



I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education supports the use of field trips to supplement and extend classroom instruction.

The Board believes that in order to offer maximum benefit field trips must be planned in recognition of students' needs, interests, and abilities; have a direct relationship to the curriculum; and align with school system goals. Because enrichment through field trips is not intended to supplant the basic curriculum, the Board recognizes that careful consideration must be given to the protection of instructional time and the appropriate use of instructional personnel.

The Board recognizes that student activity groups offer opportunities to support school system goals. The Board further recognizes that the school system has a responsibility to ensure that reasonable procedures for the supervision and safety are in place and that the participants and their parents are fully informed regarding arrangements.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for approving and conducting student field trips and for approving student activity trips.

III. Definitions

- A. Chaperone - A parent of a participating student, an adult age 21 or older, or an employee who has been approved by the principal to accompany and supervise students on a field trip.
- B. Field trip – A school system sponsored group activity which is related to the instructional program, occurs off the school site, and for which transportation is usually provided. Walking may be considered for community based field trips.
- C. Parent – Any one of the following, recognized as the adult(s) legally responsible for the student:
 - 1. Biological parent – A natural parent whose parental rights have not been terminated.

2. Adoptive parent – A person who has legally adopted the student and whose parental rights have not been terminated.
 3. Custodian – A person or an agency appointed by the court as the legal custodian of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
 4. Guardian – A person who has been placed by the court in charge of the affairs of the student and granted parental rights and privileges.
 5. Caregiver – An adult resident of Howard County who exercises care, custody or control over the student, but who is neither the biological parent nor legal guardian.
 6. Foster parent – An adult approved to care for a child who has been placed in their home by a State agency or a licensed child placement as provided by section 5-507 of the Family Law Article.
- D. Permission form – A form distributed for the purpose of providing detailed information about a field trip, and to acquire from a parent consent for his or her child to participate in the field trip and to release the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) from any liability for accident or illness of the student while on the field trip.
- E. School Absence Form – Form completed by high school teachers to acknowledge the participation of a student in an approved field trip that will require the student’s absence from class on the specified date(s).
- F. Student day – School day from the opening bell signaling commencement of the school day until the bell signaling dismissal.
- G. Student Activity Trip – A trip which provides extended opportunities related to an officially recognized school activity.
- H. Teacher-in-charge – The teacher who plans and submits the application for approval of a field trip, and assumes responsibility for ensuring compliance with the provisions of this policy.

IV. Standards

- A. Field Trips
1. The provisions of this policy apply to all field trips sponsored by the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).
 2. A field trip must be a natural outgrowth of the instructional programs and have a direct relationship to curricular goals and objectives. Field trips may be used to serve as introductory devices to stimulate or motivate interest, provide direct sources of information and opportunities to broaden

understanding through firsthand experiences, extend and enrich programs, and/or serve as culminating activities.

3. All field trips require the administrative approval of the Superintendent/designee.
4. Field Trips may be constituted as follows:
 - a. Student Day Field Trip – occurs within the student day.
 - b. Extended Day Field Trip – begins before or extends beyond the student day.
 - c. Overnight Field Trip – entails an overnight stay away from home.
 - d. Non School Day Field Trip – occurs outside of the student day.
5. Transportation must be provided by an authorized public carrier approved by the HCPSS.
6. Field trips must be supervised by a teacher-in-charge and students must be overseen by additional chaperones according to approved procedures.
7. Information regarding field trips, including the following, will be communicated in writing to all appropriate staff members, students, and parents through the normal channels of communication in advance of the departure date.
 - a. Expectations for conduct with all HCPSS policies, local, state and federal laws.
 - b. Safety and security provisions
 - c. Logistics and specific itineraries
 - d. Health and medical provisions
 - e. The Howard County Public School System reserves the right to cancel a trip at any time in order to ensure the safety of both students and staff members and that if such a cancellation occurs, the school system is not responsible for any financial loss incurred by the parent
8. Students may not participate in school-sponsored field trips without the permission of their parents as indicated by a completed Permission Form. Participation of high school students in field trips also requires submission of completed School Absence Forms.
9. Field Trips are to be conducted in accordance with rules, regulations, and policies related to the health, safety, and conduct of both students and employees.

B. Student Activity Trips

1. Student activity trips are sponsored by HCPSS. As a result, it is necessary that principals approve these trips and that reasonable procedures for supervision and safety of students apply to each trip. These procedures may vary, based on the nature of the trip, destination, activity, number of students involved, etc. The following provisions apply:
 - a. Information regarding student activity trips will be communicated in writing to parents. This will include the level of participation by school staff.
 - b. School transportation may not be provided for student activity trips.
 - c. Notification and approval of the principal are required for student activity trips.
 - d. Neither grades nor credit are given for student activity trips.
 - e. Student activity trips should not occur during school hours.
 - f. Student activity trips should support the goals of HCPSS.
 - g. Participation is usually limited to members of the school activity group.
2. The school-based administrator is responsible for ensuring that the above provisions are satisfied.

V. Compliance

- A. The Superintendent 's designee is responsible for reviewing applications for field trips and ensuring that those approved comply with the provisions of this policy.
- B. Principals are responsible for ensuring that their schools' field trips have been approved by the Superintendent's designee and comply with the provisions of this policy.
- C. Principals are responsible for ensuring that student activity trips comply with the provisions of this policy.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures for the implementation of this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal

- B. Other Board Policies
 - Policy 9200 Discipline
 - Policy 9020 Students' Rights and Responsibilities
 - Policy 9230 Alcohol, Other Drugs, Prescription Medication, and Over-the-Counter Products
 - Policy 9260 Student Search and Seizure

- C. Other
 - Student Code of Conduct

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I. Field Trips

A. General

1. The teacher-in-charge is responsible for planning a field trip, completing the application for permission, coordinating, executing the field trip details, and supervising the students.
2. The timing and duration of field trips should adhere to these guidelines:
 - a. Student Day Field Trip – The trip occurs within the student day.
 - b. Extended Day Field Trip – the duration of the trip is no longer than 12 hours. The planned return time should be no later than 9:00 p.m. when school is in session the next day. A planned return time no later than 5:00 p.m. is strongly advised for grades 4 and below.
 - c. Overnight Field Trip- The trip entails an overnight stay away from home, involving no more than three (3) days in which school is in session. Every attempt shall be made to return the students no later than ten (10) hours prior to the beginning of the next student day. Typically, overnight field trips are the exception and are usually limited to secondary students.
 - d. Non School Day Field Trip – The trip occurs outside the student day. Planned return times should correspond to those for Extended Day Field Trips.
3. The amount of time spent traveling to and from the destination shall not exceed one-half of the total time planned for the field trip.
4. Student activity trips must limit the time in which students are absent to no more than two (2) school days per year. Exceptions may be approved by Superintendent/designee.
5. In accordance with Standard B of this policy, a field trip must be a natural outgrowth of the instructional programs and have a direct relationship to curricular goals and objectives.

6. A student's participation in a field trip requires the parent to sign the Permission Form for Student Field Trip. Participation of a high school student in a field trip also requires submission of a completed School Absence Form. If a trip has to be rescheduled the Permission Form For Students Field Trip and School Absence Form must be provided again.
7. Prescription medication and over-the-counter products require written medication orders and are to be administered in accordance with medication administration procedures. (Consult the HCPSS Health Services Manual for procedures.)
8. Students who are suspended or expelled from school at the time of a trip may be excluded from field trips.
9. If any student requires exceptional nursing needs while on a field trip, the teacher-in-charge must contact the cluster nurse or health services department prior to the field trip to see if reasonable accommodations can be provided.
10. Each field trip requires a teacher-in-charge. Additionally, chaperones will be assigned as follows:
 - a. Elementary school level: one chaperone for every eight (8) students
 - b. Middle school level: one chaperone for every fifteen (15) students
 - c. High school level: one chaperone for every twenty-five (25) students
11. Additional chaperones may be added at the discretion of the teacher in charge.
12. Chaperones shall acknowledge acceptance of their responsibilities by signing the Chaperone Guideline Form.
13. A chaperone may not bring additional children who are not directly related to the class or organization.
14. If the field trip schedule does not coordinate with the regular bus schedule, parents will be notified in advance of the need to drop students off early or pick them up late. For late arrivals parents will be asked to pick up their child within fifteen (15) minutes of the return to school. Supervision of students shall be maintained until all students have left for home.
15. Appropriate evaluation/follow-up activities shall be planned to reinforce the educational objectives of the trip.

16. Students participating in a field trip shall have the opportunity and the responsibility to make up missed schoolwork.
17. All Board of Education policies and school rules are applicable during field trips.
18. The following provisions apply in inclement weather or emergency situations:
 - a. Delayed opening – field trips will be postponed or cancelled until the official opening of the school day.
 - b. Snow emergency for either the point of origin (i.e. Howard County) or the destination, or any point in between – field trips are cancelled.
 - c. Exceptions will be decided by the Superintendent/designee on an individual basis.
 - d. The HCPSS is not responsible for any financial losses if a trip is cancelled for the safety of students, staff, and/or chaperones.

B. Transportation

1. Only a HCPSS approved carrier with all necessary licensing and a certificate of insurance may be employed when transportation is provided.
2. At least one teacher or chaperone must be assigned per vehicle to be responsible for roll call, announcements, and supervision.
3. The number of students and chaperones shall not exceed the rated capacity of each vehicle used to transport students.
4. All students shall travel to and from the school under the supervision of a teacher, using designated vehicles when transportation is provided. Only in special cases, with prior school-based administrative approval, may parents receive permission to transport their own child to and/or from a field trip. Parents must request such permission in advance and acknowledge that school system insurance coverage will not apply. Parents may transport their child only.
5. Parents who wish to accompany a group on a field trip in their own vehicles shall be reminded that the school system's insurance coverage does not extend to them.

C. Planning and Approval

1. Approval of field trips is required as follows:
 - a. Student Day field Trip - Fifteen (15) school days prior approval from the school-based administrator and Superintendent/designee is required.
 - b. Extended Day Field Trip – Fifteen (15) school days prior approval from the school-based administrator and the Superintendent/designee is required.
 - c. Overnight Field Trip – Fifteen (15) school days prior approval from the school-based administrator and the Superintendent/designee is required.
 - d. Field Trips Requiring Contract Review – Thirty (30) school days prior approval from the Safety, Environment, and Risk Management Office.
2. The teacher-in-charge shall submit the following information when requesting administrative approval of a field trip:
 - a. Destination
 - b. Name of group
 - c. Teacher-in-charge
 - d. Curricular objectives/anticipated outcomes
 - e. Cost per pupil
 - f. Bus contractor
 - g. Date of trip
 - h. Departure and return times
 - i. Arrangements for meals
 - j. Ratio of chaperones to students
 - k. Names of all accompanying staff members
 - l. Plans for informing all chaperones with information concerning the field trip
 - m. Plans for emergencies
 - n. Plans for inclement weather
3. The field trip shall be planned to provide for the safety, comfort, and protection of the students and chaperones.
4. The teacher-in-charge must receive a school-based administrator and Superintendent/designee approval prior to informing students and parents.

5. Upon receipt of an application for approval of a field trip, the school-based administrator will:
 - a. Review the teacher-in-charge's request and approve the request only if all of the requirements of the field trip policy are followed.
 - b. Notify the teacher-in-charge of the decision and ask for cooperation in placing the trip on the school calendar.
 - c. Ensure that the teacher-in-charge knows the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency, illness, or accident.
 - d. Make certain that the teacher-in-charge has arranged for coverage for any student not participating in the field trip.

D. Specific Responsibilities of the School-based Administrator

1. Ensuring that all required forms are completed and submitted.
2. Scheduling field trips to minimize conflicts with other school activities.
3. Ensuring that classes are covered for teachers on approved field trips.
4. Providing a means by which the teacher –in-charge of a field trip has access to the school building if the custodian will not be present at the time of departure for or the return from an approved field trip.
5. Informing parents that insurance coverage is extended only to chaperones who accompany and supervise students on the designated means of transportation.
6. Maintaining a file of approved field trip request forms for two years.

E. Specific Responsibilities of the Teacher-in-Charge

1. All Field Trips
 - a. Thoroughly review all field trip provisions.
 - b. Obtain school-based administrative approval; contract clearance from the Office of Safety, Environment and Risk Management; and final approval from the Superintendent/designee at least thirty (30) school days before the scheduled date of the trip.
 - c. Obtain and complete all necessary forms pertaining to the field trip.
 - d. Contact the site.
 - e. Be familiar with the site and the routes to get there.
 - f. Obtain all necessary transportation information.
 - g. Following approval of the field trip, inform all potential chaperones of their duties and responsibilities in advance of the field trip and obtain an adequate number of chaperones for the size of the group.
 - h. Prepare the permission slip for the field trip.
 - i. Plan and write itinerary.

- j. Update administrator(s) regarding costs and other appropriate information.
- k. Obtain final approval.

2. Additional Requirements for Extended and Overnight Field Trips

- a. In addition to the required transportation information, the following shall be included on or with the permission slip:
 - i. Detailed itinerary
 - ii. Special clothing or cash needs
 - iii. Specific nighttime procedure
 - iv. Parent acknowledgement that, if the student does not observe Board of Education policies or school rules, that student may be sent home at the discretion of the teacher-in-charge in consultation with school administration at the parent's expense.
 - v. Requirement that every effort will be made by parents to pick up students within 15 minutes of the return of the trip
 - vi. Parental permission to list telephone number on the telephone chain.
- b. A telephone chain shall be prepared and duplicated so that one long distance call could be made to report an emergency change of plans. One copy of this list shall be kept with the permission slips in the school office. Each trip chaperone and each participant's parent shall also receive a copy.
- c. For students with special needs, a health information form and/or medication order form specifically written to address extended overnight hours shall be obtained and copies shall be kept by the teacher-in-charge and with the permission slips in the school office.

F. Special Considerations

Exceptions to these procedures will be determined on a case-by case basis by the appropriate administrative director.

II. Student Activity Trips

- A. Staff members will seek approval for the trips from the principal by submitting a parent notification letter. Principal's signature on the letter indicates that all provisions of the policies and procedures have been followed.

B. Notification letter must include:

1. Purpose
2. Time and duration of trip
3. Level of staff participation, including whether or not staff supervision is provided
4. Conditions of participation
 - a. Voluntary
 - b. No grades
 - c. Open only to members of organization
 - d. Parent sign-off
5. Transportation arrangements (HCPSS will not provide transportation)
6. Costs (if any)
7. Contact information as appropriate

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Howard County Public School System **Field Trip Teacher Checklist**

- o Submit the Field Trip Request form.
- o Prepare Permission for Student Field Trip forms.
- o After trip approval, distribute and discuss the Permission for Student Field Trip forms; announce the due date.
- o Determine that you have Student Information / Field Trip Emergency Procedure / Health Information forms for all trip participants.
- o Collect Permission for Student Field Trip forms and any required fees. Complete accounting form and make deposits.
- o Inform school-based health services staff of dates of trip and students attending as soon as known. Ensure that students with specific health needs or physical limitations have equipment, medication, and current medication orders as appropriate. Arrange for storage and administration of medication during the field trip unless a student's written medication order specifies that he or she may self-administer/carry. A parent of these students may be invited to accompany them on the field trip.
- o When appropriate, inform the cafeteria of the field trip at least five (5) school days in advance and ensure that lunch provisions are made for students who receive free or reduced-price lunches to participate in the program on the day of the field trip.
- o Notify appropriate staff members of students going on the field trip. Provide instructional coverage for children who will not be field trip participants.
- o Group students with chaperones. Create bus lists.
- o Confirm any reservations.
- o Inform the students of the itinerary, rules, policies, and suggested appropriate attire. Remind them the day before the trip.
- o Provide the school-based administrator with the permission slips and a copy of the master list of students and chaperones attending. On the day of the trip, leave with the school-based administrator an updated list of those who are actually attending.
- o Review with all chaperones:
 - Itinerary
 - Specific duties for proper supervision
 - Procedures for a roll call of all persons to be taken at the initial loading and each reloading during the trip.
 - Names of students for whom they will be responsible
 - Procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency, illness, or accident
 - Special needs of students for whom they may be responsible
 - When appropriate, suggested questions/activities for achievement of student objectives
 - Any other information needed for the trip
- o Sign out any (pre-arranged) early pickups with the Field Trip Release Form, or designate a chaperone to do so.
- o Provide for supervision until the last student goes home as prearranged by the parent.
- o Report any problems to the school-based administrator as soon as possible.
- o Evaluate the results of the trip.