

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

Field trips offered through the Mansfield Public Schools are intended to allow students to have experiences that provide them with insight, information, or knowledge that might not be learned within the classroom, bringing real-world context to the classroom curriculum.

All field trips are considered an extension of the school program, and all rules of conduct and regulations as specified in the Mansfield Public Schools Student Handbooks are in effect throughout any school trip. Any student who violates the rules of conduct may be sent home. In this case, the student's parent/guardian will either pick up the student from the field trip location or be responsible for any expense incurred in sending the student home. Further disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with student conduct policies outlined in the school's Student Handbook.

Field trips are open only to students in the Mansfield Public Schools at the grade level(s) participating in the field trip. A permission slip must be completed, signed by student and parent/guardian, and returned to the sponsoring staff member before a student will be allowed to attend any field trip; such form will include appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication. All required proof of medical insurance and other insurance and acknowledgement of expected conduct must be secured at least two weeks prior to the trip.

Attendance on school-sponsored trips that are not part of required class activities is a privilege, which may be withheld; no student may attend such a trip if, in the determination of the principal or his/her designee, the student's behavior has been so inappropriate as to be deemed disruptive to the planned trip.

Students who attend field trips must be given a reasonable and adequate opportunity to complete assignments for other classes.

Types of Field Trips

For the purpose of this policy, a field trip is defined as a school-sponsored activity, involving individual students or groups of students, who are traveling off school grounds during school hours, or as part of a school-sponsored event outside of school hours. All field trips and student travel opportunities should be appropriate for the grade level(s) involved.

A. Academic-related: A classroom-associated learning experience to afford students the opportunity to gain insight, information or knowledge; to build community and teach students to work collaboratively (e.g., "Ropes" challenge course or student leadership training); or to celebrate or culminate group work (e.g., end of year activity for 5th, 8th or 12th grade). Such field trips should provide a positive educational experience and should not prevent students from performing well in other subjects. Field trips should be planned to minimize the disruption of other classes. If substantially all members of a class are participating in a trip, the school should provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

B. Athletics, Clubs, and Performing Arts: Interscholastic athletics trips are a part of the approved interscholastic league schedule and other district-approved non-league contests which are not longer than one day and do not meet the definition of an extra-curricular excursion. Examples include but are not be limited to football, soccer, cheerleading, or other sports traveling to other school and athletic venues for games and contests. Club and student activity trips and performing arts trips are part of an approved interscholastic competition and other district approved contests which are not longer than one day and do not meet the definition of an extra-curricular excursion. Examples include but are not limited to marching band and other music ensembles, drama performances, math club meets, or robotics club competition.

C. Extra-curricular: School-sponsored extra-curricular trips are **optional, enrichment opportunities** in which students participate on a voluntary basis. Extracurricular trips should be planned to minimize disruption to classes and to take place primarily during vacation periods. Some trips, due to travel logistics, may require students to travel during regular school time, but these days should be minimized to the extent possible. Student participation in such trips is voluntary, and it is the responsibility of the student to identify and make up work missed. No trips should be planned for the week preceding and the week of term and end-of-year final exams and, for seniors, during their last week of classes. **No school funds are to be used for extracurricular trips.**

Criteria for Approval

The decision for field trip approval will depend on the amount of school time lost, the value of the learning objectives, cost, and planning, organization, and supervision of the proposed trip. No trip will be approved unless it meets the criteria outlined in this policy. Trip organizers are expected to adhere to the approval process and timeline outlined in this policy.

In evaluating a field trip proposal, the administration and School Committee will consider:

1. Relevance of proposed trip to a unit of study (academic trips); scheduled athletic contests of that team, or student competitions or events (athletic trips, club, or program trips); or enrichment and enhancement of knowledge, leadership skills, global perspectives, and emotional and physical challenges (extra-curricular trips).
2. Impact of proposed trip upon available school resources, and upon family budgets, in light of fundraising goals/plans and cost to students.
3. Considerations of trip destination, including degree of access to the field trip for all students involved in the unit of study or activity.
4. Health and safety concerns and additional factors specific to particular proposals.
5. Trip application process, if applicable, and selection criteria.
6. Thoroughness of trip planning, such as provision for adequate adult supervision, in regard to student safety and welfare.

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

Authority for Approval

1. **All school-sponsored day in-state field trips** must receive the prior approval of the Department Chair (secondary level) and Principal (all levels).
2. **All school-sponsored day out-of-state field trips** must be approved by the Department Chair (secondary level), Principal, Superintendent, and the School Committee. Such proposals must be submitted to the School Committee at least 6 weeks in advance.
3. **All school-sponsored late night or overnight field trips (in- or out-of-state)** must be approved by the Department Chair (secondary level), Principal, Superintendent, and School Committee. Late night travel is defined as travel between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m.
4. **All school-sponsored international field trips** must be approved by the Department Chair (secondary level), Principal, Superintendent, and School Committee.
5. **All Overnight Trips (including in-state, out-of-state, and international travel)** require **initial approval** by the School Committee and **final approval** by the building Principal.
 - a. Applications for **initial approval** of domestic overnight field trips must be submitted to the School Committee at least 6 weeks in advance, unless the activity could not have been reasonably planned in that time frame. Requests for initial approval of all international trips must be submitted 12 months in advance.
 - b. Overnight and international travel opportunities are limited to high school students only. Exceptions will be reviewed case by case for those middle school students who are members of and are participating in a recognized school activity, with the approval of the activity advisor and middle school principal.
 - c. **Final approval** must be sought from the building Principal no less than 30 days prior to the scheduled departure date, unless the activity could not have been reasonably planned in that time frame.
 - d. **Approval by Health Services** is required of any overnight field trip proposal prior to final approval by the building Principal.
 - e. All overnight trip organizers will report to the building Principal, the Superintendent, and the School Committee upon completion of the trip. This may include a presentation by the faculty and students to the School Committee.
6. **Emergency Approval for overnight and/or out of state travel:** In extraordinary situations, the School Committee Chairperson may make emergency approval of field trips, when time is of the essence, on behalf of the full Committee and only after prior approval by the Department Chair (secondary level), Principal (all levels), and the Superintendent.
7. Approval by the appropriate authority must be completed prior to staff distributing information about the trip or engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip, including soliciting students or other promotional activities.

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

8. The Superintendent maintains the authority to recommend the cessation of annual field trips.

Non-School Sponsored Trips

The School Committee will only review school-sanctioned field trips for approval. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

- a. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from using school time, school facilities, school resources (including student databases), or school communication systems to promote, discuss, or manage a private trip with students.
- b. Teachers and other school staff must clearly state that any such field trip or tour is not school-sponsored or endorsed by the Mansfield Public Schools, and such statements must appear on each item of field trip/tour literature.
- c. The sponsoring teacher or staff member must acknowledge in writing to the District that the trip is not school-sponsored or endorsed and must obtain an acknowledgement signed by the student and both parents/guardians that the tour is not school-sponsored.

Inclusion

Reasonable accommodations will be provided to allow eligible students with disabilities to participate in all scheduled field trips.

Cancellation of School-Sponsored Trips

The Superintendent has the authority to cancel any field trips up until the time of departure for any reason. In such event, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed.

The School Committee reserves the right to recall trips in progress, if they believe there is potential danger to students or any other reason deemed appropriate by the School Committee. In the event that the School Committee must cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reason, the Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds for School Committee review.

Funding

The Mansfield Public Schools will strive to offer field trips with a minimum of expense to the individual student. The financial impact on school system and family resources will be considered as part of the approval process. Reasonable charges may be assessed to cover the actual field trip costs. If students are charged individual fees for participation, every effort should be made to provide scholarships where needed. For Academic-related day field trips (in-state and out-of-state) that are attended by a majority of the students in a class, no student will be denied an opportunity to participate because of the financial inability of his/her family to pay the field trip fee. However, in all other instances, no student is guaranteed a full or partial scholarship for the purpose of attending any field trip.

Fundraising

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

Field trips that are optional and voluntary in nature should offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising for voluntary field trips should be reasonable and commensurate with students' obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs. Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets. Trip cancellation/interruption coverage is recommended for all trips that carry a significant cost to students and families.

Health and Safety

- A. As specific travel destinations may have particular health concerns, requirements, or risks, approval by the District's Health Services required of any overnight field trip proposal prior to final approval by the School Committee.
- B. The building Principal will ensure that adequate chaperone coverage is provided on all field trips, taking into account the purpose and location of the trip, grade level, and participants (co-ed or single sex). Whenever possible, all trips must have a minimum of two chaperones. All chaperones must be cleared through the Massachusetts Criminal Offender Records Information (CORI) system before being approved. For any type of overnight trip, at least one chaperone must hold a current certification in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- C. The parent/guardian of each student must complete the District's Permission Form and Release Agreement, including appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication, prior to the student participating in the field trip. The Athletic Consent/Waiver is required for all student participation in the District's interscholastic athletic program.
- D. All overnight field trips require that the trip organizer schedule an informational meeting with parents prior to the trip. The trip organizer of all overnight field trips must file accurate itineraries and appropriate telephone numbers including hotel numbers and cell phone numbers of trip leaders with the school office.
- E. All travel will be provided by the District or by commercial carrier unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent. All students must be transported with the group, and will remain with the group for the duration of the field trip from and to the school or designated drop off/pick up site, with exceptions for emergencies and extenuating circumstances with prior approval.
- F. Use of private vehicles or leased vans to transport students to and from field trips, athletic events, or school-sponsored trips should generally be avoided. Requirements regarding student transportation in private vehicles will be made in accordance to District Policy EEAG/Student Transportation in Private Vehicles. Staff and parents who use their own vehicles risk being legally liable for any injury a student sustains while in the vehicle.
- G. Whenever possible, trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m. Additional requirements regarding transportation and trip scheduling for overnight and long-distance travel will be made in accordance to District Policy JHH/Late Night and Overnight Student Travel.
- H. Sponsoring staff members/trip organizers are accountable and responsible for the supervision of students, including the orientation of trip chaperones regarding student supervision.

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

- I. As part of the District's Emergency Management Plan, the Superintendent will develop protocols for domestic and international travel that:
- Provide guidance for possible emergency situations related to the health, safety, or welfare of any or all members of the group, such as serious medical problems, crime, natural disasters, political unrest, or missing person;
 - Provide a mechanism for support and communication channels to the trip organizer through during the course of travel;
 - Establish a protocol for communication from the Principal to the parents in specific situations;
 - Provide parents with a means of contacting a student in a true emergency situation, through the Principal and Trip Organizer;
 - Includes an Emergency Information Folder that will be utilized by the Trip Organizer and Principal during travel.

Health and Safety – International Travel

In addition, the following requirements will apply to international travel:

- A. All international travel opportunities will be school-sponsored and tour-company managed.
- B. All students, chaperones, and district employees participating in any international field trip will be required to provide proof of comprehensive health insurance (with domestic and international coverage) and emergency travel assistance coverage, including medical evacuation and repatriation. Trip-cancellation/interruption coverage is recommended.
- C. Travel advisories and warnings from the U.S. State Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be consulted by the Principal as part of the initial approval process and again by the Principal and Superintendent immediately prior to departure.
- D. Students, chaperones, and district employees will register with the local U.S. Embassy via the State Department's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).
- E. Students, chaperones, and district employees traveling on an international field trip are responsible for obeying all rules and regulations as specified in the Mansfield Public Schools student and faculty handbooks, as well as all host country laws.
- F. Liability insurance coverage naming the Mansfield Public Schools as a certificate holder is required as part of any contract signed with an international student travel/tour provider. The Superintendent will review coverage, exclusions, and liability limits in consultation with the District's insurance provider.
- G. The Superintendent will consult with the District's attorney in advance of any District employee signing a contract with an international student travel/tour provider to ensure that the contract satisfies the Committee's policy and provides the District sufficient protection against liability.
- H. The building Principal will retain copies of trip documents, signed medical disclosures and releases, etc., at least until the expiration of the statute of limitations for filing a claim.

STUDENT FIELD TRIPS

Ethics Disclosure Requirements

State ethics law require District employees to disclose participation in any field trips where the value of the trip is \$50 or more; this requirement also applies to tour company “loyalty” benefits that a District employee may receive for sponsoring multiple tours in the form of trips, points, goods, or cash. Staff members must fill out the appropriate disclosure forms, and the building Principal must approve the forms as the appointing authority.

Implementation

The Superintendent will develop appropriate guidelines and regulations pursuant to this policy for the operation of field trips that will provide for the health and safety of students and staff, and that meet the requirements of state law or regulation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Accommodations
- Approval Process
- Cancellation/Trip Insurance
- Consent/Waiver
- Costs
- Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks for all chaperones
- Emergency Contacts
- Forms
- Fundraising
- Liability insurance
- Medical insurance and medical care
- Provision during schools hours for those students not participating
- Scholarships
- Student behavior
- Supervision/Chaperones
- Transportation
- Travel Plan

Revised: October 27, 2017
 October 6, 2015

REF: *Bon Voyage! A Legal and Policy Making Guide for School Boards on International Student Travel*, National School Boards Association, 2014
 MA State Board of Education Model Policy, adopted December 16, 2003
 MASC

LEGAL REF: Chapter 346 of the Acts of 2002 (et al) approved on October 9, 2002
 M.G.L. [69:1B](#); [71:37N](#)
 M.G.L. [268A:19](#)

CROSS REF: ADDA, Background Checks
 EBC, Emergency Plans
 EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles
 JJH, Late Night or Overnight Student Travel
 JLCD, Distribution of Medication
 MIAA Regulations