

Field Trip Guidelines

The Board and Superintendent recognize that educational field trips and trips to various types of contests can help provide desirable learning experiences for students. Field trips shall be educational in nature, will include all eligible students in the group taking the field trips, and must be related to the course of study for the particular grade level or academic area for which they are planned. Only those field trips that grow out of the instructional program or are otherwise related to the program are to be permitted on school time. These field trips that take place during the school day must give strong evidence that they are of the quality to justify students missing their regularly scheduled classroom activities. Other trips such as those involving band, choral, and athletic activities should be confined to time outside of the instructional day, except where the school is engaged in an activity, competition, or contest that requires use of school time.

Criteria for Planning Field Trips and Off-Campus Extra Curricular Activities

Procedure:

Local School Responsibilities:

- Each school principal shall appoint a field trip advisory committee to review and approve a yearly field trip plan.
- This advisory committee should include representatives from each grade level and/or athletic/academic department.
- The field trip advisory committee shall review the list of approved field trip sites for each grade level. Individual teachers may select field trips from this list and submit an Activities Permission Request form to the principal for approval.
- If a teacher wishes to organize a field trip to a site not included on the approved list, a request and appropriate rationale must be submitted to the principal and forwarded to the area coordinator for consideration. If the site is approved, it may be added to the approved field trip list upon request.
- Individual schools shall develop a list of recommended field trip sites for particular grade levels or subject areas. Field trip experiences must be appropriate for the developmental levels or grade levels of students and the curriculum outlined in the Alabama Course of Study.
- Virtual field trips (i.e. distance learning) using interactive video conferencing equipment should be planned and aligned with curriculum goals and objectives. Appropriate application should be made through the technology department.
- The number of planned field trips should be reasonable to ensure teachers and/or students do not miss too much instructional time. Chaperoning field trips must not result in excessive absences from instructional responsibilities. Therefore, teachers and/or students may be asked to choose between selected field trips in order to protect instructional time.

- Teachers taking a single class or group away from campus must make provisions for quality instruction to continue for those students not in the traveling class or group. Permission and/or provisions must be approved by the building principal.
- Reasonable provisions must be made prior to the trip for students to make-up work missed due to time away from regular classes.
- Each field trip sponsor/leader will submit an appropriate and acceptable rationale for each requested trip to the building principal unless it has been selected from the system approved list. The principal will determine whether or not the trip meets the criteria and requirements of the Board.
 - *Reward and Non-Academic trips do not meet the criteria set by Shelby County Field Trip Guidelines and must be scheduled outside of school hours.*
- A list of proposed field trip travel plans (rationale is required if not on the approved list) for each requested field trip for the school year should be submitted to the Area Coordinator for approval by the end of September.
- Prior to field trip travel plans, each school shall develop a safety/emergency plan for all field trips (this includes: one day or off-campus, overnight, out-of-state, or multi-day field trip or off-campus extracurricular activity).
- A copy of this plan must be kept on file in the principal's office, with each field trip leader, and on each bus or any vehicle transporting students during the time of the field trip.
- **The Safety Plan must include:**
 - Each bus or vehicle should have a list of students on a trip with emergency contact information,
 - Permission to travel forms signed by the parent or guardian,
 - Medical information pertaining to trip participants,
 - List chaperones (relationship to student or students, other contact information),
 - Detailed trip itinerary for multiple day or out of state trips
 - Must include a daily time schedule and student supervision information for each day on the trip,
 - Current emergency telephone numbers,
 - Carrier information,
 - For overnight or out-of-state trips, a calling tree,
 - Student accommodation information for overnight trips.

Teachers/sponsors/chaperones are strongly encouraged to have access to a cellular phone during the entirety of the trip.

System Responsibilities:

- The Instructional Department will develop and maintain a list of approved field trip sites for particular grade levels and/or subject areas.

- It shall be determined whether the trip is covered by the Board's liability insurance. No travel shall be authorized where coverage cannot be secured prior to the trip.
- Activities Permission Request forms, detailed itinerary (multiple day or out of state) of the field trip (should be 1-2 pages), and an appropriate number of field trip chaperones must be approved by the principal and submitted to area coordinator for approval no less than 10 days prior to the date of the field trip. Incomplete plans and itineraries or late requests may result in requests being denied or returned.
- The Activities Permission Request form will be reviewed by the appropriate area coordinator and/or the Superintendent for approval.
- The Activities Permission Request will be recommended for Board approval for out of state field trips.
- A copy of approved or non-approved Activities Permission Request form is returned to the requesting school for file.

Trip Leaders and Chaperones

All field trips must be supervised by school personnel. The principal should clarify school expectations to trip leaders in advance of the field trip and remind leaders that field trips are a part of the school endorsed activities and operate under school rules. Parents' assistance as chaperones may be encouraged and/or required. The age of the students, regulations involving special needs students and the need to ensure their safety on the field trip shall dictate how many chaperones or other assistance will be required for a particular trip. If a student needs specialized care or instruction, the person responsible may be counted as a chaperone and the school will be responsible for trip cost and lodging, expenses but not salary. However, a minimum ratio of at least two adults (one teacher and one parent or guardian is required per homeroom classes in elementary grades and recommended for every 25 middle/high school students. Due to liability coverage, the Board does not permit siblings or guests to accompany students on field trips. Additionally, children and guests of teachers, parents or other chaperones are not permitted on approved field trips.

Field Trip Leader's Responsibility:

Teachers and other staff members sponsoring student field trips, excursions, etc., shall be responsible for the following:

- Planning, organizing and conducting all educational, social, etc., components of the trip, this includes proper and appropriate supervision of students at all times for the entire time of the trip,
- Completing the school system Field Trip Permission Request form and submitting it to the principal on a timely basis,
- Arranging for procurement of the financial resources to pay all costs associated with the trip,
- Arranging for an adequate number of chaperones for the trip and indicate on the activities permission request form,

- Communicating with parents about the trip and securing a parental permission form for each student participating in the activity.
- Securing student medical information pertaining to trip participants.

Costs:

Field trip costs must be reasonable and affordable to the local student population. It is a violation of Board procedure to make a profit on field trip charges. Costs relating to the field trip should not be a deterrent to any student who is eligible to participate. Opportunities for monetary assistance should be made available if necessary. Costs for school personnel providing required services as prescribed by a 504 Plan or IEP are absorbed by the overall cost of the trip. Transportation costs will be shared equally by all participants. Monies collected are Non-Public Funds. Field trips cannot be used as a fundraiser for other purposes, whether instructional or operations.

The cost of any field trips should be carefully estimated and will usually include:

1. Transportation/Driver Costs
2. Admission fees
3. Meal or food costs
4. Overnight lodging

Other costs that may be considered are:

5. Educational materials related to the purpose of the trips.
6. Cost of teacher subs (if not otherwise provided)
7. Cost of students who cannot pay.

IMPORTANT NOTE: No child can be denied participation in a field trip because of lack of funds to pay. If necessary, funds must come from other sources (PTA, School Monies, Booster Clubs etc...) or built into the cost of the trip.

See: Board Policy Manual, IFCB for specific information and Accounting & Fiscal Operations Manual Section VII, MISC – Field and Class Trips

Accommodations:

Certain behaviors and physical handicaps may necessitate special accommodations for some students participating in field trips. Arrangements must be made by the general education teacher if special accommodations are needed. These arrangements must be made at least 10 days in advance as prescribed in the 504 Plan or the Individual Education Plan. Students requiring significant accommodations (interpreter, nurse, etc.) must have documented accommodations/modifications included in a 504 Plan or IEP and additional staff will be provided. Staff added to accommodate a special needs student will be considered a chaperone and required to supervise students during times special needs are not being served.

Behavior:

Standards for field trip behavior are established by the Shelby County Code of Conduct and each local school. It must be agreed to in writing by the parent and student. Some field trips may require trip-specific behavior rules or specific behavior plans. Each local school is responsible for making that determination. All students must be appropriately supervised at all times.

Eligible Field Trip Participants:

Only students enrolled in the class or group scheduling the field trip may participate. *Pre-school children and/or other siblings or guests are not allowed to accompany teachers, parents, or other chaperones.*

Transportation:

Transportation for local field trips within school hours may use Shelby County school buses or commercial carriers. Field trips that require leaving before bus runs are complete and those returning later than afternoon bus runs may necessitate utilizing outside carriers. County buses available for an extended time period during a regular school day are limited. Commercial carriers must be properly insured and meet standards set by the Department of Public Safety. The principal shall check the PCI/ICC number and the insurance coverage on such carriers at the time of the contract execution and prior to allowing departure from campus. A copy of these documents shall be included with field trip request form. Buses must be scheduled early to ensure their availability. The Board cannot and will not be responsible for insurance or safety for parent-provided or arranged transportation, and parents should make arrangements to ensure the safety of his or her own child in the event transportation is not provided by school bus or commercial carrier.

System and Local School Exceptions and Provisions:

The Board of Education and the Superintendent will not be responsible for trips that have not been approved in accordance with these guidelines and/or board policy. If teachers or employees sponsor or chaperone a trip that is not approved by the Board, or if out-of-state or out-of-country trips are taken with students without Board approval, the Board and the Superintendent will not be held liable or responsible. The teacher/employee/chaperone independently sponsoring the trip will assume personal responsibility and liability.

***All Field Trip Forms can be accessed on the Shelby County Web Site: