

# Randolph County School System Field Trip Procedures

## **Introduction:**

Field trips should be curriculum-related and confined to the school day as much as possible. The value of a field trip is directly related to the degree of planning and advance preparation as well as the effectiveness of the follow-up activities conducted upon its conclusion. We encourage consideration for field trips that can be done locally and for a half-day where students also have access to the school lunch program. School Field Trip lists are due to your curriculum director by September 30 and May 31 of each school year.

## **Criteria for effective field trips:**

- Provide a meaningful learning experience that cannot be provided in the school setting.
- Be a direct extension of the regular instructional program and the state standards.
- Be aligned with the school improvement plan or district improvement plan goals.
- Provide activities that are suitable for the age/grade of the students.
- Provide activities that are not only safe, but are appropriate and reasonable in terms of duration, distance traveled, and cost.
- Overnight field trips should not take more than two instructional days. (Individual competitions will be considered separately.)
- The cost of all field trips should be reasonable over the course of the entire school year. Schools are encouraged to underwrite as much of the costs as possible so that additional costs assessed to individual students are kept to a minimum.
- Only one grade level may be away from school per day.
- Provide adequate supervision with at least one adult per 10 students (1:10 ratio). Students should have chaperones of the same sex for overnight trips. An adult staff member must accompany students on every field trip. Teachers should be in direct supervision of students at all times while away from school on field trips. The supervising teacher must have in his/her possession a consent form signed by the parent/guardian of each student participating in the field trip.
- Secure appropriate insurance information for each student taking the trip through the use of the "Field Trip Information/Permission Form."
- Provide assurances that no student is denied the opportunity to participate because of the inability to pay the expenses associated with the cost of the trip.

- There are absolutely no activities with any school organization that could in any way be interpreted as hazing or physical violence.
- There will be no team, group, club, etc. sleepovers at a school without prior approval of the Randolph County Board of Education.
- There will be no water activities such as swimming, boating, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, etc. (However, Special Olympics will be an exception to this standard.)
- There will be no high ropes courses or zip-line excursions. Requests for low ropes courses may be considered; however, these requests should be reviewed carefully before approving.
- A calendar of field trips that are planned for the school year shall be established for each school and sent to the Superintendent's Designee by September 30 each year for review. If any field trips are added during the school year, the principal should submit the updated school field trip calendar to the appropriate central services personnel.
- The risk of trips being canceled is greater than ever and plans need to include that possibility. Pre-planning and communication are important. Nothing in this procedure precludes the Superintendent or Designee from canceling a planned field trip due to safety concerns.
- All field trips must be concluded by April 30 of each school year.

**Guidelines for trips in the community sponsored by private companies that are not school-sponsored trips:**

- This type of trip is not school sponsored.
- No documents associated with the trip can be displayed in a school.
- Fundraising for these events as part of the school is not allowed.
- School staff members may not enter into any contracts with a private company on behalf of the school or school system.
- No applications or forms regarding the trip may indicate that the activity is a school-sponsored event.
- The name of the school or school system may not be listed on any of the paperwork associated with the field trip.
- Any private or outside agency seeking to utilize a school facility for a meeting must fill out a form to use the facility.
- The private educational tours may not be advertised as a school-sponsored event.

**Guidelines for safe decision-making regarding field trips:**

- No field trips to any location will be allowed if the national level status or state level status is Code Red.

- If the national level status or state level status is Code Orange, field trips should be only one-day field trips whereby the students and teacher would leave at a reasonable time and return to school by 12:00 a.m. The field trip would require the principal's approval and notification to the Superintendent or Designee. Field trips are not to be planned in or near high profile locations such as military bases, nuclear power plants, airports, major waterways, major ports, and particular events/locations involving a large gathering of people (such as in Washington, D.C. and New York).

**Exception to the rule:** If students have earned awards to compete on a higher level at the state level or national level such as competing for a state title or national title (Spelling Bee winner, FFA activities, FBLA, HOSA, etc.), the principal may approve the trip and submit the paperwork to the Superintendent or Designee for review.

- Field trips may proceed as regularly planned if the national level status or state level status is Code Yellow.
- High risk activities: Some activities provide unusual risks to staff members and students involved. Within the school system, ask if the curriculum objectives are worth the potential risk of injury to the participants.

**Activities that should not be included in field trip excursions are:**

- **Water activities:** jet skis, canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, powerboat racing, private swimming pools, swimming in lakes/rivers, scuba diving, snorkeling, surfing, watercraft activities, water skiing, water slides, and water parks
- **Amusement park activities:** amusement park/carnival rides, bungee jumping, dunk tanks, fairground activities, food eating contests, moonwalks, mud/Jell-O wrestling, Wild West shows, mechanical bull riding, and bounce houses
- **Animal activities:** donkey basketball, horse riding, pack animal trips, saddle animals, snake handling, un-caged wild animals, and petting zoos
- High-impact aerobics, archery, martial arts, boxing, rugby, powder puff football, snow skiing, and snowboarding
- **Skating (unless it is a part of an approved Physical Education program):** inline roller skating, rollerblading, ice skating at rinks, and skateboarding
- **Wilderness activities:** mountain climbing, rock climbing, spelunking (cave exploring), rappelling, wilderness survival, orienteering, and search/rescue

**Procedures for obtaining permission to take a proposed field trip:**

- The sponsoring teacher(s) must secure approval from the principal (see "Field Trip Approval Request Form") before conducting any discussions with students or parents regarding the proposed field trip. The teacher must attach his/her plans for relating the field trip to the curriculum to the "Field Trip Approval Request Form." These plans should include specific competencies to be learned during the field trip activity. Appropriate follow-up activities also should be planned.
- The principal can approve all field trips which are three (3) hours or less without the need to convene the Field Trip Committee. The Field Trip Committee will convene to discuss all other field trips. After approval of the Field Trip Committee and principal, all overnight, out-

of-state, and out-of-country trips must be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction for final approval. Please note the timeline for submission of field trip proposals as outlined by Board Policy 3320. The Field Trip Committee will meet in September, and if needed, at the beginning of the second semester during each school year. If a field trip opportunity arises during the school year and it is not possible to wait until the second semester meeting, the Field Trip Committee may be asked to meet to review the proposed field trip. The Field Trip Committee should address the following questions when determining approval of field trips:

- Is the field trip related to the curriculum?
  - Does the value of the field trip justify the cost?
  - Is fundraising for the field trip necessary?
  - Is duplication of the field trips at different grade levels justifiable? The content or emphasis of the field trip should vary from grade-to-grade, according to the curriculum.
  - Is the number of field trips taken during the school year reasonable?
- Prior to signing any contracts or sending any notice to students, parents, or the community, all overnight and/or out-of-state field trips must have the approval of the Superintendent or Designee at least 60 days in advance of the date of the field trip.
- Once approval for the field trip has been secured, the “Transportation Request for Field Trip Form” must be completed and submitted. Activity buses may not travel out-of-state, except on the border of North Carolina and South Carolina due to our school system’s agreement with the Charlotte/Mecklenburg School System for service back up. Activity buses traveling out-of-state must be properly insured. Activity bus drivers should possess a CDL with a Class “B” with a “P (Passenger)” endorsement and a “S (School Bus)” endorsement. The activity bus driver should be on the Randolph County School System’s random drug/alcohol test as well. Charter bus carriers must be selected from an approved list of carriers maintained by the Director of Transportation. All transportation plans for students shall be approved by the principal.
- Once approval has been secured from the principal (for in-state day field trips or in-state extended day field trips) or Superintendent/Designee (for out-of-state field trips or overnight field trips), and transportation has been arranged, written permission from parents for students’ participation, including insurance documentation and a signed release must be secured with the use of the “Field Trip Permission Form.” Parents have the right to choose whether or not a child participates in a field trip experience. Students missing a class due to participating in a field trip must be given the opportunity to make up assignments. Any student who does not participate in the field trip will be given alternative assignments that include the same curriculum information covered during the field trip. A student’s grade will not be affected as a result of not participating in the field trip. However, a student not participating in the field trip will be expected to complete any alternative assignments. Failure to complete the alternative assignments could affect his/her grade.

- Once approval for a field trip has been secured, the sponsoring teacher(s) should notify the appropriate staff members of the students' absences due to participation on the field trip: administrators, teachers, data manager, and cafeteria manager.
- The sponsoring teacher(s) should obtain a completed volunteer sheet for each non-school system employee who will serve as a chaperone on the field trip.
- A charter bus must be used for any field trip to the downtown area of Charlotte or Raleigh. (Note: This standard does not apply to CTE competitions, athletics, or performing/cultural arts such as band, chorus, dance, and theatre arts.)
- A charter bus must be used for any field trip involving a one-way travel distance of 100 or more miles. (Note: This standard does not apply to CTE competitions, athletics, or performing/cultural arts such as band, chorus, dance, and theatre arts.)
- The sponsoring teacher(s) should meet with chaperones prior to the scheduled field trip to discuss expectations for student and chaperone conduct, dress, and duties while on the field trip.
- A calendar of field trips that are planned for the school year shall be established for each school and sent to the central office designee for review. Any time field trips are added or cancelled, the calendar should be updated and sent to the central office designee.
- Child Nutrition staff members must plan weeks in advance for food amounts. It is important to notify the cafeteria manager as soon as possible when dates change, even if bag lunches are not being requested. The Child Nutrition staff members will need to know when large numbers of students will or will not be eating school lunch on any given day.

**Out-of-country field trips:**

- School trips that require travel outside of the continental United States are prohibited.

**Discipline of students and participation on field trips:**

- All students are eligible to participate in curriculum-related field trips unless the principal, upon the recommendation of the teacher, excludes a student from participation. A student may be excluded if:
  - The teacher informed the student and his/her parents, in advance and in writing, of the behavior standards that must be met to participate on the trip.
  - The student exhibited unsatisfactory conduct in class as reflected in the conduct grades that he/she received on his/her report card, has a record of misconduct, and/or has a record of failing to follow reasonable directions in class/school.
  - The student is provided an appropriate alternative educational experience.

- If the student has a handicap or disability, the student's IEP Team shall address field trip participation in the student's Behavior Plan, Section 504 Plan, or IEP before excluding the student from the trip.

Note: The principal may allow a student to participate on the trip if his/her parent or guardian agrees to accompany and supervise him/her on the trip.

**Special provisions regarding children on the free or reduced lunch program:**

- Federal regulations prohibit a student on free or reduced price meals from being required to pay for breakfast or lunch while away from school on a field trip. If there is a fee for the field trip, it cannot include the cost of breakfast or lunch for the student. If a restaurant meal is included in the itinerary for the field trip, the school must assume the breakfast or lunch cost for all free or reduced price students.
- The food service manager should receive at least a two-week notice prior to the field trip.
- The school cafeteria must be equipped with all necessary food transport equipment for the food needs of students on a day field trip. These resources should be considered when planning a field trip.