

Ripon Area School District Administrative Guidelines

2340A - FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

Field Trips and Excursions

Field trips or related educational excursions represent a conscious effort to extend the classroom walls into the outside world. These trips should include such community elements as will effectively assist in the teaching-learning process, should grow out of units of classroom study, and should be made an integral part of the total educational effort. Except for unique principal-approved celebratory events, trips intended solely as rewards for students are **not** to be considered approvable under this policy. Even those relatively few reward-associated activities approved by principals must be planned with District curriculum guide learner outcomes in mind and must have appropriate educational structures planned and implemented by the teacher(s) responsible for the student group. Trips are to be approvable only insofar as adequate funding is available to pay required costs.

The Board approves of and encourages school-sponsored trips to parks, museums, and institutions, both public and private, within the local area. It also believes that field trips to more distant locations can be an important part of a student's educational experiences.

Therefore, field trips and excursions, both locally and to more distant locations, may be approved by the administration provided (1) curriculum guide learner outcomes are compatible with the experience and (2) methods are devised and reduced to writing for the achievement of these objectives. Also, learner readiness must be provided for and a follow-up program must be developed to reinforce the learning. Appropriate evaluation procedures must be used to test the effectiveness of the field trip after its completion.

Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association-sanctioned co-curricular group competitive game, meet, or tournament competitions are not considered overnight field trips for purposes of this policy or its related rules. Other school-sponsored interscholastic competition activities are also exempted from policy and rules limitations. A final exemption is applied to middle school and high school "extended campus" activities that make use of either of these two (2) facilities or the Ingalls Field for instructional purposes during the normal school day.

Student Safety and Staff Responsibility

As a part of good planning, safeguards must always be taken to ensure safety and adequate supervision of students at all times. However, in some cases unforeseeable and unpreventable accidents or events may occur.

In such cases, the student and Board employees are covered by a comprehensive general liability policy. The policy will cover any situation during an authorized activity, whether on school premises or not, **providing normal safeguards are taken**, and provides legal support for any employee acting in an authorized capacity. The board shall approve the limits of liability insurance in order to provide adequate protection for both the student and the employee.

Skiing/Snowboarding activities require all student skiers/snowboarders to wear an appropriate safety helmet while engaged in the activity. All students should receive a level and amount of instruction appropriate for their skill level by a certified instructor.

Only approved, school-provided or authorized transportation will be used for field trips. Parents/guardians of students participating will be informed through the school office of the details of the field trip. Such information will include a field trip participation permission slip which must be signed and returned by the parent(s)/guardian(s) to the trip's classroom sponsor. The receipt of such a signed slip is presumed to indicate parent/guardian approval, is required **in advance** of any student participant joining in the field trip activity, and is desired to be received at least three (3) days prior to the event.

A "generic" permission slip providing evidence of parent approval for away-from-school educational trips during the normal school day may be used to establish such parent approval or disapproval at the start of each school year. Any such K-5 activity during the year should also be preceded by the school's sending of a reminder note home to parents with the child. This note should specify all pertinent activity details. **Either** the "generic" approval approach or a reasonable advance notification of upcoming activities to parents is expected for activities involving grades 6 through 12 students. Each school-published parent and student handbook should refer to procedures for conducting field trips and other educational excursion activities.

Standards of student bus conduct and any deviation from preplanned bus route activities on extra-curricular trips shall be the responsibility of the chaperone and the bus driver by way of joint decision making. When chaperone and driver are in disagreement, the bus should be stopped at the nearest safe location and a contact made with the building principal for further directions. Plan changes significantly effecting return time will be shared with the building principal who will take appropriate steps to notify parents.

Local Field Trips

When conducting and planning field trips to sites within the local community, the procedures listed below will be followed:

- A. A field trip permit form, signed by the principal, will be required for any school-sponsored activity which involves crossing a public road. The principal's signature indicates that s/he approves the proposed field trip and that the trip is planned in compliance with administrative procedures.

The permit is intended to protect the staff and is not intended as a restrictive measure. If the permit filing would be repetitive, such as visiting of the public library, a single permit may be filed for each class covering an entire semester or school year, as appropriate.

- B. The number and duration of field trips taken by a given group and the number of classes away from the school building at any one time shall be left to the discretion of the building principal.
- C. All students of a given classroom group should have the opportunity to accompany their classmates on any field trip; however, it is possible for part of one (1) class or parts of several classes to go on a field trip if special provisions are made for students who remain in school. No student of a class should be denied the right to take part in a field trip because of inability to pay any cost or fees. Also there should be opportunities for all students to go on field trips planned during the course of a year. If, for any reason, the principal believes that it is not advisable to allow a student to participate in a field trip with his/her class, the situation should be discussed with the parent or guardian prior to a decision.
- D. The classroom group or part of a class or classes are expected to travel as a group and be accompanied by the class teacher. Origination of the trip must be at the school or at a predesignated meeting point within the school attendance district made known in advance to parents and children. The teacher must accompany the class back to the school or other predesignated point(s) within the school attendance district made known in advance to parents and children via required District procedures. Where not inconvenient to the group purpose or the efficiency of accomplishment of group trip purposes, principals may approve written parent advance requests to pick up a child at the group's return trip departure point.
- E. Transportation should be by bonded carrier where possible. Transportation must be arranged and financed by relying on approved private, school district, or school-sponsored organization financing. When more than one (1) bonded vehicle is involved, there should be a teacher or other Board of Education employee with each vehicle. When private automobiles are used to transport students, in order to be supported by Board insurance the automobile must be driven by an employee of the Board who is also endorsed by the School District to drive students or by a non-employee volunteer driver who must have satisfied District requirements for vehicle inspection, driver competence, and in-service minimums.

- F.

Generally speaking, the class teacher and at least one (1) other adult supervisor per classroom group are considered necessary for provision of adequate elementary level (K-5) supervision.

The following guidelines are for staff member consideration when field trips are planned and taken:

- A. A field trip should always be regarded as an educational activity. The planning for a field trip should include consideration of the learner outcomes to be accomplished, the trip's relevance to the District's curriculum, the needs and abilities of the students, and the methods for evaluating the activity. In planning for field trips, the value of the trip should be compared with alternative means of accomplishing objectives.
- B. Each individual school should develop an annual building-wide schedule for field trips through total staff planning. The school plan should assure balance and variety of opportunities for students, provide assurance of relevance to the curriculum, and help minimize administrative problems. As a part of this planning, the staff should become thoroughly familiar with the field trip procedures to be followed.
- C. The teaching staff should become familiar with the various field trip opportunities by using available informational materials and, if possible, making on-site visits.
- D. The teacher should make a reservation with the agency or institution as far in advance as possible. If the reservation is made by telephone, it is advisable to follow up with a confirming letter to the agency.
- E. Parents/guardians should be advised in writing **prior to** a field trip activity so that the parent/guardian is informed of his/her child's activities away from the school and has a chance to consider approving his/her child's participation.
- F. Principals, other staff members, parents/guardians, and other community members should be encouraged to assist the teacher on field trips. Such assistance can help provide additional adult supervision as well as specialized talents which may not otherwise be available.
- G. After a field trip has been taken, there should be carefully planned follow-up activities in the classroom that will assist the student in relating the trip to the learning objectives and provide an assessment of the value of the trip. One (1) other important activity should be appropriate acknowledgement to the agency or institution that was visited.
- H. In some cases, it may be necessary to cancel a trip for reasons such as inclement weather or other last-minute problems. In these cases, the school principal and the agency or institution to be visited should be notified immediately. If the trip is rescheduled, the date on the field trip permit form can be changed with principal approval.
- I. If, for any reason, the teacher experiences serious problems or difficulties on a field trip, these should be communicated as soon as possible to the principal. This is particularly true if some serious problem or difficulty occurs because of conduct of a student or students which could endanger the health or safety of any group members and/or affect the school system's relationship with the agency or the community. The staff member designated by the principal is in charge of the trip will be considered

authorized to make necessary decisions to assure preservation of the health and safety of all group participants. Joint decision making should involve the bus driver when student bus conduct or deviation from pre-planned bus route activities is at issue. Differences of opinion on such issues are to be resolved through an immediate contact of the principal. Plan changes significantly affecting return time will be shared with the principal who will take appropriate steps to notify the parents.

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 Superintendent 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 Superintendent 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 teachers, 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. The District will then decide which employees or other adults should benefit from the discount or waiver. Expenses for staff members and volunteers who accompany students on trips may be included in the cost of the trip after prior notice has been given to parents/guardians of participating students. These expenses shall be identified in the financial records and reports.
5. Preference is for at least one (1) certificated staff member employee of the School District will accompany students on an overnight field trip. A second option, where adjudged necessary by the principal, is to rely on an adult supervisor adjudged by the principal through past observations as an appropriate person to be placed in charge of student groups.
6. Overnight field trips will provide no fewer than one (1) adult leader

for each fifteen (15) students at the elementary level and one (1) adult leader for each twenty-five (25) students at the secondary level. The group activity planner(s) will determine when ore 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. Before students are placed in private homes, each shall be provided information on any cultural difference likely to be experienced, shall be reminded of protective behaviors strategies, and shall have in his/her possession local contact information for the group supervisor.
8. 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.
9. Adult supervision is to be immediately available at all times during the trip.
10. 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.
11. 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 student Code of Conduct.
12. 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.
13. 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.

Note: Only the field trip form needs to be processed by the building principal after Superintendent 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. Contributions from outside organizations for this purpose may be received through the channels established for the receipt of gifts. Solicitation of necessary funds from non-school sources, as is also the case with the scheduling of overnight field trips themselves, shall be the exception and not the general rule in offering youngsters meaningful learning activities. Any such solicitation plan must be part of the formal request for Superintendent and Board approval.

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. This report will be available to parents/guardians of participating students at the local school upon request.

5. Unexpended Funds

When private funds raised for an overnight field trip are in excess of expenditures, these excess funds are to be disposed of in the following manner:

- a. If the funds were raised by student assessment, excess funds are to be rebated to the students who were assessed.
- b. If the trip was financed by parent or citizen group contributions, the unexpended funds will be returned to the parent/citizen group or placed in an appropriate student activity account as determined by the parent/citizen group.
- c. Where funds are raised by students, parent/citizen groups, and others, and there is an unexpended balance, the participating fund-raising groups will recommend to the principal which student activity account will receive these funds.

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 carrier of the Board's general liability policy for any adult participants not covered by the Board's policy. The coverage shall be comparable to that provided for Board employees, and the fee will be included in the overall cost of the trip. The company has the right and duty to defend any suit against the insured seeking damages on account of bodily injury or property damage. (Also see part D of this rules section in regard to transportation liability.)

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 (3541.43) 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.

Each agency must be required to present evidence that it:

1. is capable of carrying out the requirements of the trip;

2. has the approval of the American society of Travel Agents and generates satisfactory evaluation data from the Better Business Bureau;
3. has satisfactory procedures for handling personal emergencies of participants;
4. does not have as a director or officer any staff member of the school system;
5. has policies with cancellation provisions which meet the needs of the trip;
6. has never defaulted on its obligations to fulfill group trip commitments.

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.

School-community committees and/or parent organizations of the school affected should also be informed of the plans for the trip.

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.

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.

Since these guidelines and procedures apply to all age levels and a varied number of students and staff members who might be involved in an overnight field trip, rules of student conduct must be developed which are appropriate.

A recommended list of rules of conduct follows (see Section J). It is required that appropriate rules and regulations be developed with participation of students, staff, and parents/guardians. These rules will be given in writing to participating students and parents/guardians during the planning stage of the anticipated trip. It should be made clear that varying situations might necessitate the adoption of other specific rules.

H. Evaluation

Evaluations of overnight trips shall be reported to the building principal on forms developed for this purpose. These evaluations will be shared with the Superintendent and Board of Education and may be used as reference for school staff in their selection of future educationally sound overnight trips.

I. 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. The principal will determine the appropriateness of the proposed overnight field trip with staff members on the following basis:
 - a. The objectives of the trip are consistent with the desired learner outcomes of the instructional program for that grade, class, or course as reflected in the District's written curriculum guides.
 - b. The ongoing school program will not be adversely affected.

- c. The participating students' total educational program will not be adversely affected.
 - d. Appropriate provision is made for continuity of learning for those eligible students who do not participate in the trip activity due to individual preference (not financial limitations).
 - e. No eligible student is denied participation if the activity for economic reasons. If it is considered desirable for other reasons that an eligible student should not participate, the matter will be discussed with the student and his/her parents/guardians prior to a final decision.
 - f. The financial implications are realistic in terms of the value of the activity.
3. 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 Superintendent of Schools.
 4. The principal's recommendation for approval must be submitted to the Superintendent 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.
 5. 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.
 6. 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.
 7. 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 Superintendent and appropriate business office personnel.
- J. Recommended Rules for Student Conduct on Overnight Field Trips
1. The use of tobacco or tobacco products is prohibited.
 2. The use of alcoholic beverages, marijuana, and hallucinogenic drugs by students is prohibited.

3. Any student carrying prescribed medication must carry the medicine in a pharmacy container to which is affixed a pharmacy label describing the student name, strength and intended dosage, and administration data.
4. Any games which involve the exchange of money or other items of value are prohibited.
5. A "buddy" system is to be employed in all cases when students leave the group. No student(s) shall leave the group or group's headquarters at any time during the trip without permission of the staff member in charge. If permission is granted, students shall provide the staff member with information such as: time of departure, destination, persons accompanying him/her, end expected time of return.
6. Students on overnight trips who wish to visit relatives and/or friends along the way shall meet with them where the group is assembled. Written parental/ guardian approval will be required in advance of the trip departure.
7. To assure alertness for the following day's activities, evening curfew hours, which have been accepted in advance of the trip, will be strictly enforced.
8. All participants who have elected to join a school-sponsored trip shall comply with the preceding stipulations regardless of whether or not they have reached their eighteenth birthday.
9. If there are serious infractions of rules of conduct, a student may be sent home at the parents'/guardians' expense. This decision would be made only after the staff member in charge has consulted with the principal, the student, and his/her parents/guardians.

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