

POLICY RELATING TO EDUCATION

FIELD TRIPS INVOLVING LATE NIGHT OR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

The Wachusett Regional School District encourages field trips, which enhance the students' educational experience. In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 37N, if field trips involve late night or overnight travel, the following must be met:

A. Trip Approval Process:

1. Advance approval by the Superintendent and/or designee will be required for any student trip involving late night or overnight travel (in concurrence with P3321 Policy Relating to Education *Field Trips*).
2. The approval process will be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
3. Overnight trips must offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips must be appropriate for the grade level and must meet Time on Learning requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
4. Teachers and other school staff will be prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process applies only to school-sanctioned trips; trips will not be approved that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.
5. Policies and procedures for trip approval will take into account all logistical details involving security arrangements, emergency management and communications protocols, transportation, accommodations, itinerary, fundraising required of students, the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs, and recommendation of the principal.

B. Transportation

1. The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should generally be avoided. Should the use of vans be necessary for overnight travel, prior written authorization from the Superintendent and subsequent approval by the School Committee must be obtained. Such trips should generally use commercial motor coaches. No student drivers will be allowed at any time.

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2. Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel will involve pre-trip checks for companies, drivers, and vehicles. Companies must have liability insurance on drivers. CORI data also shall be obtained for employees of contracted companies that provide transportation to students, as described in School Committee Policy 5241.12.
 3. School officials will ensure that the selected carrier is licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The District should not contract with any carrier that has an FMCSA safety rating of “conditional” or “unsatisfactory.”
 4. The contract with the carrier must prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the District to allow for verification of the subcontractor’s qualifications.
- C. Trip Scheduling
1. Overnight accommodations will be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Hiring independent security is recommended when appropriate.
 2. Field trips during school time must meet the Massachusetts Department of Education Time on Learning requirements.
 3. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. Student vehicular (bus and auto) travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 AM is prohibited.
 4. If substantially all members of a class are participating in a field trip, the school will provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.
- D. Fundraising
1. The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students’ obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.
 2. Group fundraising activities are preferred.

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- E. Student Supervision
1. Students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones, taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics. The District shall make a suitability determination for all chaperones, including parents and volunteers, using all available Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) data from the criminal history systems board as well as fingerprint-based Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) data, as described in School Committee Policy 5241.12. Faculty and staff of the school will serve as chaperones whenever possible.
 2. A chaperone must always be present whenever students are on the bus.
 3. All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form. Such forms shall include eligibility requirements and appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.
 4. When away from school, all school rules will apply to the trip.
 5. Infringement of rules may result in a student's immediate expulsion from the trip. In such cases, parents will be financially responsible for transportation home.

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WRSDC Policy 3321.1