

POLICY RELATING TO EDUCATION

TRAVEL AND STUDY ABROAD

The Wachusett Regional School Committee recognizes the educational value of study and travel abroad for the students in the District. The health and safety of the students participating in such travel or study shall be the first priority for any such school-sponsored trip.

During trips to other countries, students must follow District policies and school rules. In addition, students will be given instructions regarding expected behavior and laws in the countries to which they will be traveling. Students will be made aware of, and must adhere to, the criteria for participation in travel abroad to be published not later than the orientation meeting.

Travel agencies and providers shall be required to provide verification of background checks on all their employees, agents and host families who will have contact with the students. Any travel professionals who will be accompanying the school group will undergo a CORI check.

The provider or agency must be insured and provide certificates of insurance to the District. The provider or agency shall also provide to the District evidence of emergency procedures to be followed should the need arise during the trip. A system of regular communication with District administrators and parents shall be maintained throughout the trip.

The District shall develop and maintain emergency preparedness processes and a crisis response plan for all student trips abroad, a copy of which shall remain on file at the District office. The crisis response plan will be reviewed by the building principal/designee for appropriateness before each excursion. If necessary, changes may be made with the approval of the superintendent to better accommodate the intended destination.

Students shall not travel to countries which are under a travel warning advisory issued by the U. S. State Department. Students shall not depart from the United States if the U. S. Department of Homeland Security has elevated the terrorist alert level to "red."

All students and the parents or guardians of traveling students will be provided with an information session to be conducted by the District and the trip providers for the purpose of obtaining information concerning the trip, and providing an opportunity to ask any questions prior to the child's enrollment in the trip. Parents, guardians and students shall be provided with a trip itinerary at that time. This information session must be held

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prior to the collection of any trip deposit or down payment. A permission to travel form must be signed by the parents or guardians or emancipated students and presented at the time the down payment is made. This form shall contain appropriate language releasing the District from liability for circumstances arising during the trip which are beyond the control of the District. The parents or guardians or emancipated students must also provide the trip provider with a completed medical information form disclosing medications the student is taking and health conditions that may require medical intervention.

The District will only contract with agencies and trip providers who adhere to the “good practices” recommended by NAFSA: Association of International Educators (see, “Guidelines for Responsible Study Abroad: Health and Safety” at www.secssa.nafsa.org/safetyabroad/goodpractices).

First Reading: 04/11/05
Second Reading: 04/25/05

WRSDC Policy 3321.2