperones to monitor the number of students involved.
2. Chaperones must be current school system employees or volunteers, including parents, who meet the standards established by policy 5015, School Volunteers.
3. Chaperones must abide by all other applicable board policies, regulations, and school rules. At all times during a school trip, chaperones are strictly forbidden from engaging in any behavior that would violate board policy if an employee engaged in the behavior on school property. This includes, but is not limited to consuming, using, possessing, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, or tobacco products, or possessing a weapon.

4. If applicable, a special needs student will be accompanied by a designated aide or nurse in accordance with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. The aide or nurse will not be considered a chaperone for purposes of meeting the required student-chaperone ratio.

B. Additional Chaperone Requirements for Overnight Trips

1. Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with safety and security in mind.
2. Separate accommodations for male and female students and chaperones must be maintained. In all cases, single showering and/or restroom facilities shall be used by males and females at different times.
3. Chaperones must be assigned to accommodations on every floor that is occupied by students.
4. Chaperones shall not stay in the same room or private accommodation as a student unless necessary to meet a student's needs as identified in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan or the chaperone is the student's parent or guardian. If the form of accommodation is a group dormitory, this prohibition shall not apply.

C. Threat Assessment

The principal and superintendent or designee shall check and heed any travel advisories or restrictions that have been issued by the State Department or other governmental agencies.

D. Higher Risk Activities

The principal and trip sponsor shall develop a detailed safety plan for trips that involve a higher risk of injury due to the nature of the activity (e.g., water activities) or location (e.g., theme parks, fairs/carnivals). Notice of higher risk activities must be included on all parental consent forms.

Swimming - including wading to the ankles or knees - and other water sports or activities (e.g., diving, boating, rafting, canoeing, waterslides, etc.) are not permissible without explicit approval from the superintendent and prior written permission from the parent/legal guardian.

E. Medical Treatment

School employees may administer medication to a student during a school trip only upon prior written request of the student's parent or guardian and prior authorization by the principal or designee in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicines to Students. A separate request and authorization is required for the administration of medication to students (or a request to self-administer medicine) during the trip when the scheduled dose falls outside of regular school hours.

In the event of a medical emergency, the trip sponsor or any other staff member may arrange for the emergency medical treatment of a student. The school system will not be responsible for the cost of any such treatment.

As soon as possible during or after a medical emergency, the trip sponsor shall notify the principal and fill out a written incident/injury report.

IV. TRANSPORTATION

The most appropriate and cost-effective mode of transportation should be considered for all school trips. The principal shall work with the transportation department to ensure that the arranged transportation will accommodate any students with disabilities who require accommodations.

The following modes of transportation are available for school trips.

- Regular school buses for in-county trips during normal school hours, so long as reservation of the bus(es) will not interfere with the regular transportation program. Regular school buses must be reserved through the transportation department.
- Activity buses for in-county or out-of-county trips. Activity buses must be reserved through the transportation department.
- Commercial transportation (e.g., charter bus, commercial flight) with a pre-approved company, for all travel that exceeds a 100-mile radius from the school.
- The superintendent may allow travel in private vehicles if driven by a parent/chaperone who has signed a form acknowledging that the board's insurance coverage will not apply, the board is not liable for any accident or injury, and the driver's private personal auto insurance coverage will apply.

Exceptions to these rules are permissible only with the prior approval of the superintendent or designee.

V. TRIP MODIFICATIONS AND/OR CANCELLATION

If any significant aspect of the trip changes after the initial approval has been granted, the trip sponsor must restart the process established in subsection I.B and re-submit a new school trip request to the principal. The trip sponsor shall notify all students and parents of any significant modifications to the trip arrangements or itinerary prior to the trip date.

The principal or superintendent may cancel or postpone school trips when necessary if conditions change such that student travel is unsafe or otherwise impracticable under the circumstances. The trip sponsor shall notify all students and parents of such cancellation or postponement as soon as reasonably possible.

The principal and trip sponsor shall endeavor to refund any trip fees or deposits to the fullest extent possible but such reimbursements are **not guaranteed**.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES DURING A TRIP

A. Sponsor's Responsibilities

1. The trip sponsor shall be accessible by cellular phone at all times during the trip. The principal shall have the sponsor's contact information readily available.
2. The trip sponsor shall keep, for the duration of the trip, a notebook or other record with emergency contact information for each participant and all appropriate paperwork, including the parental consent forms.
3. The trip sponsor or designee shall store medication in a safe and secure location during the trip and shall administer medication to students in accordance with policy 6125, Administering Medicine to Students, except to a student who has been pre-authorized to secure and self-administer his or her own medication.
4. The trip sponsor is responsible for all activities during the trip and shall ensure that all activities conform to the approved itinerary.
5. The trip sponsor is responsible for enforcing applicable board policies, regulations, school rules, and the Code of Student Conduct. The trip sponsor shall impose disciplinary consequences for violations accordingly. The trip sponsor is encouraged to contact the principal prior to sending any student home from the trip early.
6. If any emergency occurs, the trip sponsor shall contact the principal as soon as possible. If the principal is unreachable, the trip sponsor shall contact a central services administrator, transportation supervisor, or the superintendent.

B. Student Responsibilities

1. Students must abide by all applicable board policies, regulations, the Code of Student Conduct, and school rules at all times during school trips.
2. Students must also abide by any additional rules established by the principal to govern the conduct of students during participation in school trips. Students will be notified of such rules in advance of the trip.
3. If a student is found to have violated any of these rules and regulations and the trip sponsor deems it necessary to remove the student from a trip or from an activity during the trip, the student must be supervised by a teacher or chaperone at all times. If a student is sent home early, he or she must be accompanied by a teacher or chaperone until he or she is released to the physical custody of his or her parent or guardian.

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Transylvania County Schools
