

STUDENT FIELD TRIP POLICY

The Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools seek to provide students with rich opportunities for learning both inside and outside the schools. Our location in the greater Boston region puts us in close proximity to excellent educational and cultural resources, and the use of those resources is desirable when enrichments to formal learning are sought. Excursions away from the school building during the school hours may flow naturally from curriculum topics being explored in the classroom. Field trips may also stem from the need to reinforce ideas of cooperation and productive community living.

International, long-distance and overnight trips should offer significant educational benefits to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. If students are charged individual fees for participation, every effort should be made to provide scholarships where needed.

Attendance on school-sponsored trips which are not part of required class activities is not a student's right, but a privilege. No student may attend such a trip if, in the determination of the principal or his/her designee, the student's behavior has been so inappropriate as to be deemed disruptive to the planned trip. All rules and regulations as specified in the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools Students' Handbook will be in effect throughout any school trip.

For the purpose of this policy, a field trip is defined as a school sponsored activity, involving individual students or groups of students, who are travelling off school grounds during school hours, or as part of a school-sponsored event outside of school hours. All field trips and student travel opportunities should be appropriate for the grade level.

The following student travel is not classified as a field trip:

- Regular competitive /performing art group events, i.e., band performance at away athletic events, state competitions, etc.;
- Routine athletic team events;
- Routine student activities.

These trips are excluded from field trip definition because their activities are within the scope and core of that specific group.

This policy applies to all student trips which have received approval in accordance with this policy including:

1. Day trips are defined as trips that occur during regular school hours, or trips that extend beyond normal school hours during the day but do not begin prior to 6 a.m. or extend beyond 11 p.m.;

2. Out-of- state or overnight trips are defined as trips that involve travel prior to 6 a.m. or after 11 p.m., trips which involve an overnight stay of at least one night or trips that involve travel out of state;

3. International trips are defined as travel to any country outside of the United States.*

(*must have prior School Committee approval)

Any questions pertaining to the school field trip policy should be directed to the Office of the Superintendent.

Purpose of Field Trips

Staff members will work within the following guidelines in their selection of appropriate field trips.

a) Field trips that are integral to a specific curriculum unit

These field trips include a focused visit to locations such as a museum, a theatre production, the seashore, an historical location or government building.

b) Field trips that build group identity

These field trips might include an Outward Bound day trip or camping trip experience with an overnight commitment. Community building trips reinforce relationships in an existing group of students; they might also prepare students for a significant transition into a new structure or community (e.g. students entering grades 7 and 9). The context of such field trips is to help children work collaboratively, make decisions, evaluate success and prepare for the future.

c) Field trips that enrich general curriculum goals

These field trips might include visits to foreign countries for drama or festivals or language immersion; visits to governmental bodies, such as United Nations, would be viewed as extra opportunities for those students who are interested in participating on a voluntary basis.

d) Field trips that celebrate or culminate group work

These field trips might include a trip at the end of a school year for 8th grade students to mark the completion of their junior high school years.

e) Field trips that meet the mission and goals of student activity groups

These field trips include travel to special events or to provide service to community organizations.

Students who attend field trips must be given a reasonable and adequate opportunity to complete assignments for other classes. Communication about school trips should occur between faculty members. Communication between school and family should be regular and ongoing.

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There is to be no solicitation for privately run trips by teachers, students or other school personnel. Under no circumstances is school property or school time to be utilized in the promotion, advertisement or discussion of any privately planned and organized non-school sponsored trips. PTOs may opt to publish information about such trips in their newsletters or post information on the PTO bulletin boards.

The School Committee will only review for approval international school-sanctioned trips. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.