

FIELD TRIP POLICY

Field Trips can bring the school and community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations.

The Attleboro School Committee recognizes that it is desirable and valuable, on occasion, to supplement and extend classroom activities with voluntary and optional domestic and international academic and extracurricular field trips to broaden perspectives and educational experiences of students. The Attleboro School Committee encourages activities that augment classroom instruction and promote healthy social development.

Field trips which are an extension of a unit of study may be authorized by the Principal and Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee, provided the field trip does not exceed a distance of 75 miles in one direction or require an overnight stay. Trips which include travel beyond 75 miles, overnight, out-of-state or out-of-country, and those involving greater than ordinary liability (for example, a boat trip) shall, in addition, require approval of the Attleboro School Committee.

Field trip approval forms requiring Superintendent's approval shall be sent to the Superintendent at least two (2) weeks prior to a field trip. A field trip which requires School Committee approval must be submitted to the Superintendent thirty (30) days prior to the field trip. Trips which require "extensive" preplanning and/or fundraising must be presented for approval prior to any fundraising or financial arrangements or commitments. Fundraising activities for field trips will be subject to approval by the school principal or designee.

A. DEFINITIONS:

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this Policy:

1. **Academic field trips** include all off-campus trips that are organized as part of the class curriculum. There must be pre-and post- trip instructional activities and/or assessment. Participation by all members of the class is expected. Provisions for comparable instructional experiences during the school day must be made for students not participating in the academic field trip.
2. **Extracurricular field trips** are those off-campus trips that are organized by a school sponsored club, group, or athletic team. Participation is optional and voluntary. The School Committee is mindful, however, of the financial burden such travel may place on some families and the potential for disparate educational opportunities for students. Away games or matches that are part of the athletic program are considered extra-curricular field trips under this definition.
3. When an **academic field trip** or an **extra-curricular field trip** is planned to occur between midnight and 6 a.m. or to require a student to stay overnight away from home, the procedures for planning and approving overnight trips apply. It is understood that overnight trips may include travel within Massachusetts, in other states, and internationally.

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

Only field trips meeting the following conditions are permitted. The sponsoring faculty member shall ensure that:

1. Trips are appropriate for the age group involved in the activity.
2. Trips are reasonable in terms of time, distance and cost.
3. Trips are not scheduled during the last full week (plus any partial week) of school of the school year. In general, extracurricular international/domestic field trips should occur during non-school time.
4. Trips are not scheduled during the MCAS examination periods for students taking the MCAS exams. If unique and special circumstances present an academic opportunity, the Principal and Superintendent will consider and evaluate each request with care.
5. Trips are planned with careful consideration of student safety which includes, without limitation, an appropriate number of adult chaperones. All chaperones must be over the age of eighteen and have approved Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks on file with the Superintendent.

6. While there must be adequate supervision, the Principal must also minimize the number of teachers missing classes due to chaperoning.
7. Provisions for medical emergencies, including attending medical personnel, if necessary.
8. If a student requires accommodation, it will be referred to the student's liaison or to the Section 504 Coordinator. A determination will be made by the 504 or IEP Team as to what accommodations are necessary for the student's participation in the field trip
9. No student is denied the opportunity to participate in an academic field trip because of the inability to pay.
10. Costs associated with an optional/voluntary extracurricular field trip will be the responsibility of the individual student family. Where appropriate, there may be fund raising to help defray costs. All fundraising must be done in compliance and accordance with Attleboro Public Schools and individual school policies.
11. Should an emergency situation occur, the sponsoring faculty member is responsible for notifying the Principal by telephone as soon as possible. He/she must have a list of parent/guardian contact numbers in his/her possession and notify parents as appropriate.
12. Trip cancellation insurance must be made available for all multiple day out-of-state trips and international travel.
13. Helmets are required for bicycle and ski/snowboard trips.

C. AUTHORITY TO APPROVE/DISAPPROVE

1. All school-sponsored day out-of-state and/or international field trips must receive prior recommendation of the sponsoring faculty member and the approval of the Principal.
2. All school-sponsored overnight and/or international field trips (in-or-out-of-state) must receive prior recommendation of the sponsoring faculty member and the approval of Principal, Superintendent, and School Committee.
3. Pursuant to MGL, Chapter 71, Section 47, the School Committee is responsible for approving out-of-state and/or overnight academic and extracurricular field trips. However, in the event that approval is required for an academic or athletic contest, competition or tournament before a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, said approval authority is delegated to the Superintendent of Schools.
4. Where practical, the Attleboro School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled trip dates by the Superintendent and/or designee.
5. The approval process shall be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
6. The School Committee reserves the right (a) to cancel trips up to departure and (b) to recall trips in progress, if they believe there are national and/or international conditions that pose potential danger to students or any other reason deemed appropriate by the School Committee.
7. The Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/situations which might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

D. APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Approval for all trips must be received prior to making any financial contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in this policy. The initial documentation to request a field trip must include:

1. Proposed dates and itinerary.
2. Estimated number of students expected and percentage of eligible students participating.
3. Cost per student (if applicable).
4. Mode of transportation and schedule.

5. Ratio of chaperones/teachers to students is contingent upon the location and circumstances of the trip (one adult for every 8 to 13 students as is appropriate).
6. Description of arrangements for meals and lodging (if applicable).
7. Description of security features for transportation and accommodations.
8. Means of financing.
9. Copy of any contract and refund policies associated with the trip.
10. Draft copy of the letters to be sent to parents and guardians referencing the specifics of the trip including all of the above and any rules specific to the trip which are in addition to the Attleboro Public Schools student conduct policies, student handbook rules or regulations, and the MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations. For international field trips, the sponsoring faculty member will provide parents a copy of the State Department travel advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.
11. In the case of academic field trips, there must be a description of the educational alternative and mapping of that alternative for students not attending the trip, if applicable.
12. Satisfactory Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check of all chaperones is required and must be on file in the Superintendent's Office.
13. All tour companies must be qualified to organize the trip. The tour company must carry adequate Professional Liability Insurance.
14. International trips must include a printout of the State Department Travel Advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.
 - Additional information may be requested from the appropriate authority prior to making a decision.
 - Should external circumstances change after the initial trip approval detailed modifications to the relevant approval documentation (see above) will be required.

F. FUNDRAISING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

1. Fundraising events and activities may be planned to offset the costs for academic and extracurricular field trips but are not required. Any such fundraising shall take place in accordance with Attleboro Public Schools and individual school policies on fundraising, including but not limited to: the amount of time devoted to fundraising should be reasonable. Group fundraising activities are preferred.
2. When an individual fee is charged for an academic field trip which is part of the approved curriculum, the Principal may provide a partial and/or full scholarship from an individual school's gifts and donations line to a student if, due to financial hardship, such scholarship is necessary to allow a student's participation. However, no student is guaranteed a partial or full scholarship for the purpose of attending an optional and/or voluntary extracurricular field trip.
3. Consistent with the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest law, no staff member may receive any financial benefit in excess of \$50 from any company, agency, public or private entity for organizing, or making the arrangements for, any trip.

G. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

1. All Attleboro Public Schools Policies on Student Behavior, Student Handbook rules and regulations, and MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, regarding student conduct will apply and be in effect at all times for academic and extracurricular field trips.
2. If a student violates any Attleboro Public Schools student conduct policies, student handbook rules or regulations, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, or otherwise misbehaves while on a field trip, the student will be immediately suspended from the field trip and may be sent back to school or home, as appropriate, by the faculty sponsor at the parent's/guardian's expense. In addition to being sent home, the individual will be subject to the consequences for the action/infracton upon his/her return to

school as defined by the aforementioned student conduct policies, student handbook rules and regulations, and MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations.

3. Attleboro Public Schools Policies on Student Behavior, Student Handbook rules and regulations, and MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, regarding student conduct will be given to chaperones. Chaperones shall agree to implement and enforce them; failure to do so will result in not being able to chaperone future school sponsored trips.

H. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS on FIELD TRIPS

In accordance with the Attleboro Public Schools Policy on Administration of Medications (JLCD), the administration of medications while on a day field trip is discouraged if medically feasible. However, in the event that it is medically necessary for a student to be administered medication while on a field trip the procedures promulgated in the Policy on Administration of Medications will apply. Parents/legal guardians will need to complete the Medical Form for Students on Overnight/International Trips and the Medical Delegation Permission for Overnight/International Trips.

I. TRANSPORTATION, LODGING, AND SCHEDULING

1. The use of private vehicles for student travel is not permitted, except in a bona fide emergency. Existence of a bona fide emergency will be determined by the principal or the trip leader if the principal is not present. Staff and parents/guardians who use their own vehicle risk being legally liable for any injury a student sustains while in the vehicle. Such trips will use district or commercial vans or motor coaches and employ professional licensed drivers.
2. When school bus transportation is required, the school district's regular transportation contractor is to be utilized, if available. If the school district's regular transportation carrier is not available, only contractors licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) or the Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers may be used. Carriers with an FMCSA or Department of Defense safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" cannot be used. FMCSA carrier ratings are available online by providing the carrier's D.O.T. identification number. Department of Defense carrier ratings are also available online. All transportation vendors also must maintain liability insurance with a minimum of \$500,000 (five hundred thousand dollars) per occurrence for bodily injury.
3. Overnight accommodations at all hotels, motels, or other lodging and rules and regulations to ensure student wellbeing should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.
4. Whenever possible, the trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m., due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.
5. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. If a planned trip exceeds ten (10) consecutive hours of driving, a second driver must be utilized or the driver must be off duty for eight (8) consecutive hours before driving again.

J. PERMISSION, CONSENT, and RELEASE FORMS

Any student going on a school sponsored field trip must submit a properly completed and signed "Permission to Participate, Emergency Treatment and Medications Consent and Release Form" prior to engaging in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip. Other forms that must be submitted include "Authorization of Medication Delegation and/or Medical Form for Students on Overnight and International Trips." These forms must be signed by the student (if appropriate) and the student's parent or legal guardian prior to a student taking part in any school sponsored field trip.

For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups that routinely travel as part of their activities, the student (if appropriate) and the student's parents/guardians may submit one consent/release form to cover all events for the season.

Students presently subject to a level of disciplinary action, as defined in the Student Code of Conduct, may not be permitted to go on the field trip. Their parents/guardians will be notified by the Principal that the student is unable to attend the field trip, and of the alternate arrangements for in-school instruction.

The permission, consent, and release forms will include a section in which the student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians will be required to affirm and record that they have read the "Permission to Participate, Trip Emergency and Medications Consent and Release Form" and they understand the contents of the forms. The release form will include

any and all claims related to or arising out of the field trip as well as those claims related to or arising out of cancellation of the trip by the School Committee as described in Section J-1. Since student safety is a primary consideration, the ultimate responsibility is a family choice. By signing the permission, consent and release forms, the student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians affirm that he/she/they have decided to allow the child to participate in the school-sponsored academic or extracurricular field trip with full knowledge that:

1. The School Committee reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the Attleboro Public Schools had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The APS School Committee will take the following criteria into consideration when making its decision: (a) U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory; (b) Homeland Security Advisory (alert status); and/or (c) Declaration of War or armed conflict. Additionally, the critical judgment of the School Committee, with input from the Superintendent, Principal, and Faculty Sponsor, will be taken into consideration.
2. In such event, that a trip must be cancelled, 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 student and parents understand that he/she/they may lose any and/or all of the funds he/she/they have expended for the voluntary trip.
3. The School Committee, and its officers, agents, and employees shall be forever held harmless for remuneration of any and/or all costs associated with this voluntary trip.
4. The Attleboro Public Schools and the Attleboro School Committee will not be responsible for any financial obligations incurred as a result of the planning of the field trip or school sponsored trip, or for any monies that are non-refundable due to a student's exclusion from participation and access to a field trip or school sponsored trip as a result of the student's suspension or expulsion from school on the date or dates of the field trip or school-sponsored trip.
5. Students and their parents/guardians will be held responsible for any damage done to hotels, rental properties, real or personal property. Parents/guardians must agree to pay for any damages that may be done by their son/daughter and/or aid school officials in collecting money necessary to do so.

K. NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS

Teachers and other school staff sometimes privately conduct educational tours or trips involving the participation of Attleboro School District students. The Attleboro School Committee neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school district.

Information regarding non-school sponsored field trips teachers and other school staff are expected to clearly state that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the Attleboro School Committee and the Attleboro Public Schools District do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

The School Committee will only review for approval school-sanctioned trips, which include a field trip request and required documentation as defined by Section D, Items 1-14. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

Legal References:

- Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 27.00
- MA Department of Education Time on Learning Regulations 603 CMR 27.01-27.07
- M.G.L. Chapter 71§ 37 M&N
- M.G.L. Chapter 71§38R

Additional Resources:

- US Department of State Advisory
- Homeland Security Advisory
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Carrier Ratings
- United Motorcoach Association - Student Motorcoach Travel Safety Guide
- Department of Defense's approved list of Motor Carriers
- Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District, Wenham, MA
- Norton Public Schools, Norton, MA
- Massachusetts Association of School Committees