

# Seattle Public Schools Guidelines for Volunteer Chaperones Overnight Field Trips

## Thank You for Your Support!

Seattle Public Schools believes 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.

In order to help ensure that District-sponsored field trips result in safe and rewarding experiences for all participants, we have prepared these guidelines to provide information about volunteering as a field trip chaperone.

## Becoming a Volunteer Field Trip Chaperone

Because student safety is our paramount concern, Seattle Public Schools has established procedures for screening all school volunteers who may have unsupervised access to children. Please check the District website "Volunteering at SPS" (under the Families & Communities tab) for the latest requirements. No volunteer may chaperone a field trip until the background check and other requirements are completed. If you have recently moved to Washington State and plan to chaperone an overnight field trip, the District may require you to be fingerprinted so we may access other states' criminal history databases. Please allow sufficient time to complete this requirement before the scheduled field trip departure date.

The District also requires that volunteer chaperones be at least 21 years old to supervise students in grades 6-8, 25 years old for students in grades 9-12.

## 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.

1. All school rules apply on District-sponsored events. Chaperones are expected to comply with District policies, follow the directions given by the District's lead chaperone, work cooperatively with other staff and volunteers, and model appropriate behaviors for students. Be sure you are familiar with the Seattle Public Schools' *Code of Conduct*.
2. In order to comply with District policy, during District sponsored events, chaperones:
  - may not use, sell, provide, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
  - may not use tobacco in the presence of, or within the sight of, students
  - may not possess any weapon
  - may not administer any medications, prescription or nonprescription, to students
3. Student behavior is your responsibility. School rules related to student behavior apply. Go over rules and standards of behavior, safety rules, and any site specific rules with students. Ensure that students do not get involved in any extra activities not pre-approved by administrators and parents. If a student will not follow your reasonable requests to comply with behavior and safety rules, please notify the lead chaperone or other District staff chaperone promptly.
4. Students must be supervised at all times while at District-sponsored events. Go over use

of the buddy system with students under your care. Account for all participants regularly and before changing activities. Be sure you know when and where to meet the rest of your group at the end of the visit. Chaperones must be readily available 24/7, be mindful of safety concerns, and respond to students' needs.

5. Night-time supervision can present different challenges. Chaperones should not be sleeping in the same rooms with students, but must ensure that students are in their rooms and not engaged in prohibited activities. This will generally mean a bed check at lights out and at least one additional check during the night. Your lead chaperone will help you understand the requirements and procedures for specific locations where students will be lodging. Different rules may need to be established for locations where students are staying in a gym, in open cabins or other non-traditional lodgings.
6. For the protection of both the student and the chaperone, chaperones should not place themselves in situations in which they are alone with a student.
7. Other than the spouse or partner of a chaperone, with prior written approval of the principal, family members or friends of a chaperone may not participate in a District-sponsored overnight field trip.
8. Chaperones who transport students in their personal vehicle must complete the Volunteer Driver Checklist form. You are expected to comply with all District and State student transportation rules and regulations. Be aware that your personal vehicle insurance provides primary coverage in the event of an accident or injury.
9. 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.

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In the event that I have a personal emergency, please contact:

\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name*                      *Relationship*                      *Daytime Phone*

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the "Guidelines for Volunteer Chaperones – Overnight Field Trips," have read these guidelines, and agree to comply with the guidelines as a school volunteer.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*