

REGULATION ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: Policy IFS

Responsible Office: ASSOCIATE SUPERINTENDENT FOR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

FIELD TRIPS

A. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures for field trip activities.

B. BACKGROUND

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) provides guidelines and procedures for field trips in three categories: Day trips, overnight trips, and foreign field trips.

C. DEFINITIONS

1. *Field Trip* is any activity or excursion away from the school property taken by groups of students as a class or part of a class or a student organization, under sponsorship of the school and under the guidance and supervision of professional staff members on school days and/or non-schools days.
2. *Day Trip* is a field trip which does not include an overnight stay.
3. *Foreign Field Trip* is a field trip for students to locations outside the United States.

D. PROCEDURES

1. The chaperone/student ratio shall be at least
 - a. Pre K, K, ECI - One (1) chaperone to every four (4) students
 - b. Elementary School - One (1) chaperone to every ten (10) students
 - c. Middle School - One (1) chaperone to every ten (10) students
 - d. High School - One (1) chaperone to every fifteen (15) students
 - e. Overnight - One (1) chaperone to every five (5) students
 - f. Foreign - One (1) chaperone to every five (5) students
2. Developing a Proposal for a Field Trip

In the development of a plan for a field trip, staff is responsible for assuring that:

- a. The objectives of the trip are specifically related to the instructional program or regularly scheduled extracurricular and co-curricular activity. Evidence of pre- and post-trip instructional activities prior to and subsequent to the trip shall be provided;
 - b. The total ongoing school program shall not be adversely affected by participation of staff and students on the trip;
 - c. Participation in the trip shall not be detrimental to the total program of individual students;
 - d. Appropriate educational experiences shall be provided for those eligible students who do not participate on the trip;
 - e. Efforts must be made to find ways to permit maximum participation by interested and qualified students regardless of economic circumstances;
 - f. All students regardless of disability must have the opportunity to participate on field trips; and
 - g. Teachers not participating in the trip, who have regularly scheduled activities for students for whom the trip is planned, shall be informed of proposed plans.
3. Obtaining Approval and Implementing a Field Trip
- a. The initial proposal for the school-sponsored field trip must be approved by the principal. A copy of the "Anne Arundel County Public Schools Instructional Field Trip Request Form" must be submitted to the appropriate Regional Assistant Superintendent (RAS) for information and notification of the required substitute days at least 30 days prior to the trip. The RAS shall send a copy of the completed and approved form to the Communications Center.
 - b. Once the trip is approved, the following steps must be followed for transportation:
 - i. When a bus is required, procedures established by the Transportation Office are to be followed, inclusive of what vehicles and equipment are authorized to transport students. If a bus with a lift is required, arrangements must be made in advance.
 - ii. A copy of the "Driver Permission/Student Self-Transportation Form" must be completed and signed by the principal, sponsoring teacher, and parent/guardian for students to use private transportation. When private transportation is used for a small group or team event involving travel to a school-sponsored activity, these persons shall be advised that their own insurance coverage is primarily responsible and that

AACPS does not provide excess liability coverage.

- iii. Teachers and other staff members shall not be required to drive students to activities which take place away from the school building; however, they may do so voluntarily with the advance approval of their principal or immediate supervisor. Teachers and other staff members drive under the liability coverage of their own insurance policies. They shall be compensated at the IRS mileage rate for all driving done in their own automobiles.
- iv. All designated private vehicle drivers shall observe the following safety rules, which shall be distributed by the school to all drivers before transporting students on field trips.
 - (a) Every driver and passenger **must use safety belts**. No passenger can be transported when a safety belt is not provided.
 - (b) Drivers must **not transport more than the recommended** number of passengers specified by the vehicle's manufacturer or specified law.
 - (c) The driver must hold a valid in force permanent license.
 - (d) No consumption of alcoholic beverages or use of drugs will be permitted.
- v. Sponsoring teachers shall:
 - (a) Develop an alternative plan for notifying concerned parties (transportation, students, and chaperones) to deal with delayed openings and trip cancellation.
 - (b) Provide parents/guardians with specific written information about objectives of the trip, costs, and transportation arrangements, including departure time and approximate time of return, chaperones, and insurance information. A "Field Trip Permission Form" must be signed and returned to the school and retained for a minimum of six (6) months at the school.
 - (c) Prepare an emergency information roster by bus number. Information pertinent to the days of the trip must include the name, address, home, and work phone numbers of parents/guardians for each student involved in the trip. Complete a "Field Trip Inventory Form" and leave a copy in the school office.

- (d) Collect all monies and deposit with the school financial secretary on a daily basis.
 - (e) Review "Chaperone Duties and Responsibilities" with chaperones.
 - (f) Review expectations for responsible student/chaperone behavior; i.e., bus behavior, group and individual courtesy, following directions, and Board Policy JCC, Code of Student Conduct and the Superintendent's Regulations JCC-RAB, Use of Tobacco by Students, and JCC-RAC, Alcoholic Beverages, Controlled Dangerous Substances or Other Intoxicants.
 - (g) Chaperones are expected to complete all volunteer requirements and pay field trip costs.
 - (h) Review emergency procedures; e.g., an accident involving student(s), separation from the group.
 - (i) Refer to Board Policy/Regulation JEC, Administering Medicines to Students, to ensure that procedures are followed.
 - (j) Ensure that all movies being shown on school field trips, including those from a video rental store, public library, or privately owned by a teacher or chaperone, are in compliance with federal copyright laws and are age-appropriate. All movies to be shown on all Field Trips must have a Movie Public Performance Site License.
- vi. Students participating on a field trip during school hours are permitted to make up any school work missed, and the students' absence from class for any approved field trip should not be recorded as an absence from school.
4. Student Searches on Field Trips
- a. In accordance with Section 7-308 of the Education Article, *Annotated Code of Maryland*, student searches on field trips may be conducted by a principal, assistant principal, or teacher only if:
 - i. There is a reasonable belief the student has possession of an item which is a criminal offense or in violation of any other state law or Board policy or administrative regulation and a third person is present during a student search.

- ii. When conducted by a teacher, the teacher has received training in how to conduct student searches and the principal has designated in writing those teachers who are authorized to conduct student searches on the field trip.

5. Field Trip Limitations

- a. Principals are responsible for monitoring the number of field trips taken by staff. The school principal, in consultation with the Faculty Advisory Council, shall establish guidelines regarding the frequency of field trips and other points pertinent for a particular school's staff. The principal must determine that the frequency of trips does not have a detrimental effect upon the otherwise scheduled educational process of either the student participants or those non-participating students whose regularly assigned teachers are scheduled to be in attendance on the trip.
- b. Participation in any field trip may not be mandated by a sponsoring teacher. No student shall be penalized for failure to participate in said trip, irrespective of cause, unless participation in field trips or at scheduled performances is a condition precedent to team performance, group membership, or enrollment in the program.
 - i. The sponsoring teacher shall have the primary responsibility of arranging suitable programs for students who do not participate in the field trip but whose class or classes would be cancelled by virtue of the sponsoring teacher and/or chaperone being in attendance on said field trip.
 - ii. Any student not participating on a field trip is still expected to attend school during such time as the field trip is in progress, unless said student has an excused absence in accordance with Board Policy/Regulation JB, Compulsory Attendance.
- c. Students shall follow the Code of Student Conduct, Policy JCC and its accompanying regulations, while on any school-sponsored field trip.
- d. School-sponsored field trips shall not be planned to occur in June or August. Exceptions shall be subject to approval by the appropriate Regional Superintendent.

6. Financial Arrangements

- a. If any field trip is to be funded by Board funds, in whole or in part, specifically including school bus transportation, but not necessarily limited to same, the extent or scope of such field trips shall be properly identified in the annual budget of the Board. In planning for anticipated funds, attention needs to be given to providing for students with special needs.

- b. There shall be no solicitation of funds by individual students, chaperones, or community supporters of the field trip for the purpose of subsidizing the cost of any field trip, irrespective of the fact that such solicitation is conducted in the name of the school, a school-affiliated organization, or the community itself, unless there is adherence to the following procedures:
 - i. At the time that approval for the field trip is being sought from the school principal, the sponsoring teacher should advise the principal of the fact that solicitation of funds may be needed for the purpose of subsidizing the field trip.
 - ii. The justification for the fundraising activities is the evaluative criteria set forth in Policy/ Regulation KE/504, Student Fundraising Activities.

7. Additional Requirements for Foreign Field Trips

- a. Planning
 - i. The teacher or teachers considering a foreign field trip shall meet with the school principal to discuss general plans before initiating any formal planning.
 - ii. Before initiating planning with students, collecting deposits, or making any commitments with trip vendors, the organizing teacher(s) shall complete the "Foreign Field Trip Approval Packet" and submit it to the school principal and appropriate RAS for approval 90 days in advance of the trip.
 - iii. The ability of the teacher or teachers to successfully and safely carry out the trip as described in the "Foreign Field Trip Approval Packet" shall be evaluated by the principal and appropriate RAS.
 - iv. Before being finalized, all foreign field trips must be approved by the RAS and the Associate Superintendent.
 - v. Upon approval of the foreign field trip, formal planning with students, collecting deposits, and making commitments with trip vendors shall begin.
 - vi. There shall be adequate pre-planning and setting of standards for all persons involved.
 - vii. Teachers shall meet with students and parents to inform them of trip plans, goals, rules, and any required identification documents, including a U.S. Passport or other travel documentation.

- viii. Students and parents shall be provided with detailed information regarding rules and regulations governing student behavior while participating in the foreign field trip.
- b. Cost
- i. Teachers organizing foreign field trips shall select vendors who supply package deals that are good values in terms and services provided.
 - ii. No eligible student shall be denied the opportunity to participate in a foreign field trip solely because of inability to pay.
 - iii. Fundraisers may be held in order to reduce the costs for trip participants.
 - iv. Funds shall be available to assist students who are eligible for financial assistance.
- c. Transportation
- i. Transportation shall be by an authorized public carrier.
 - ii. If transportation is to be provided by a tour promoter or a travel agency, the school shall make a thorough investigation of the vendor's reliability and shall include in the Approval Packet documented evidence of the following:
 - a. The firm's membership in trade associations, such as the Air Traffic Conference of America, International Air Transportation Association, or the American Society of Travel Agents;
 - b. Contingent liability insurance coverage by the firm to ensure students of refunds if the promoter defaults;
 - c. Confirmation of the firm's credit by the Better Business Bureau or the Chamber of Commerce in the city where the vendor's office is located; and
 - d. Direct correspondence from at least two schools or organizations which have used the firm's travel services and recommend it.
- d. Because of the time required for meaningful foreign field trips, teachers shall consider a variety of scheduling alternatives which shall keep to a minimum the number of days that students shall have to miss regular classes. Such alternatives include, but are not limited to:

- i. Scheduling trips to include weekends;
 - ii. Scheduling trips to include established school holidays and vacations;
and
 - iii. Scheduling trips during summer months when school is not in session.
- e. Since all foreign field trips present an element of risk, all participants must submit a signed and notarized permission/release form.

*Regulation History: Developed by Superintendent 12/02/09
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Note previous regulation history: Replaces AR 605.19, issued 5/20/91 and revised 01/08/97, and 03/17/10.