

SCHOOL SPONSORED FIELD TRIPS AND EXTRACURRICULAR TRAVEL

Regulation Code:

3320R

MIDDLE SCHOOL OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

- **Required Action**

The principal will not approve requests for overnight field trips that fail to meet the following guidelines.

Additionally, for any field trips in excess of two (2) instructional days a copy of the principal approved itinerary must be sent to the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services prior to any agreements with tour bus companies or other field trip related agreements being signed on behalf of the school. The final decision regarding overnight field trips in excess of two (2) instructional days rests with the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services.

- **Curriculum/Standard Courses of Study**

A written proposal containing the specific itinerary of the trip along with corresponding activities and their direct connections to the North Carolina Course Standards must be submitted to the principal along with request for approval. Specific objectives from the appropriate North Carolina Course Standards must be linked to each activity or program and evidence of student learning must be documented.

*Acknowledging that some social activities may be a minor portion of the overall trip to address the social/emotional development of young adolescents.

- **Organization/Structure**

The success of an overnight field trip as a comparable experience to traditional classroom instruction is dependent upon a high level of prior planning and academic structure. Student learning should not be left to chance. Beyond the typical organizational requirements of required forms (i.e. parent permission, emergency contact information, administration of medication, etc.) teachers must provide clear evidence to the principal that the curriculum is being addressed using appropriate instructional strategies. Example: A trip through a museum would be more than just a walk-through experience. Instead students would be prepared beforehand with focus activities such as a “scavenger hunt” type activity whereby students were purposely viewing items or displays in the museum in order to complete items on the scavenger hunt handout. Journaling would be used throughout the trip to allow students to make connections both with prior learning and the curriculum currently being studied.

- **Recommended Student/Chaperone Ratios**

1:12 – Trips to public places with potential for greater security issues.

1:15 – Trips to restricted facilities where additional trained staff are responsible for directing program activities. Every effort should be made to utilize chaperones that are employees of the Buncombe County School System. This is especially important on overnight field trips that involve travel to highly public places where there may be a need for greater security (i.e. trips to New York City, Washington, D.C.). A training session/meeting should be held for chaperones to ensure common expectations and consistent application of school policy.

The principal, in order to meet the ratio requirement in situations where students are traveling to non-public; restricted access settings, may approve non-employees. Examples would include locations such as camps (i.e. EarthShine) where additional trained staff are normally in attendance.

- **Special Needs Students**

Some special needs students may require that specialized personnel provide additional supervision. The principal will make the final determination in such cases based upon input from the student's teachers.

- **Students Not Participating in Field Trip Experience**

Schools are urged to be sensitive to the needs of those students who, for a variety of reasons, do not participate. Students whose parents or guardians choose not to grant permission for their son/daughter to participate in overnight field trip activities or students who do not participate due to other reasons shall be provided constructive instructional experiences which may include the following:

- a common lesson using the same thematic topic/materials being addressed on the field trip
- the opportunity for more individualized instruction in the form of tutoring
- hands-on small group activities not always possible in large classes
- special activities, food, etc.
- regrouping of students to provide experience with other teachers
- offer other options such as local day field trips

- **Grade Levels:**

Each principal should consider approval of overnight field trips keeping in mind the age and grade level of the students, location, number of chaperones and the cost burden to parents during the 6-8 grade span of the middle school years. Also a major consideration should be that the instructional value of the field trip is appropriate to the specific grade level's curriculum content as identified by the North Carolina Course Standards.

- **Length of Trip**

Recognizing that time out of the traditional classroom has the potential to decrease instructional time, principals should ensure that the quality of activities is equal to or exceeds what could be delivered in the regular classroom. The length of the overnight trip should take into consideration the distance traveled in relation to the overall value of the trip to the North Carolina Course Standards for the particular grade level. Specific connection to the curriculum must be demonstrated to the principal in writing.

Generally speaking, trips should not exceed three (3) instructional days. If additional days are required due to the distance of the destination, every effort should be made to utilize weekends or other non-student days within the school calendar. The principal may approve trips exceeding three (3) instructional days but he/she must scrutinize the itinerary very carefully to ensure that all guidelines are being met to their fullest extent.

Final approval for overnight field trips in excess of two (2) days rests with the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services.

- **Team Equity within the School**

Principals are urged to provide for equity within their school between teams on the same grade level. Teachers on the same grade level should make every effort to provide students with equitable opportunities to experience nontraditional learning experiences. This does not require that every

team offer the same trip. If the school offers overnight trips at more than one grade level, the trip destination and content should not be repeated. Efforts should be made to offer different learning experiences than the previous grade level trip.

- **Cost Limitations**

While it is impossible to set a cost limit that would allow flexibility in determining overnight field trip destinations, principals are urged to keep the cost of such trips within the financial means of the majority of their students. Schools should be mindful of the disparities in financial means within the school community and provide opportunities such as fundraising, community service scholarships, business partner scholarships, or other financial resources in order to allow all eligible students who desire to attend the opportunity to do so. The cost of trips should be announced to students and parents early enough in the year in order that arrangements for earning payment can be made.

- **Eligibility**

Each principal will set expectations and criteria regarding student eligibility to participate in overnight field trips using such factors as attendance, grades and behavior. These expectations should be established early and communicated well in advance of the trip.

HIGH SCHOOL OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP GUIDELINES

- **Required Action**

The principal will not approve requests for overnight field trips that fail to meet the following guidelines.

Additionally, for any field trips in excess of two (2) instructional days a copy of the principal approved itinerary must be sent to the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services prior to any agreements with tour bus companies or other field trip related agreements being signed on behalf of the school. The final decision regarding overnight field trips in excess of two (2) instructional days rests with the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services.

- **Educational Value**

All overnight field trips that require students to miss class must have a valid educational component worthy of time away from the traditional classroom environment. Trips, such as those commonly referred to as "Senior Class Trips," that are purely for recreational purposes cannot occur during instructional time.

- **Length of Trip**

Overnight trips may not exceed two (2) instructional days. This limit may be extended by permission of the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services when the purpose of the travel is for student competitive events or performances.

- **Eligibility**

Each principal will set expectations and criteria regarding student eligibility to participate in overnight field trips using such factors as attendance, grades, discipline record, and individual student motivation needs. These expectations should be established early and communicated well in advance of the trip.

- **Student/Chaperone Ratios**

The recommended student to chaperone ratio is 10 to 1. Chaperones for class trips must be Buncombe County School employees. Chaperones for trips involving school organizations (i.e. band, chorus, JROTC) may be non-employees with approval from the principal.

- **Cost Limitations**

While it is impossible to set a cost limit that would allow flexibility in determining overnight field trip destinations, principals are urged to keep the cost of such trips within the financial means of the majority of their students. Schools should be mindful of the disparities in financial means within the school community and provide opportunities such as fundraising, community service scholarships, business partner scholarships, or other financial resources in order to allow all eligible students who desire to attend the opportunity to do so. The cost of trips should be announced early enough each year in order that arrangements for earning payment can be made.

- **Security**

Safety of students is always a major concern but especially when we take students away from the school campus or our community. It is therefore recommended that local security personnel be hired at the overnight hotel site to provide around-the-clock security coverage.

At the discretion of the principal, additional security personnel could be required at military bases or camp-like environments.

TEACHER REQUEST TO PRINCIPAL FOR OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP

This form must be submitted to the principal for approval PRIOR to the signing of contracts with vendors. For field trips in excess of two (2) instructional days, the approval of the Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services is also required.

OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP ITINERARY
NORTH COURSE STANDARDS (NCCS) GOAL SHEET

Destinations

NCCS Goal/Obj.

Supporting Activities

Day 1/Date**Day 2/Date**

Day 3/Date

Day 4/Date

Teacher's Signature_____ Date_____

Principal's Signature_____ Date_____

Associate Superintendent's Signature_____ Date_____

Motorcoach Service

The School Charter Transportation Safety Committee (SCTSC) is a multi-agency task force. The committee's membership consists of the North Carolina State Highway Patrol Motor Vehicle Enforcement Section (MVES), the Transportation Services Section of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the School Bus and Traffic Section of the NCDMV, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the North Carolina Motorcoach Association, and a public school parent representative.

In June 2001, SCTSC issued guidelines and procedures for local education agencies (LEAs) to use in establishing a program of contracting for motorcoach services that will help ensure safer transportation for students. The SCTSC's guidelines and procedures were revised in December 2004, and the State Board of Education in April 2010 adopted policy number TCS-H-009 regarding rules and regulations for LEAs related to charter transportation for school-related events and activities; therefore, the following procedures must be followed when contracting for motorcoach service:

1. **Pre-Qualification:** The Transportation Department will maintain a list of eligible companies that schools may use for charter motorcoach service which have been preapproved by the Transportation Department, or the Buncombe County Board of Education's contractor to inspect motorcoach carriers who follow the SCTSC guidelines and procedures. Upon verification, a charter motorcoach company may be placed on the list if the company has been approved by another LEA which has implemented the SCTSC guidelines and procedures or has been approved by the aforementioned contractor. The list will be updated annually. Schools will not be allowed to use a charter motorcoach carrier unless the company is on the list. Schools will only be allowed to use full size motor coaches, Tensa TS 30/35 or larger. Minibuses and vans are not permitted. This applies to sports teams as well as curriculum activities.
2. **Contract for a Specific Trip:** The principal shall secure a copy of the Motor Carrier Policies of Insurance for Public Liability (MCS-90B) form or a Certificate of Insurance showing \$5,000,000 minimum coverage per incident. The \$5,000,000 is required by the FMCSA and North Carolina state law. Approximately one week prior to the trip, the principal shall verify the motorcoach company's insurance coverage by calling the telephone number on the MCS-90B or the Certificate of Insurance.

A carrier may not subcontract any portion of the trip except with another carrier on the approved list.

The contract for a specific trip must contain critical pieces of operational information. The school principal/designee must be sure that the following items are addressed in the contract:

- Name of motor carrier
- Date of trip
- Name of group
- Number of passengers
- Itinerary

- In case of emergency who is the contact person (e.g., if the bus driver or vehicle is not available, not performing correctly, etc.)?
- Total cost of the trip. Stipulate whether the charges are hourly, mileage based, fixed, or other. Be sure to understand any special driver accommodations, gratuity, or other costs. For trips booked through travel agents or tour companies an additional cost may be incurred.
- Mileage of trip. Any trip more than 550 miles should take more than ten hours, and therefore, will require more than one driver. However, some trips less than 550 miles (e.g., in rural or mountainous areas) may require ten hours or more. The ten-hour rule begins for the driver when he/she begins driving the bus for the trip (i.e., leaves the bus terminal). A driver cannot drive more than ten hours without taking an eight consecutive hour break. A driver cannot drive after having been on duty 15 hours, part driving and part non-driving, without taking an eight consecutive hour break. A driver cannot drive after having been on duty 60 hours in seven consecutive days or having been on duty 70 hours in any period of eight consecutive days. Be sure the contract includes the cost of an extra driver if the length of the trip requires an additional driver or includes the cost of providing an appropriate location for the driver to rest.
- The amount of deposit required when reserving the trip and refund/cancellation policy.
- When is the final payment due?
- Miscellaneous costs (e.g., taxes, permits, fees, etc.).
- Miscellaneous policies that might affect the group (e.g., carryon food and/or beverages).

The contract for a specific trip must contain critical pieces of vehicle and driver information. The school principal/designee must be sure that the following items are addressed in the contract:

- How many vehicles are required for the trip?
 - How many drivers are required for the trip?
 - How and when will drivers rotate?
 - Are enough drivers being provided to meet the federal hours of service regulations?
 - How much equipment/luggage is allowed on the trip?
 - List any specific requirements for vehicles (e.g., accessible for students with disabilities, large equipment storage, etc.).
3. **Departure Checklist – Immediately Before the Trip Begins:** When the charter bus arrives to load a group of students, the Departure Checklist must be completed by the school principal/designee before departure. The checklist should be completed privately with the driver, not in front of the group to call attention to it, but ahead of time to ensure everything is in place for the trip.
3. **Passenger Briefing – Immediately Before the Trip Begins:** When the Departure Checklist has been completed and passengers have boarded the bus, the driver or carrier representative shall provide safety and evacuation training (e.g., proper loading procedures and requirements, location and proper use of emergency equipment, location and operation of emergency exits, and emergency procedures in the event of an emergency) to all passengers.

Charter Motorcoach Departure Checklist

Place a Checkmark in the Box for Each Item that is OK

OPERATIONAL

- ☐ Prior to the day of the trip, review the terms of the contract. Take a copy of the contract on the trip. The emergency contact name and telephone number should be in the contract.
- ☐ Check to make sure that the bus company that arrives is the one that was contracted with for the trip. If a bus is not from the contract carrier, ensure that the bus(es) assigned are valid subcontractors on the list of approved motorcoach carriers maintained by the Transportation Department.
- ☐ Make sure the proper number of buses and drivers are present as stipulated in the contract for the trip.

DRIVER INFORMATION

When a driver arrives at the designated location for trip departure, he/she should provide the information listed below. The purpose of the information is to ensure that the driver has available hours to make the trip and has had adequate rest.

- ☐ Valid Commercial Drivers License (CDL) with a (P) passenger endorsement.
- ☐ Valid Medical Certificate (pocket card). A medical certificate contains either an expiration date or date of exam. The certificate is good for two years.
- ☐ Driver's Record of Duty Status (logbook). Ask the driver to show the entry for that day's pre-trip inspection and the previous day's activities, and if he/she has enough hours remaining to perform the trip.

Please note: A driver cannot drive more than ten hours without taking an eight consecutive hour break. A driver cannot drive after having been on duty 15 hours, part driving and part non-driving, without taking an eight consecutive hour break. A driver cannot drive after having been on duty 60 hours in seven consecutive days or having been on duty 70 hours in any period of eight consecutive days.

VEHICLE

The driver must provide certain information on each vehicle that is to be used on the trip. The purpose of acquiring this information is to ensure that the vehicle is properly registered and in good mechanical condition.

- ☐ Check the vehicle registration card to ensure that the vehicle is authorized to operate in the

states of the trip. Make sure the license plate number and the vehicle identification number (VIN) match the registration card.

- ☐ Copy of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Annual Safety Inspection – either sticker or paper.

Note: This document indicates the date of the inspection and is valid for one year.

The driver is required to complete an official pre-trip inspection of the bus by the time he/she arrives for the trip; however, the principal or designee shall accompany the driver on a basic walk-around review of the vehicle before the group leaves on the trip. The following items shall be checked:

- ☐ Windows/windshield/wipers
- ☐ Headlights (high beam/low beam)
- ☐ Horn
- ☐ Tires (no slick tires)
- ☐ Taillights
- ☐ Brake lights
- ☐ Turn signals
- ☐ Fire extinguisher (charged)
- ☐ Interior lights

Signature of Principal/Designee Completing Checklist

Date

Checklist Should be Filed in the School Office

**BUNCOMBE COUNTY SCHOOLS
FIELD TRIP/EXTRACURRICULAR TRAVEL
PARENTAL CONSENT FORM**

School _____ Date _____

Purpose of Trip/Travel and Destination _____

Sponsor _____

Date and Time of Trip/Travel _____ Departure: _____

Return: _____

Mode of Transportation _____ Vehicle # _____

Student's Name _____ Grade _____

Student's Address _____

Health Insurance Company _____

Policy Holder _____ Policy # _____

I hereby give my permission for my child to participate in the field trip or extracurricular travel, and for a representative of Buncombe County Schools to obtain medical assistance and authorize medical treatment and any medical procedure which is in the best interest of my child whenever I am not readily available to grant such authority and permission directly to the doctor or hospital involved.

I have provided my child's insurance information above and understand Buncombe County Schools is not responsible for medical expenses related to injuries that could occur from participating in this field trip.

Parent's/Guardian's Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's/Guardian's Home Telephone # _____ Parent's/Guardian's Work Telephone # _____

Parent's/Guardian's Cellular Telephone # _____

Teacher's Signature Indicating Trip Approval _____ Date _____

Principal's Signature Indicating Trip Approval _____ Date _____

For School Use Only

Replaces Administrative Regulation 655

History of Administrative Regulation 655

Adopted: December 6, 2001

Revised: September 4, 2003

Revised: August 4, 2005

Revised: August 7, 2008

Revised: August 5, 2010

Submitted to the Board for information: May 7, 2015

Revised: June 8, 2023