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## SCHOOL TRIPS

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*Policy Code: 3320*

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School trips designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry can be appropriate and valuable extensions of the classroom. School trips can help meet educational goals and objectives by connecting learning with experiences outside the classroom environment.

An educational field trip is defined as a trip away from the school environment which involves a teacher and his/her students, and which is directly related to the instructional program in a given classroom. The instructional relationship may be either the introduction of new course content or the reinforcement/enrichment of content already presented. Any field trip must have as its basis some specific instructional objective or expected outcome. Off-campus activities such as contests, competitions, student club conferences and other similar events sanctioned by state and/or local education authorities are not classified as field trips, but must nevertheless receive proper authorization from the Superintendent or designee.

In order to protect the instructional needs of all students, discretion should be exercised in determining the number of days a teacher may be away from school on field trips in a given year. Pre-K through eighth grades are encouraged to take grade level field trips, with a maximum of two field trips per grade level per school year.

Field trip requests should be submitted to the Superintendent or designee by October 1 of each year. The Superintendent or designee must approve day school trips, and the Board must approve any overnight school trips. Board approval for overnight trips must be attained prior to the trip. Written parental permission for each student must be obtained for each trip prior to departure. Permission slips need to include the rationale/objective of the trip, date of the trip, the destination, departure and arrival times back at school, and the method of transportation.

To be approved, a school trip must (1) provide an effective method for accomplishing specific curriculum objectives in the Standard Course of Study; (2) be consistent with the educational goals of the Board; and (3) keep to a minimum any disruptions of other educational programs and/or loss of instructional time. Any educational field trip must be a direct outgrowth of the instructional program, and must include documented preparatory instruction and follow-up.

The sponsoring teacher must hold a preliminary conference with the principal and secure the principal's tentative approval before conducting any discussions with students/parents regarding the proposed field trip. The sponsoring teacher is responsible for making all arrangements. After all arrangements are made, the sponsoring teacher must then secure the principal's final approval. When a trip is approved, the teacher must notify the school lunch manager of the scheduled trip. Students who normally receive free/reduced lunches should have lunches provided by the school.

Both the sponsoring teacher and the principal shall maintain a list of all students and chaperons participating in the trip. The principal shall keep a record of all field trips and off-campus activities. The sponsoring teacher, along with the principal, is responsible for assuring proper insurance coverage is in place for field trip participants. When students from two (2) or more schools are participating in a given field trip, approval of the principals of all the participating schools is required.

Field trips need to be planned to provide safe transportation for all students. Parents must be advised as to the mode of transportation, whether it be by private car, charter bus or school vehicle. Whenever possible, trips should be planned in advance so that maximum use of activity buses can be made when available. Board Policy 6320, Use of Student Transportation Services, must be followed when using activity vehicles. It is recommended that travel time not exceed 2.5 hours one way for a day trip with appropriate breaks planned. If the field trip involves the use of travel agents or tour companies, at least two (2) quotations must be obtained.

Private cars should be used as a last resort. Use of private vehicles for field trips is prohibited unless the approving administrator receives written verification that the private vehicle is insured against liability for a minimum of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00); otherwise, transportation for field trips must be provided through (a) vehicles owned by the Franklin County Schools when available, or (b) a licensed carrier. Private cars must be equipped with seat belts, and students need to be buckled in at all times.

Besides seat belts, there are other safety considerations. Teachers should bring a small first aid kit. A minimum ratio of chaperons must be 1:10 for day field trips and 1:5 for overnight field trips and must include adequate gender representation. It is a good idea for teachers to check out the field trip in advance so that any safety issues can be addressed.

Teachers may ask parents to defray the cost of admission, but the school must also be prepared to cover the cost for those who are unable to pay. It is recommended that students not bring extra money, and avoid gift shops and souvenir stands. Monies collected to finance field trips must be deposited in a school account before the scheduled date of the trip.

Board policies concerning student behavior, student safety and supervision of students will apply to all students and teachers while they are taking part in school trips. Since field trips are an integral part of the program and occur during regular school hours, they should not be seen as a reward for good behavior or as a punishment for poor behavior in the classroom. Students who misbehave on a field trip should be handled in much the same way as they are in the regular classroom. However, since administrators are not always present to deal with difficult students, and given the factor of safety, and also given the fact that the students are out in the public eye, students who misbehave on a field trip may be prohibited from participating in the next field trip unless accompanied by his/her parent or another adult, other than the teacher, providing one-on-one supervision. Students who are prohibited from one field trip and again misbehave on a subsequent trip, may be prohibited from field trips for the rest of the school year. Teachers will make arrangements for students who do not participate in the field trip to remain at school in another classroom with appropriate assignments to complete. Students are responsible for the material covered in any classes missed during a field trip. Specific make-up assignments and time periods are left to the discretion of the classroom teacher and principal.

The Superintendent may make necessary exceptions to the guidelines/procedures described herein, and will be responsible for developing procedures for the request and approval of school trips.

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**Legal References:** G.S. 115C-47, -288, -307

**Cross References:** Use of Student Transportation Services (Policy 6320)

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