



INSTRUCTION: Field Trips

Field Trips and Foreign Travel

I. Purpose

- A. To provide guidelines for approving and conducting field trips and foreign travel study programs sponsored by Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).
- B. This Rule does not apply to school-sponsored interscholastic, intramural, or informal athletic competitions, unless the competition requires overnight or foreign travel.

II. Definitions

- A. *Chaperone* – A volunteer chosen by the school principal and/or sponsoring teacher to accompany and supervise students on a field trip or foreign travel program and who meets the following criteria:
 - 1. Is age 21 or older;
 - 2. Has completed the BCPS volunteer program requirements;
 - 3. Has completed the requisite screening process and/or background check.
- B. *Day field trip* – A field trip that occurs during the student school day. A day field trip may include in-state or out-of-state travel.
- C. *Extended-day field trip* – A field trip that occurs before and/or extends beyond the student school day. An extended-day field trip may include in-state or out-of-state travel.
- D. *Field trip* – A BCPS-sponsored group activity which is related to the instructional program and occurs off the school site.
- E. *Foreign travel* – A BCPS-sponsored trip that includes travel outside of the United States.

- F. *Overnight field trip* – A field trip that involves an overnight stay away from the student’s home. An overnight field trip may occur in-state or out-of-state, but not outside of the United States.
- G. *Parent* – The biological or adoptive parent, legal guardian, or person acting in the absence of the parent or guardian.
- H. *School-sponsored activity* – Means any activity planned and supervised by school staff.
- I. *Sponsoring teacher* – A BCPS certificated employee who is responsible for planning the field trip, completing the trip proposal form, coordinating and executing the field trip details, and supervising students.
- J. *Student school day* – From the opening bell signaling commencement of regular instructional hours until the bell signaling dismissal.

III. General

- A. All school-sponsored field trips must be:
 - 1. Designed to support and extend classroom instruction;
 - 2. Clearly aligned to and a logical outgrowth of the curriculum goals and objectives;
 - 3. Supervised and accompanied by BCPS certificated personnel;
 - 4. Approved by the principal and other appropriate personnel as provided in this Rule.
- B. Field trips should be planned to provide for the safety, comfort, and protection of students, teachers, and chaperones.
- C. Students shall not be denied participation in field trips or foreign travel opportunities because of disability or economic status. Efforts shall be made to find ways to maximize participation by interested and qualified students in these field trips.
 - 1. Students with disabilities must be provided equal opportunity for participation, including transportation to and from the destination, and all planned educational and recreational activities that take place at the field trip site(s).
 - 2. As part of the planning and implementation process, students with disabilities should be given the opportunity to participate with

students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate to meet the needs of any student with a disability. For this purpose, the student's IEP and/or 504 Plan should be available to staff coordinating and participating in these field trip opportunities.

- D. The principal shall monitor the involvement of teachers and students in field trips to make certain that neither instructional time nor school resources are unduly compromised by multiple field trips during a single school year.
- E. In order for a student to participate in a field trip, the parent must sign the permission form. If a trip has to be rescheduled, the permission form must be provided and signed by the parent again.
- F. Students participating in approved field trips should not be recorded as absent from school and should be given opportunities to make up any missed work in other classes.
- G. All medications will be administered in accordance with BCPS medication administration procedures. This includes the requirement for written health care provider orders for all medications, prescription, and over-the-counter, and for medications to be stored in labeled pharmacy bottles.
- H. Students who are suspended or expelled from school at the time of a trip will be excluded from field trips.
- I. Each field trip requires a supervising teacher and sufficient chaperones as determined by the school principal.
- J. Chaperones shall complete the BCPS volunteer training and background screening process and acknowledge acceptance of their responsibilities by signing the chaperone agreement form. A chaperone may not accompany a field trip or foreign travel program until the requisite training has been completed and the background check approved by the Office of Investigations and Records Management.
- K. A chaperone may not bring visitors, children, siblings, or others in their care on the field trip.

- L. The following information regarding the field trip or a foreign travel program shall be communicated in writing to all appropriate staff members, students, and parents through normal channels of communication in advance of the departure date:
 - 1. Expectations for student conduct and notice that all Board of Education of Baltimore County (Board) policies, Superintendent's rules, and school instructions remain in effect at all times during the trip.
 - 2. Logistics and specific itineraries.
 - 3. Health and safety procedures and plans, including requirement for health history and medication orders, if needed.
 - 4. Notice that BCPS reserves the right to change or cancel a field trip at any time in order to ensure the safety of students and other participants and that if such cancellation occurs, the school system shall not be financially liable for losses due to changes or cancellation of field trips.

- M. Appropriate evaluation/follow-up activities shall be planned to reinforce the educational objectives of the field trip.

- N. The following provisions apply in inclement weather:
 - 1. When schools are closed due to inclement weather, or when severe weather is forecast at the trip destination, the field trip will be cancelled.
 - 2. Delayed opening – Field trips will be postponed until the official opening of the school day. At that time, the school principal will confer with his/her assistant superintendent to determine whether the field trip will be cancelled.
 - 3. The Superintendent may grant exceptions on a case by case basis.

- O. Employees are prohibited from participating in any aspect of a field trip and/or foreign travel program when such participation violates the Board's ethics code.

IV. Guidelines by Category of Trip

- A. Extended-Day Field Trips
 - 1. For students in Grade 3 and below, the planned return to school should not be later than 6:00 p.m. when school is in session the next day.

2. For Grades 4 and higher, the planned return to school should not be later than 9:00 p.m. when school is in session the next day.
3. If the field trip schedule does not coordinate with the regular bus schedule, the sponsoring teacher must ensure that parents are notified in advance of special drop off/pick up requirements. The sponsoring teacher must ensure that supervision of students is maintained until all students have been picked up or until the previous arrangements for dismissal (e.g., dismissal to after-school care) have been accomplished.

B. Overnight Field Trip

1. The field trip includes an overnight stay away from home and shall involve no more than 3 student school days.
2. Overnight field trips are the exception and are typically limited to secondary students.
3. Field trips that involve more than 3 student school days shall require the approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

C. Foreign Travel

1. Foreign travel shall involve no more than 5 student school days.
2. Trips involving more than 5 student school days shall require the approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

V. Transportation

- A. When transportation for a field trip is provided, only a BCPS school bus or BCPS-approved contractor with all necessary licensing and a certificate of insurance may be used.
- B. At least one teacher shall be assigned to each vehicle and be responsible for roll call, announcements, and student supervision.
- C. The number of passengers on each vehicle shall not exceed the rated capacity of each vehicle used to transport students.
- D. All students shall travel to and from the field trip site under the supervision of a teacher, using designated vehicles when transportation is provided.
- E. Only in special cases, with prior approval of the school principal, may parents receive permission to transport their own child to and/or from a

field trip. The parent must request permission in writing at least 5 student school days in advance of the field trip and acknowledge that school system insurance coverage will not apply. Parents may only transport their own child.

1. The Board does not cover, nor is it liable for, comprehensive and collision coverage for the use of a private vehicle.

F. For trips involving air and foreign travel, travel services shall be arranged with and provided by the contractor approved by the Board (hereinafter, “Board’s travel agent”).

VI. Planning and Approval

A. Proposals for field trips shall be submitted to the school principal as follows:

1. Day field trip – Proposals shall be submitted 20 calendar days prior to departure.
2. Extended day field trip – Proposals shall be submitted 20 calendar days prior to departure.
3. Overnight field trip – Proposals shall be submitted 60 calendar days prior to departure.
4. Foreign travel – Proposals shall be submitted 6 months prior to departure.

B. High Risk Activities

1. Proposals that include high risk activities that expose the Board to high risk of exposure for property damage, property loss, personal injury, or liability, as defined in Board Policy and Superintendent’s Rule 3160, *School-Sponsored Activities*, require the advance approval of the Office of Risk Management.
2. The sponsoring teacher shall complete a *Risk Management Review Form* and submit the completed form to the principal for processing.
3. The principal will review and sign the form and forward to the Office of Risk Management for review at least 30 business days prior to the scheduled trip.
4. The Office of Risk Management will review the proposal and either approve or reject the activity and notify the principal accordingly.
5. No proposal shall be submitted for approval until the Office of Risk Management has completed its review.

- C. The sponsoring teacher shall submit the following to the school principal when requesting approval of a field trip:
1. A completed proposal form.
 2. Destination and date of the field trip.
 - a. For foreign travel, the sponsoring teacher shall consult with the Executive Director, Special Programs (hereinafter, “Executive Director”) to review the U.S. state department’s public announcements regarding travel to determine whether the state department has advised against travel to the proposed destination.
 3. A detailed plan that outlines the relationship of the objectives of the field trip to the curriculum and anticipated outcomes.
 4. Detailed itinerary for each day of the field trip.
 5. Approved *Risk Management Review Form*, if applicable.
 6. Cost per pupil.
 7. Financing, including any approved fundraising activities.
 8. Arrangement for meals.
 9. Ratio of chaperones to students.
 10. Mode(s) of transportation.
 11. Names of accompanying certificated teachers.
 12. Departure and return times.
 13. Pre-planning and follow-up activities for students.
- D. School Principal Review and Approval
1. Upon receipt of a field trip proposal, the principal will:
 - a. Review the sponsoring teacher’s request and only approve the request if all of the requirements of the field trip policy and this Rule as followed.
 - b. Ensure that the proposal is consistent with the educational mission of the school system and aligns with the curricular goals and objectives.
 - c. Notify the sponsoring teacher of the decision in writing.
 - d. Place the field trip on the school calendar.
 - e. Forward the proposal to the appropriate office for review and approval as required by this Rule.
- E. Field trips will be considered approved when signatures are obtained in the order provided below:
1. Day and extended-day field trip proposals that include out-of-state travel – Require the advance approval of:

- a. School principal
- b. Assistant Superintendent for the school (“Assistant Superintendent”)
- 2. Overnight field trip proposals – Require the advance approval of:
 - a. School principal
 - b. Curriculum content supervisor
 - c. Assistant Superintendent
 - d. Executive director
- 3. Foreign travel proposals – Require the advance approval of:
 - a. School principal
 - b. Curriculum content supervisor
 - c. Assistant Superintendent
 - d. Executive director

VII. Responsibilities

A. Principal

- 1. Ensure that all required forms are completed in accordance with applicable timelines, requisite signatures have been obtained, and that the proposal is submitted for approval in accordance with the guidelines outlined in this Rule.
- 2. Schedule field trips to minimize conflicts with other school activities, including testing schedules.
- 3. Ensure that classes are covered for teachers on approved field trips.
- 4. Ensure that the sponsoring teacher has access to the school building if a custodian will not be present at the time of the field trip departure or return.
- 5. Ensure that all contracts and agreements are approved in accordance with Board policies, Superintendent’s rules, and operating procedures. The principal shall be the signatory on all such contracts and agreements.
- 6. Ensure that the sponsoring teacher knows procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency, illness, or accident.
- 7. Ensure that the sponsoring teacher has arranged for coverage for any student not participating in the field trip.
- 8. Notify his/her assistant superintendent of any safety concerns that arise at any time before or during the field trip.
- 9. Maintain the original of all forms for the duration of the field trip and in accordance with the BCPS records retention schedule.

- B. Sponsoring Teacher
 - 1. All Field Trips
 - a. Complete the appropriate field trip planning timeline form.
 - b. Coordinate travel and lodging with the BCPS Office of Transportation and/or the Board's approved travel agent, if applicable.
 - c. Act as the liaison with the field trip destination and as the BCPS contact person for all questions concerning the field trip.
 - d. Prepare, distribute, and collect all pertinent information, including parent permission, chaperone agreement, student health history, and authorization to administer medication forms.
 - e. Collect all monies and deposit with the school financial secretary on a daily basis.
 - f. For extended-day and overnight trips, include the following information with the permission slip:
 - (1) Detailed itinerary
 - (2) Special clothing or cash needs
 - (3) Special nighttime procedures
 - (4) Parent acknowledgement that a student may be sent home at the discretion of the sponsoring teacher in consultation with the school principal at the parent's expense.
 - g. Identify teachers to accompany and supervise students.
 - h. Identify chaperones and ensure that each chaperone has completed the BCPS volunteer training program and requisite background investigation checks by the Office of Investigations and Records Management.
 - i. Provide school nurse with list of students to participate in field trip at least one week in advance. In collaboration with school nurse, develop plan to meet students' health needs on the field trip, which may include training in medication administration, first aid, and making health observations.
 - j. Notify the school's cafeteria manager in advance of the trip of the number of students who will not be eating lunch on the days(s) of the trip.
 - k. Review expectations for responsible student/chaperone behavior; i.e. bus behavior, group and individual courtesy, following directions, compliance with the student code of

conduct, and all Board policies, Superintendent's rules, and school procedures.

- l. Carry a list of names of students and chaperones participating in the field trip, emergency contact information for each participant, and submit a list of same to the principal prior to the trip.
- m. Notify the principal immediately of any emergency situation, including, but not limited to, an accident involving a student or other participant, student missing from the group, illness, etc.
- n. Ensure completion of evaluation/follow-up activities to reinforce the educational objectives of the field trip.
- o. Complete the Field Trip Final Report form.

2. Foreign Travel

The following additional responsibilities apply for foreign travel:

- a. Make arrangements for air and lodging with the Board's approved travel agent.
- b. Request the Board's travel agent send a representative to the mandatory pre-travel orientation sessions to respond to parent questions related to all aspects of the travel arrangements, including the company's cancellation and refund policies and travel insurance.
- c. Schedule, at a minimum, 2 mandatory pre-travel orientation sessions to inform students, chaperones, teachers, and parents about the foreign travel program and their responsibilities.
 - (1) Orientation sessions shall be mandatory for the student participant and his/her parent.
 - (2) The mandatory orientation sessions will include the following:
 - (a) Student behavior expectations.
 - (b) Those expenses, not included in the costs, such as required inoculations, passport/Visa expenses, and personal expenses.
 - (c) Health and safety procedures and plans, including requirement for health history and medication orders, if needed.
 - (3) The travel agent's trip cancellation policy (if applicable), availability of travel insurance, and the refund schedule (if any).

- (4) Parent financial responsibility in the event a student is removed from participation in the field trip for any reason.
- d. Maintain contact with the executive director prior to departure as follows:
 - (1) Periodically to monitor state department travel advisories for the trip destination.
 - (2) If the state department advises against travel to a country on the foreign travel itinerary, the sponsoring teacher must immediately inform the principal.
 - (a) The principal or sponsoring teacher shall contact the Board's travel agent to determine whether the trip should be cancelled or re-routed as a result of the state department's travel advisory.
 - (b) The principal shall advise the assistant superintendent and executive director if the Board's travel agent has recommended cancellation or re-routing of the trip. All changes in the trip itinerary shall require the approval of each approving signatory.
 - (c) The principal shall notify students, parents/guardians, and the travel company of the decision immediately.
 - (d) In no event shall the field trip actually proceed to the location that is the subject of the advisory while the advisory is in effect.
- e. The sponsoring teacher shall devise a contingency plan for maintaining communications with participants in the event of an emergency during the field trip.
- f. Upon conclusion of the foreign travel, complete the Overnight/Foreign Travel Final Report and submit copies to the principal.

C. Chaperones

Chaperones who will accompany the students on the field trip or foreign travel program are responsible for paying his/her own costs and shall:

- 1. Complete the BCPS volunteer training and sign the volunteer training certificate.

2. Complete the BCPS volunteer screening process as determined by the Office of Investigations and Records Management.
 - a. Chaperones volunteering to supervise students on overnight and foreign travel trips must submit to a commercial background check and department of social services background check. Such checks must be completed at least 30 days prior to the scheduled field trip.
3. Complete the *Field Trip Chaperone Agreement*.
4. Attend all requisite orientation sessions, if applicable.

D. Parent

The parent of the student participant shall:

1. Complete the following:
 - a. Parent/guardian permission form, and
 - b. For overnight or foreign travel, complete the following:
 - (1) *Student Health History Form* (Rule 6800, Form K).
 - (2) *Request to Administer Medication/Treatments Form*, if applicable. (Rule 6800, Form L)
2. Attend all orientation sessions, if applicable.
3. For foreign travel, be responsible for the cost of travel to and from the destination country, requisite inoculations, passport/Visa expenses, medical/travel insurance (mandatory), and any personal costs associated with the trip.
4. Acknowledge that a student may be sent home at the discretion of the sponsoring teacher in consultation with the school principal at the parent's expense.

E. Student Participant

The student participant shall:

1. Adhere to the BCPS student code of conduct, Board policies, Superintendent's rules, and all school staff directives at all times while participating in the field trip and/or foreign travel program. (*See, Board of Education Policy 5550, Disruptive Behavior*)
 - a. Violations of the student code of conduct may result in immediate dismissal from the trip.
 - b. In the event a student is dismissed from the field trip or is sent home for any reason prior to the conclusion of the trip, the student's parents shall assume all financial responsibilities for returning the student to his/her home.

2. Sign the student agreement section of the parent/guardian permission form.
3. Attend all orientation sessions, as applicable.
4. Make up any school work missed as a result of participation of the field trip.

VIII. Cancellation

- A. The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel a field trip and/or foreign travel program, or recall the group, if circumstances suggest that travel is unsafe or for any reason determined within the Superintendent's sole discretion.
- B. Neither the Board, the Superintendent, nor BCPS shall be financially responsible for losses due to changes or cancellation of a field trip scheduled under this Rule.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §4-105, Comprehensive liability insurance; defense of sovereign immunity.*
Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-308, Searches of students and schools
COMAR 13A.08.01.01, *Attendance*

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 3125, *School Activity Funds*
Board of Education Policy 3150, *Board Insurance*
Board of Education Policy 3160, *School-Sponsored Activities*
Board of Education Policy 5460, *Searches*
Board of Education Policy 5500, *Conduct*
Board of Education Policy 5520, *Student Dress Code*
Board of Education Policy 5530, *Student Use and Possession of Tobacco*
Board of Education Policy 5540, *Alcoholic Beverages and Drugs*
Board of Education Policy 5550, *Disruptive Behavior*

RULE 6800

Board of Education Policy 6000, *Curriculum and Instruction*
Board of Education Policy 6100, *Curriculum*
Board of Education Policy Sub Series 8360, *Ethics Code*
Board of Education Policy 8410, *Fraud Reporting*

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

Approved: 10/10/02
Revised: 05/11/04
Revised: 07/10/12
Edited: 09/06/12

Source: http://www.bcps.org/system/policies_rules/rules/6000Series/RULE6800.pdf

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