

<b>Business &amp; Finance</b>	<b>Seattle Public Schools</b>  <b>FIELD TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS: General Guidelines and Procedures for All Field Trips</b>	<b>Administrative Procedure 2320-A</b>  <b>7/25/2018</b>  <b>Page 1 of 8</b>
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This Administrative Procedure provides instructions for implementing School Board Policy 2320 – Field Trips and Excursions.

This procedure **MUST be read in its entirety first** by Principals (or the District Department sponsoring the trip) and chaperones as it outlines important guidelines and procedures for all field trips. After reading this entire procedure, please refer to the procedure appropriate for your type of trip for further details on guidelines, procedures, and permission forms.

Principals (and/or the District Department sponsoring the trip) are responsible for ensuring that all field trip policies and procedures as outlined in all of the field trip procedures are adhered to.

Transportation for field trips **must** be arranged in accordance with District procedures, including Transportation of Students (if District employees will be transporting students), Volunteer Driver Checklist and the Transportation Department's guideline Field and Athletic Trips.

### **Types of Field Trips**

A field trip is **school-sponsored** if school or ASB funds pay for the activity, it is part of the educational process (e.g. there is any relationship between participation and grades or credit for a class), or it is supervised or staffed by school employees during their contract year. All school-sponsored field trips must be approved in writing by school administration, Executive Director of Schools, risk management and/or the Superintendent as required under these procedures.

For school-sponsored field trips, no qualified student who is member of the group making the trip shall be prevented from participation due solely to a lack of funds. If families are being asked to contribute to the cost of the field trip, the school must ensure that fundraising opportunities or scholarships are made available to assist students whose families' financial circumstances do not allow them to contribute the full amount. If students do not qualify for field trip participation based on behavioral or disciplinary actions or academic standing, alternative educational opportunities will be made available to them at the school during regular school days.

A field trip is **privately sponsored** if no school funds, equipment or materials are used; the field trip does not occur during school hours; and the school or the district are not named in promotional materials. All such materials should include clear and prominent notice that the trip is not sponsored by the school or the District. Planning or organizational meetings for privately sponsored field trips should be held off-site or, if at the school, according to the public use of school facilities guidelines. Enrollment at the school should not be a requirement for participation in privately sponsored field trips.

**NOTE:** Promotion of a privately-sponsored field trip by a teacher in his or her classroom or elsewhere during class time is, in most cases, a violation of the District Ethics Policy, Section 4.f. (Misuse of Position). Such violations will be reviewed for disciplinary action.

If a trip is privately-sponsored, the individual organizing the trip will assume all responsibility for the safety of participants and may be personally liable for any incidents or injuries that occur. **Approval by the District is not required and the District will assume no liability for these trips. None of the remaining guidelines in this Administrative Procedure need to be applied to privately-sponsored trips.**

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SPS has divided school-sponsored field trips into three types: 1) Day Field Trip, 2) Overnight Field Trip, and 3) International Field Trip. This division ensures that permission forms and procedures are directly relevant to the type of trip and activities students will be engaged in.

For more information about the type of field trip you are planning and permission forms, refer to the applicable procedure listed below:

1. **“Day Field Trips,”** Administrative Procedure 2320-B
2. **“Overnight Field Trips,”** Administrative Procedure 2320-C
3. **“International Field Trips,”** Administrative Procedure 2320-.D

### **Purpose of Field Trips**

Field trips provide an important avenue for student learning that complements the classroom experience in critical respects. They can enrich and extend the curriculum and, in doing so, often motivate students. Field trips expose students to new ways of thinking and being that are often best understood when experienced firsthand.

It is important to note the serious obligations that SPS staff members have to ensure that all field trips are not only educationally sound, but also safe and secure learning experiences. To meet this obligation, we must partner with students and families to ensure we understand the responsibilities we share when students are engaged in experiences outside of the classroom. This procedure provides field trip rules and guidelines that will help fulfill this obligation.

### **Field Trip Categories** (A trip often meets more than one category.)

- Curricular/Educational Field Trip:** A field trip that is integral to a specific curriculum unit or serves a broader educational purpose. This might include a focused visit to a college, museum, an historic location, or a nature reserve.
- Cultural Field Trip:** A field trip where the content of the trip is cultural in nature. These field trips might include a visit to a dance or art exhibition or a visit to a foreign country for a language immersion experience.
- Community Building Field Trip:** This type of trip may reinforce relationships in an existing group of students, prepare students for a significant transition into a new structure or community (e.g. students entering grades 6 or 9), help students work collaboratively, or assist in the development of leadership and decision making skills. These trips might include an outdoor education day trip or camping trip experience with an overnight commitment.
- Service Learning Field Trip:** This is a voluntary field trip where students learn the value of helping others in their own community and beyond. These trips show students how empowering service to others is while developing students' leadership skills.
- Athletic Field Trip:** A field trip in which travel (local or out of state) enables a team to participate in athletic training, practice or competition. This might involve varsity, junior varsity, “C” or freshman team competing in WIAA sports and activities, approved club sports teams, or individual competitors qualifying for state or regional competition in those sports.

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### General Guidelines for All Types of Field Trips

- **Principals** have the primary responsibility to ensure that all procedures pertaining to field trips are followed by their school.
- Permission for field trips must be in written form only. Without a signed permission slip, the student may not attend the field trip. Trip leaders are responsible for seeing that permission slips are filled out completely and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Permission slips are legal documents and may not be altered.
- Permission slips must be used for any excursion that is school-sponsored, including those scheduled on weekends, holidays or during school breaks.
- Retain completed field trip request forms, original permission slips, medical forms, and other signed documents for field trips in the school office. These records must be kept for the current school year plus six (6) additional years after all field trips have occurred. Current year and one prior year should be retained at the school, earlier years can be prepared for archiving and sent to District archives at the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence.
- A separate parent/guardian permission slip must be obtained and filed for each field trip. There are two categories of exceptions authorized.
  - “Blanket” authorization (i.e. parent/guardian approval through the use of a single form for any trips to be taken on unspecified dates during the school year) is only allowed for walking field trips in the immediate vicinity of the school.
  - “Series” authorization (i.e. parent/guardian approval through the use of a single form listing a series of essentially identical events on specified dates) is only allowed for events in which both the activities and the means of transportation are the same. Examples might include a series of “away” basketball games against other local high schools with yellow bus transportation or a series of parade appearances by a school marching band with approved charter bus transportation.
- Parent/Guardian permission slips **must** be sent home in English and preferably in the language of the home.
- Only parent/guardians are authorized to sign permissions forms. For questions regarding legal guardianship, refer to Legal at 252-0110.
- Staff should be aware that errors, late submissions, and poor security for a field trip at one school or site may have negative side effects on field trips for other schools and students. Therefore forms **MUST** be submitted **AT LEAST 4 weeks in advance for “Day Field Trips”** and **AT LEAST 12 weeks in advance for “Overnight Field Trips”** and **“International Field Trips”** to ensure that guidelines are adhered to, safety procedures are followed, and parents, the Principal, and the district are informed and prepared to support the trip. If these deadlines are not met, then a field trip application may be rejected.

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These timelines will be waived to allow student participation in competitive events requiring a team to qualify (through earlier rounds of competition) before they are invited or accepted into the event. Examples of this might include athletic competition at the State level, a robotics competition at the regional level, or a musical competitions at the national level. While timelines will be waived, other field trip requirements must still be met, which may mean having chaperones pre-screened, tentative travel arrangements in place and other preparation under way before the results of the earlier rounds of competition are known.

### **Approval and Filing Process for Field Trips**

It is necessary that the proper procedures are followed and that copies of all checklists, permission forms, and if applicable, medical forms are kept on file in the school office and when appropriate, filed with the district. Details regarding approval process and record keeping are outlined below:

- “Day Field Trip” forms are submitted to the principal **AT LEAST 4 weeks in advance** (or at the principal’s discretion) and approved by the principal; all forms, including signed checklist form, are filed at the school.
- “Overnight Field Trip” forms are submitted to the principal **AT LEAST 12 weeks in advance** and approved by the principal; all forms, including the signed checklist form, are filed at the school; copies of original Overnight Field Trip Request form, signed original checklist page, and other required documents are submitted to the district **AT LEAST 12 weeks in advance** and approved by the appropriate Executive Director; copies of all forms also filed at the district. Please email or fax the form to the appropriate Executive Director. In addition, please follow up with a phone call or email to ensure documentation has been received.
- “International Field Trip” forms are submitted to the principal **AT LEAST 12 weeks** in advance and approved by the principal; all forms filed at the school; copies of original International Field Trip Request form, signed original checklist page, and other required documents are submitted to the district **AT LEAST 12 weeks in advance** and approved by the appropriate Executive Director, Risk Management and the Superintendent; copies of all forms also filed at the district. Please email or fax the form to the appropriate Executive Director as well as to Risk Management. In addition, please follow up with a phone call or email to ensure documentation has been received.

### **General Trip Planning Guidelines**

- Please note that trip planning timelines (i.e. “Twelve Weeks (Or More) Prior to the Field Trip”, etc.) in each procedure chronicle the minimum amount of time for planning. **More time for pre-trip planning is strongly recommended for all types of field trips.**
- Together, principal and trip leader must review and complete the appropriate type of field trip Procedure and Checklist throughout the planning process.
- **The student’s and his/her family’s ability to pay may not be a criterion for field trip participation. Trips must be open to all students regardless of their financial situation.**
- Sites for field trips should be carefully selected to enrich student learning and increase students’ exposure to new people, places, and activities. It is recommended that a school plan its trips from grade to grade and subject to subject to avoid duplication.

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- Discuss with students the trip's purpose and learning goals in the weeks prior to the trip; engage students in activities before, during, and after the trip so that the field trip's learning potential is maximized.
- Teachers and staff at the school should be consulted with and/or informed about the trip well in advance so they may plan their schedules accordingly.
- If applicable, provide alternative arrangements for students not attending the trip or a comparable activity for students unable to participate in a portion of your trip.

### **Chaperone Guidelines**

- At least one chaperone on every field trip must be an SPS employee, from the school or department sponsoring the trip. Unless the group is small (fewer than 20 students) or the destination is within 90 minutes of Seattle, a second chaperone should also be a district employee. Other authorized chaperones may include parents and volunteers who are 21 years of age or older in the case of grades K-8 trips, 25 years or older for grades 9-12 trips. The trip leader must be sure that all non-SPS chaperones are familiar with the *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools – Code of Prohibited Conduct* and other district and school-based rules of conduct.
- We require that all volunteer chaperones be background checked in accordance with current SPS Volunteer Program procedures. This requires at minimum a WATCH background check for all field trips. A comprehensive national background check or fingerprinting may be required for overnight/international field trip chaperones. Please allow sufficient time.
- All chaperones must be oriented to their duties, including a review of the document “Guidelines for Chaperones” for the appropriate type of trip, a review of the *Basic Rules of Seattle Public Schools - Code of Prohibited Conduct*, and an opportunity to ask the Principal and the Lead Chaperone any questions about school-specific and trip-specific requirements.
- For all field trips, every effort should be made for chaperones to be representative of the student group and include males and females.
- The student-to-chaperone **maximum** ratios must be:
  - Day Field Trips:
    - Grades K-5, 10:1
    - Grades 6 and up, 15:1
  - Overnight Field Trips: 10:1
  - International Field Trips: 10:1

Please note the following: For students with disabilities, the ratio of staff to students must be at least the same as the ratio mandated in their IEPs for their classes.

### **Safety Guidelines**

- The Department of Safety & Security (206-252-0707) must be notified in the event of a serious emergency and should be used as a resource for questions regarding safety on field trips.

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- Review each student's emergency information in the student information system (PowerSchool) to ensure/cross-check accuracy of all field trip permissions and forms.
- Please be specific when completing the "School Portion" of the Parent/Guardian Authorization for Field Trip Form. Parents/guardians must be given sufficient information to understand the nature and scope of the activity(s) and the associated risks.
- All chaperones must carry with them at all times during the trip a copy of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) (which can be found under the "Day," "Overnight" and "International" procedures) that outlines procedures for calling 911 in the US or the EAP for foreign countries which outlines emergency procedures for the respective country. While an EAP outline is provided in the "International Field Trip Procedure," it is the lead chaperone's responsibility to research the information required for foreign countries. During the trip, a copy of the EAP for the foreign country visited should be left with the Principal.
- Consult with and, when necessary, receive training from and obtain written comments from the school nurse regarding any students who have expressed medical needs (e.g. medication, asthma, allergies, etc.). If any student has a serious medical condition, please be sure that his/her doctor writes a letter indicating that the child may safely attend and participate in trip activities.
- The district reserves the right to require additional training and/or certifications such as CPR/AED and First Aid depending on the location and purpose of the trip.
- The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel any field trip up to and including the day of departure to ensure safety.
- In case of a medical or other emergency, the chaperones must immediately contact Safety & Security, principal, the parent/guardian, and the district (i.e. Executive Director or Superintendent depending on the level of emergency).
- If a principal or lead chaperone finds the behavior of a student unacceptable on a field trip and the student fails to correct his or her behavior, the child may be sent home after notifying his or her parent/guardian. The principal or lead chaperone must document their contact with the parent or guardian.
- Conduct regular "head counts" throughout your trip to ensure that all participants are accounted for.

### **Prohibited Activities**

Certain categories of activity are excluded from coverage under Seattle Public School's insurance program. Non-insured activities that will not be authorized on any field trip include:

- Air or flight activities (other than regularly scheduled commercial flights), including airplane flying, hang gliding, helicopters, hot air ballooning, parasailing, and skydiving.

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- Motorized races and contents, including auto racing, soapbox and go-cart racing, demolition contests, stunting and tractor pulls.
- Maintenance, operation, use, loading or unloading of any aircraft or any motorized vehicle used in races or contests, except for electric-powered endurance activities
- Any activities (rafting, tubing, kayaking, canoeing, etc.) on any body of water that has been designated as Class I through Class VI under the international whitewater classification system.
- Any jet ski or other similar motorized personal watercraft.
- Any watercraft over 26 feet in length, unless in advance of the trip a certificate of insurance has been obtained from the owner/operator of the vessel, showing the name of the insurance carrier and the limits of insurance, which must be at least \$1,000,000 of Protection & Indemnity (marine liability) coverage.

There are many other types of activities that are prohibited or subject to specific approval due to their inherent risks. These include other activities in or on the water, visits to amusement parks, rock climbing, ropes courses and other higher risk activities. Please refer to the [School Sponsored Activities Matrix](#) for those activities that are being considered for your field trip. If an activity does not appear on that list and the principal or lead chaperone has concerns about the potential risks, please consult with Risk Management for guidance.

#### **Water Activities (On the Water)**

- Water activities are permitted involving larger commercial or passenger vessels which meet the US Coast Guard standards for safety and hold a valid Certification of Compliance for the state or its international equivalent. Washington State Ferries, Victoria Clipper and Argosy Harbor Tours meet these requirements. (Please note: There **must** be one life jacket per passenger.) In addition, be sure the water-related activity is clearly listed in the appropriate [Parent/Guardian Authorization for Field Trip](#) form. Parents/guardians must be given sufficient information to understand the nature and scope of the activity(s).
- [Water Activities](#) such as kayaking and canoeing (or the equivalent where the movement of a craft depends on the physical endurance of its operator) and travel in small water crafts are not permitted on a SPS field trip unless a request is submitted and approved by the district. These requests are submitted to and reviewed by Risk Management. Activities on any body of water designated as Class I through Class VI under the international whitewater classification system are excluded from the district's liability coverage and will not be authorized. Significant lead time is needed (12 weeks or more) to allow for safety requirements to be met.

#### **Student Attendance Logistics**

- Provisions must be made for any student not attending the trip and staying at school.
- Attendance forms should indicate when a student is physically absent from the school building on a field trip, but participating in a school-sponsored program being conducted off school grounds. (Note: It is important to know and document where students are at all times.)

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**Procedure Owner:** Richard Staudt

**Cross Reference:** Policy 2320, Field Trips and Excursions

**Legal References:**