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## FIELD TRIPS

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA (SBBC) BELIEVES THAT FIELD TRIPS CAN BE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LEARNING PROCESS IN MANY AREAS OF EDUCATION. FOR PURPOSES OF THIS POLICY, A FIELD TRIP SHALL BE DEFINED AS A DISTRICT-APPROVED TRIP AWAY FROM A SCHOOL BOARD SITE. FIELD TRIPS SHALL NOT EXCEED FIVE (5) CONSECUTIVE SCHOOL DAYS.

### I. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Initial Compliance Approval:** A preliminary compliance approval above the school principal's level indicated by the initials of the appropriate District administrator(s) (designee). An initial compliance approval permits schools, centers or departments to proceed with the necessary field trip notification and planning that traditionally requires extensive preparations. An Initial compliance approval does not constitute final District compliance approval.
- B. **Final District Compliance Approval:** A signature compliance approval from the appropriate school principal and the Superintendent's designee (for International Trips -and the Superintendent of Schools) when all the field trip requirements are completed.
- C. **International Field Trip:** A trip that includes international travel or travel outside the mainland USA. Consideration for such trips is reserved for once in a lifetime experience that are unavailable here in the USA. International trips require the express written approval of the principal, the Superintendent's designee, and the Superintendent of Schools.
- D. **Local Field Trip:** A trip that is geographically located within the tri county area (Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach) that does not involve overnight stay and is not water related. Local field trips do not require an approval beyond the school principal's level.
- E. **One-Day Field Trip Outside the Tri-County Area:** A trip that is geographically located outside the tri- county area (Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach) that does not involve overnight stay and may or may not be water related. One-day field trips outside the tri-county area require compliance approval from Superintendent's designee.
- F. **Parent:** Refers to either or both parents, any guardian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of a parent.

- G. **Overnight Field Trip:** A trip that requires overnight lodging or other activities that constitute overnight characteristics not limited to bed, bath, and meals regardless of geographic location. Overnight field trips require compliance approval from Superintendent's designee.
- H. **Principal's Field Trip Designee:** An SBBC employee designated by the school **principal** to act in an official administrative capacity for the duration of the field trip. Such a designee must be clearly identified on the chaperone list.
- I. **SBBC Sponsored Trip:** A trip that is sponsored exclusively by the SBBC through its schools, centers, or other department(s) with the required District compliance approval. Any trip that does not conform to the foregoing would be considered a non-district sponsored trip.
- J. **Security Clearance:** Compliance with Federal and State Laws that mandate security screening of individuals (chaperones) that are permitted access on school grounds when students are present, are allowed direct one-on-one contact with students, or are allowed access to or control of school funds. For example, The Jessica Lunsford Act that requires Level 1 and/or Level 2 screening by checking the names of chaperones against the sexual predator and local criminal database, and/or be fingerprinted respectively. A Level 2 clearance is required for all overnight field trips.
- K. **Superintendent of Schools Designee:** An individual in an administrative capacity limited to the title of Superintendent, Chief, Director or Assistant Director on the district level, or Principal on the school level, with the proper authorization to approve, permit, or sanction a field trip.
- L. **Water Related Field Trip:** A trip that requires a water source (natural or man-made) to accomplish its intended and specific purpose by engaging students and/or staff in water related activities regardless of geographical location. Water related field trips are limited to programs on the SBBC pre-approved vendor list and require compliance approval by the Superintendent's designee.

## II. RULES

### A. **General**

1. All proposed field trips must first be reviewed and approved by the school principal(s) (designee).
2. Field Trips that are overnight, outside of the tri-county area, water related or international must receive compliance approval beyond the principal's level by the Superintendent's designee.
3. All students participating in a field trip must provide the school principal with the district approved parent authorization form signed by their parents in advance. The signed authorization form must be on file at the school before a student can participate.

4. Any field trip information that is intended for parents and students must be printed on school/district stationery.
5. The use of any official SBBC or individual school stationery to promote a non- district approved field trip is prohibited.
6. The parents of all K-12 students planning to attend any overnight field trips shall be advised in advance that their student should be properly insured. Further, "At school" Student Accident Insurance will not cover overnight field trips under any circumstances. Parents should be advised that "24 hour" or "around-the-clock" insurance coverage is highly recommended (available through the currently authorized student accident insurer or through their own insurance agent).
7. The following information must be documented for all field trips: a list of all participating students and chaperones, dates of departure and return, appropriate itinerary, and mode of travel. On all overnight trips, this documentation must be submitted to the Director of Risk Management at least one (1) week prior to departure.
8. Students who violate the Code of Student Conduct, act in a disruptive manner or fail to conform to school rules and regulations may be denied the privilege of participating in field trips, social and/or extracurricular activities. The principal shall make the final decision on whether the student may participate after receiving documentation and input from the affected staff.
9. School administrators shall comply with Federal and State Law that guarantee the right of each student with a disability be afforded an equal opportunity to participate in all school sponsored social and/or extra-curricular activities when the student is otherwise qualified to participate. School principals shall make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities (ESE students) to participate in field trips, school sponsored social and/or extra-curricular activities. Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to, wheelchair accessible mode of transportation, nurses, and additional aides. Parents shall not be required to attend a trip as a requisite for their child to participate. However, space permitting, parents should be invited to attend. Reasons ESE students may be excluded from a field trip or extra-curricular activity is by parent request or an extreme circumstance approved by the regional or associate superintendent office.
10. The Superintendent's designee may grant an initial field trip compliance approval when requested by the school principal.

**B. Local Field Trips (Within the Tri-County Area of Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach That Are Not Overnight or Water Related.**

1. Field trips that are necessary to fulfill the obligations of interscholastic athletic and other interscholastic activity program(s) shall be permitted, if they do not seriously interfere with the educational routine of students who must remain in school.

2. Teachers planning local field trips shall:
  - a. Schedule each trip with the school principal (designee), specifying a list of all participating students and chaperones, dates of departure and return, appropriate itinerary, and mode of travel. The principal (designee) must approve the trip in writing.
  - b. Complete all necessary arrangements with the organization, firm and/or owner of the property to be visited.
  - c. Make provision for proper supervision. Two adults are recommended as a minimum for chaperoning a local field trip (within the tri-county area of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach). One of them must be the employee in charge of the class, program, or team. Schools must arrange for at least two School Board Employee Chaperones for every 50 students. If additional chaperones are needed, parents that are eligible may be permitted to assist in such supervision. Schools may share chaperones on field trips.

**C. One day Field Trips Outside the Tri-County Area (May or May Not Be Water Related)**

1. The same Rules listed in Section 2b will apply, except that chaperones shall be in accordance with Section 7a. In addition, the principal shall provide notification and information regarding the out-of-tri-county field trip to the Superintendent's designee for compliance approval prior of the event and before it is discussed with students, parents, and the community. If needed, an initial compliance approval may be requested but a final compliance approval shall be required from the Superintendent' s designee.

**D. Overnight Field Trips (May or May Not Be Water Related)**

1. The school principal shall be contacted before the teacher or sponsor begins planning any overnight field trip. If the principal considers the trip a worthy project, a detailed plan including the trip objectives, the number of chaperones required in Section G.1.a, and the cost(s) must be provided to the Superintendent's designee for compliance approval before it is discussed with students, parents, or the community. On all overnight trips requiring lodging, single gender sleeping quarters for students must be instituted. Field Trip permission forms disseminated to parents must indicate whether room assignments for overnight lodging are not separated by biological sex at birth. If needed, an initial compliance approval may be requested, but all overnight trips must have final compliance approval from the Superintendent' s designee.

**E. Water Related Field Trips**

1. The principal of a school shall be contacted before the teacher or sponsor begins planning any water-related field trip. The applicable rules shall be

followed in accordance with the type of trip (Local Within the Tri-County, Outside the Tri-County or Overnight). All water related field trips, local or otherwise, are limited to those programs, vendors or destinations approved by the SBBC. The Risk Management Department shall maintain a list of all approved water related field trip programs, vendors and destinations on the District's website. Schools having concerns regarding water-related field trips or those involving water travel are expected to contact the Risk Management Department for direction. Chaperones shall be assigned in accordance with Section G.1.a.

- a. Where water travel is being considered for a field trip the Risk Management Department must approve. Vessels must be inspected and approved by the Coast Guard or other responsible government agency for the type of water travel being considered.
- b. General Liability Insurance with bodily injury limits of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence. The School Board of Broward County shall be named as an additional insured.
- c. Lifeguard Certificate (at least one certified instructor per trip)
- d. Red Cross / CPR Certificate for all instructors.
- e. Commercial License and Boating Certificate from the Coast Guard.

#### **F. International Field Trips**

1. The principal shall be contacted before the teacher or sponsor begins planning any international field trip. If the principal considers the trip a worthy project that provides students with a once-in-a-lifetime experience, then the following must be provided. The teacher or sponsor shall provide a detailed plan including the trip objectives, the number of chaperones required in Section G. (1 b), and the cost of the trip to the principal. Upon receiving this documentation, the principal shall submit a cover letter indicating his or her written justification and approval of the trip to the Superintendent's designee. The Superintendent's designee will then discuss the trip information with the appropriate District personnel to determine the feasibility of an approval from the Superintendent of Schools. The teacher or sponsor shall proceed with the necessary notification and formalities after an initial approval is received from the Superintendent. All international trips must have a final approval in advance from the Superintendent.

#### **G. Chaperones**

1. Chaperones are essential for proper supervision and are intended to address the health, safety, and security needs of the students. All individuals serving as a chaperone on any SBBC sponsored field trip must have the appropriate security clearance. Therefore, they are expected to meet the security eligibility requirements in accordance with State Laws, Federal Regulations and District required security clearances.

- a. On any District sponsored overnight, out-of-county, or water-related field trip(s) all K-12 students shall be accompanied by qualified chaperones. When the student group is co-educational, there shall be at least one (1) chaperone of each gender. The minimum number of chaperones shall be in accordance with the following formula:

1 to 10 students – 2 chaperones  
11 to 20 students – 3 chaperones

For every additional 25 students or portion thereof, another chaperone shall be added respectively.

- b. On any District sponsored international field trip (outside of the mainland United States), all K-12 students shall be accompanied by qualified chaperones. When the student group is co-educational, there shall be at least one (1) chaperone of each gender. The minimum number of chaperones shall be in accordance with the following formula:

1 to 10 students – 2 chaperones  
11 to 20 students – 3 chaperones  
16 to 20 students – 4 chaperones

For every additional 10 students or portion thereof, another chaperone shall be added respectively.

- c. Field trips needing approval beyond the principal, require at least two of the chaperones be SBBC employees. Schools must arrange for at least two school board employee chaperones for every 50 students. One chaperone must be the employee in charge of the class, program, or team. When two or more schools are participating in the same field trip, chaperones from the attending schools may be combined to fulfill the chaperone requirement.
- d. Chaperones shall not be assigned the same sleeping quarters with students unless it is solely with their own child, or in the case that the destination/organization calls for large group sleeping accommodations that are an integral aspect of the trip, (e.g., sleep-out at SeaWorld, military style barracks).

## **H. Transportation**

- 1. The use of school buses (for local trips) and charter buses are the preferred method of transporting students on field trips. The use of rental vans and vehicles is the second preference for transporting students on field trips. A

third preference, when the above means of transportation are not feasible, would be the use of privately owned passenger vehicles permitted by the principal.

- a. Use of School Buses to Transport District Students:
  - i. School transportation vehicles may be made available for all trips sponsored in compliance with revisions of this Policy.
  - ii. School buses may be used for school activity trips provided approval has been obtained from the principal.
  - iii. The Transportation Department may grant the school principal's application for the use of school buses providing:
    - aa. Use of buses for the school activity field trips shall not interfere with regular bus schedules.
    - bb. Use of school buses shall be confined to the tri-county area. See Board Operating Procedure #2.1 for mileage limit on activity school buses. However, this restriction will be waived when a student(s) who is participating in the field trip is wheelchair dependent and requires special transportation equipment. In such cases, the Director of Transportation shall assign a specially equipped District bus for a trip outside the tri-county area. Whenever possible, as determined by the Director of Transportation, all the buses on field trips that have this special bus assigned to the trip shall be District school buses.
    - cc. Expenses for use of school buses for such activities or trips shall be paid by the sponsoring organizations with rates to be determined by the Director of Transportation.
    - dd. Sponsoring organizations under the direction of the school principal shall be responsible for the general conduct of students while riding on school buses or other vehicles.
    - ee. Application for use of school buses for the aforementioned purposes must be made to the Director of Transportation not later than ten (10) days prior to the date of the anticipated trip. Forms for application are available in the Transportation Department.
    - ff. A list of students for each bus shall be provided to the driver immediately prior to each trip
- b. Use of Private Charter Buses to Transport District Students

- i. Schools may use private charter bus companies to transport students to school sponsored functions based on the following criteria.
  - ii. Transportation is needed during hours School Board vehicles are not available, or for trips that are outside of the tri-county area.
  - iii. Private charter bus companies must submit a Request for Proposal to the office of Supply Management and Logistics and meet all the requirements in the Request for Proposal.
  - iv. Private charter bus companies approved by the office of Supply Management and Logistics must file an approved certificate of insurance with The School Board of Broward County, Florida, Risk Management Department, naming the School Board as an additional insured in the amount of one million dollars (\$1,000,000).
  - v. The office of Supply Management and Logistics shall maintain a list of all approved private charter buses on the District's website.
  
- c. Use of Rental Vehicles to Transport District Students:
  - i. Rental vans and vehicles shall have insurance coverage with bodily injury limits of not less than \$100,000 per person, \$300,000 per accident; property damage limits of not less than \$200,000 and comprehensive and collision coverage with no deductible.
  
- d. Use of Private Vehicles to Transport District Students:
  - i. Privately owned vehicles shall have appropriate insurance liability coverage for bodily injury and property damage as per Florida Statutes and be operated by a licensed driver. These conditions are to be certified by the owner of the vehicle and provided to school staff.

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