



# RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## Field Trips

Prior administrative approval of all field trips shall be required. Board approval is needed for trips outside of the United States.

The following guidelines shall apply when approving field trips:

1. Where possible, field trips should be coordinated with other teaching disciplines.
2. Sound educational purposes or objectives must be given before a field trip will be approved.
3. Each field trip should be planned to maximize the amount of time available for achieving educational goals and to reduce the amount of time spent in travel.
4. Budget for all anticipated field trips must be approved by your building administrator.
5. A Bus Request Form should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the planned field trip to allow time for proper review. If less than two weeks' notice is given, then the principal and school nurse will need to review for approval and determine if the field trip can still take place.
6. For all overnight field trips, the Student Health Information Form for Overnight Field Trips must be completed by parent prior to student participation in the overnight field trip (Policy #352-Exhibit 1 – Student Health Information Form for Overnight Field Trips).
7. Person in charge of field trip will complete School Field Trip Checklist (Policy #352-Exhibit 2 – School Field Trip Checklist).
8. Parents should be encouraged to participate in field trips, working along with the teacher(s) involved, as chaperones.
9. Student work should be made up before a student participates in a field trip.
10. Participation in co-curricular activities should not be considered a field trip.
11. Background checks are required for all volunteers and chaperones.
12. Staff shall have proper medication and emergency training from the School Nurse before they can go on a field trip if a student under their supervision has a health condition. Staff shall complete the 1:1 training (yearly) with the School Nurse. Failure to complete proper training would mean the field trip may be cancelled. The School Nurse shall notify the Principal if a field trip may be cancelled.
13. Diabetic students should be accompanied by a medically trained adult (parent, guardian, district staff).

## Overnight Field Trips

An "overnight field trip" is any properly authorized school-sponsored activity which takes students away from the regular school premises or from their homes for a period extending over one (1) or more nights. All such trips shall be limited to members of a specific class or classes of the School District or an existing school group and shall provide instructional opportunities related to the program and learner outcomes of that class or school group. Graduates of this or any other school district are not eligible to participate in such activities as group members.

Generally speaking, overnight field trips are not school-funded but may still be considered school-sponsored. School sponsored, overnight field trip costs should be financed in such a way that no eligible student is denied participation due to financial need. However, in any optional overnight field trip student(s) and/or their parents are responsible for the full cost of student participation. Student(s)/Parent(s) may contact the overnight field trip advisor for consideration of possible financial assistance.

All forms processing and procedural guidelines previously detailed for local field trips apply to overnight field trips. In addition, all overnight field trips must receive at least initial District Administrator endorsement judged on previously-stated criteria in these policy and rules statements and also assuring compliance with the following guidelines (Any stated guideline can be adapted to emerging unique needs (a) with advance written principal and District Administrator concurrence or (b) to preserve participant safety, health or welfare as adjudged by the group supervisor.)

### A. Supervision

1. Teaching staff members involved in a field trip activity will receive no additional financial payment for this service beyond previously-bargained compensation.
2. No staff member or member of his/her immediately family shall receive any benefits from outside agencies in relation to school-sponsored trips; nor shall any staff member act as an agent or solicitor for any such agency.
3. Adult volunteers, under the direction of a certified staff member, may be involved as chaperones.
4. Discounts or waivers of trip costs as incentives to identify group supervisors must be awarded to the School District.
5. One or more certificated staff member employee of the School District will accompany students on an overnight field trip.

6. Overnight field trips will provide no fewer than one (1) adult leader for each twenty-five (25) students at the secondary level. The group activity planner(s) will determine when more than these minimum adult supervisors are needed. Male and female adult supervision will be provided for all overnight trips which are coeducational except during those times when a group participant is housed in a private home as part of a preplanned cultural exchange program.
7. Male and female students shall be housed separately. All coeducational contacts and activities will take place in public areas of the building or housing accommodation under adult supervision.
8. Adult supervision is to be immediately available at all times during the trip.
9. If a serious emergency occurs, the staff member in charge shall as soon as possible report the situation to the principal or his/her designee.
10. Accompanying adults, by virtue of their desire to provide the best learning situation for students, will exercise such judgment in their activities as to motivate students to comply with the River Valley High School Code of Conduct (for example, regarding use of alcohol and tobacco/vaping products).
11. Commercial housing needed for students will be secured where possible on hotel or motel rooms that do not offer "in-room convenience bars" and that are designated as "No Smoking" rooms.
12. Only enrolled students in the class that is participating in the field trip may participate. Only principal-approved adults serving as group chaperones may accompany the group.
13. All parents/guardians are expected to pay for return travel if a student violates Code of Conduct or for emergency health reasons.

Note: Only the field trip form needs to be processed by the building principal after District Administrator approval has been received for the first of what will be recurring annual overnight field trips to the same site for the same purpose.

## B. Financial Accounting

### 1. Board Funds

No Board funds will be expended for school-sponsored trips except as may be provided by specific authorization of the central administration or the Board of Education.

### 2. Financing

The financing of overnight trips will be by student assessment, local school fund-raising activities and contributions from school parent groups.

### 3. Fees

Any school-sponsored overnight field trip shall require that the cost of food, lodging, transportation, and insurance be included in the overall trip fee. This amount and all other costs shall be communicated to the parents/guardians in writing in advance of the trip.

### 4. Reporting of Financial Transactions

A complete accounting of receipts and disbursements for overnight field trips will be recorded in a separate activity account in the school's financial records and will be submitted to the business office.

## C. Insurance

As part of good planning, safeguards must be taken to insure the safety of students and adults at all times.

1. Liability Insurance Coverage

It is required that all adult participants be covered by liability insurance. Board employees are covered by a comprehensive general liability policy. Prior to the date of departure, the principal shall obtain such insurance from the Business Office.

2. Group Health and Accident Insurance

It is required that participants, including adults, be protected against accidents and illnesses while on an overnight field trip. Such group insurance in the standard coverage amount will be obtained by the principal from a reputable insurance firm prior to the date of departure. This fee will be included in the overall cost of the trip. Coverage is to be determined on the basis of the length of the trips, the distance to be traveled, and other pertinent factors.

D. Transportation

A staff member or adult volunteer approved by the school administration must be assigned to each vehicle to supervise students.

When automobiles are used, they must be driven by staff members or adult volunteers in full compliance with the District policy and rules governing the driver's eligibility and the vehicle used.

E. Travel Agencies

If the service of a travel agency is required, selection shall be made on the basis of bids from at least the local bona fide agencies operating office within School District boundaries.

Only the principal is authorized to sign contracts with travel agencies, transportation firms, and firms providing housing accommodations which might be required.

The Board of Education will provide legal counsel in cases of suits which might arise out of the principal's signing of contracts and will protect the principal against damages for any good faith act by the principal in this regard.

F. Parent Involvement

Parent of students eligible for the trip will be informed sufficiently in advance and in writing of the objectives of the trip, standards of conduct required, responsibilities of students, number and names of chaperones and other adults, how expenses of chaperones and other adults will be paid, the per student cost for the trip including travel, housing, and all other expenses, type of travel arrangements, day-to-day itinerary, arrangements for coping with emergencies, and needs for special clothing or equipment.

Efforts should be made by the staff to report and hold a post-trip evaluation with parents and participants.

G. Rules of Conduct

The overnight field trip can offer students excellent opportunities for educational enrichment. Students and staff members participating in these trips are actually ambassadors for our entire school system and perhaps our State and country. These representatives should conduct themselves in such a way that other students may be extended an invitation in the future.

Students are required to adhere to the scheduled field trip itinerary and not modify the field trip schedule to join family members, etc. who are not part of the field trip attendees or chaperones.

It is imperative that students have safe and educationally beneficial experiences on these trips. It is equally important

that staff members who accept the responsibility of leading overnight trips be given the safeguards and support which result from a well-developed Code of Conduct.

#### H. Sequential Steps in Applying for an Overnight Field Trip

1. A teacher or group of teachers who wish to plan an overnight field trip activity will develop a preliminary plan for the trip and submit it to the principal for approval. This preliminary plan will include the following information not normally part of the District's field trip permit form:
  - a. Daily itinerary
  - b. Housing accommodations required
  - c. Mode of transportation
  - d. Number of chaperones and their duties
  - e. Orientation of chaperones
  - f. Estimate of cost of transportation, food, and lodging (separately)
  - g. Means of financing
  - h. Special clothing, supplies, equipment, or funds needed
  
2. If the principal approves the preliminary plans, s/he will designate a certificated staff member to be in charge of the planning for the trip and will submit an application to the District Administrator.

3. The principal's recommendation for approval must be submitted to the District Administrator at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the event. Trip requests which require a large amount of preparation should be submitted earlier. No final plans for commitments may be made before approval is granted.
4. Upon receipt of official written approval for the overnight field trip, the principal and the staff involved will complete plans for this trip. The principal will sign all contracts and approve final plans, and will be responsible for obtaining and keeping on file written parental permission for students to participate in an overnight field trip activity.
5. At least ten (10) days prior to departure, the principal will submit to the School District business office evidence of payment for expenses and any changes in number of students, staff, and volunteers participating.
6. When situations arise which pose a threat to the safety or welfare of students participating in a trip, the principal (in consultation with staff and other participants) will determine whether or not to cancel a trip. If the principal's decision is to cancel a trip, all persons involved will be notified immediately, including the District Administrator and appropriate business office personnel.

CROSS REFERENCE: Policy #352-Exhibit 1 – Student Health Information Form for Overnight School Field Trips  
Policy #352-Exhibit 2 – School Field Trip Checklist

APPROVED: June 10, 1982  
REVISED: March 9, 1989  
APPROVED: April 13, 1989  
REVISED: November 13, 1997  
APPROVED: December 11, 1997  
REVISED: October 28, 2010  
APPROVED: November 18, 2010  
REVISED: July 16, 2015  
APPROVED: August 13, 2015  
REVISED: January 10, 2019  
APPROVED: February 14, 2019