

Trip Policy

1.0 Purpose:

All curricular and extracurricular activities requiring travel either same day, overnight, intracounty, intrastate, or interstate must be appropriately approved. The Superintendent/designee reserves the right to approve or cancel any trip with limited notice.

2.0 Definition(s):

2.1 Curricular Activities: Trips that are planned to enhance the learning environment of students and will take students outside of the normal classroom during the instructional day (s).

2.2 Extracurricular Activities: Trips that are planned to expand the school learning experiences for students. These activities, including athletic events, are usually conducted after the normal instructional day has ended.

2.3 Responsible People: Those involved in the approval process include: teachers, coaches/athletic directors who make the initial request; school administrators who assess the request for approval and submit it to the Transportation Supervisor for consideration; the Superintendent/designee will review the request if necessary, the Transportation Supervisor will schedule the bus operator and monitor the availability of buses on the particular dates.

2.4 Eligibility Guidelines: Each school will publish guidelines, which shall govern the eligibility of students to participate in curricular and extracurricular trips. Such guidelines shall either be included in the school handbook or otherwise distributed to parents at the commencement of each school year.

2.5 Extracurricular Events: Only trips directly related to the instructional program are permitted during instructional time. Athletic events and other trips must be taken during non-instructional time. School teams and groups must obtain permission from the Transportation Director for early departure from school for any extracurricular event. Students must obtain written permission to participate in a trip from a parent, guardian or other responsible adult. All safety and supervision guidelines listed in the curricular section of this policy apply to the extracurricular trips.

2.6 Transportation: All schools are encouraged to use Board owned vehicles for transporting students during curricular and extracurricular trips. All forms and web-based requests related to transportation must be complete and submitted timely. SCHOOL BUSES (1) The use of school buses will not be approved if the request interferes with the routine transportation schedule. The Trip Request must be sent to the Transportation Supervisor after the appropriate approvals have been received. (2) After trips are scheduled

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and if substitute drivers are not available the Transportation Director has the authority to notify the principal that the trip must be delayed or cancelled.

3.0 Vehicle Procedures:

3.1 SCHOOL BUSES:

(1) The use of school buses will not be approved if the request interferes with the routine transportation schedule. The Trip Request must be sent to the Transportation Supervisor after the appropriate approvals have been received.

(2) After trips are scheduled and if substitute drivers are not available the Transportation Director has the authority to notify the principal that the trip must be delayed or cancelled.

3.2 TOUR COMPANIES:

(1) When tour buses are used the Tour Company must be certified as a tour business and have adequate liability insurance. School administrators are required to secure the following documentation and forward to the appropriate Director for approval:

1. The tour bus company's business certification.
2. The tour company's proof of liability insurance.
3. The latest bus inspection for the bus being used on the trip.

(2) Tour bus contracts must be signed by the Superintendent/designee.

(3) All participants in the school trip must have health and accident insurance.

3.3 PRIVATE VEHICLE: All schools are encouraged to use a school or tour bus. When using private vehicles all trip policy procedures must be followed. This includes insurance, driver, drivers' license and registration, meeting load capacity and the signature of the principal.

The State Board of Risk will not insure the parent volunteer, vehicle owner or the vehicle if an accident occurs. The State Board of Risk Insurance is secondary and covers liability. If the driver is an employee it would cover the driver. The Board of Risk does not pay for vehicle damage, only liability.

If a private vehicle is used:

(1) The principal must certify that all persons riding in a private vehicle must be insured by the vehicle owner's liability insurance.

(2) Parent Consent and Authorization for Travel Form must be completed. Students are not allowed to drive the transporting vehicle.

(3) The number of passengers is not to exceed the legal limit the vehicle was designated to accommodate.

3.4 AIR TRAVEL: Air travel should be used on a very limited basis. Student trips that require over-seas travel will not be sanctioned or approved by the Wirt County Board of Education. Therefore, the Board of Education will not accept any of the liabilities of a trip. Sponsors of the trip will communicate this directly to the parents before the trip has been planned.

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4.0 Trip Participants:

4.1 Supervision: All curricular and extracurricular trips must have proper supervision. The school administrator in collaboration with the teacher/coach/athletic director is responsible for determining and scheduling supervision that will protect the students while they are on the trip.

4.2 Staff Members: Staff members are professional employees of the school sponsoring the trip. An appropriate number of staff members must be on each bus used on the trip. A roster of students making the trip must be completed by the teacher/coach and given to the bus operator. If a student on the roster list does not plan to ride the bus on the return trip home, the student must submit request from parents in writing to the staff member in charge.

Field trip sponsors will be approved for professional leave only. Travel and other expenses will not be paid from county funds.

Teachers or other employees that volunteer to be chaperones in another school activity will only be approved to use (without cause days). Only when the principal of the school makes a request that a teacher (volunteer) is needed for a specific duty then optional consideration will be given.

4.3 Chaperones/Volunteer Parents: Prior to the trip a list of approved chaperones must be submitted to the Board of Education for approval. Staff members in charge of the trip must direct the chaperones.

4.4 Bus Operators: Full-time or substitute, certified bus operators will be used to drive. The bus operator has the authority to maintain control of conduct of all persons aboard while enroute. The school staff members and chaperones are expected to assist and support the driver. The bus operator will transport students from school to destination and back to the school, unless the staff member request the bus operator to stop in a pre-approved safe location to let a student off; or making scheduled stops for fueling and food. The bus operator will have the school employee assigned to the bus check the roster of students before leaving any scheduled stop.

5.0 Special Circumstances:

5.1 Crisis or Emergency: Lost Students: Students failing to be with the group at time of departure during a trip.

Procedures to follow:

...Make an immediate search for the student(s).

...If not found in a reasonable time period, contact the proper authorities.

...With no further success, the parents must be notified (Should have telephone number).

...The principal of the school must be informed.

...If a group leaves the departure area, a responsible adult should be left at that point to provide assistance and direction once the child appears.

...Arrangements must be made to transport the chaperone and student(s) home safely.

...Under no circumstances will the student be left without any possible assistance and without informing the proper authorities and parents.

...Unless approval is received prior to the assigned trip upon a request of the parent, those who are transported to an event or activity must return with the transported group. Only parent request to the sponsor will be honored.

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6.0 Trip Expenditures:

The principal must approve all expenditures and funding.

6.1 Fund Raising: If a trip requires fundraising the trip must be pre-approved by the appropriate Administrator before the fundraiser is started. (Form A)

6.2 Student Expenses: Students will not be eliminated from a Board approved trip because of financial expenses. If a student is part of a group that is planning a particular activity and cannot afford the trip cost, the principal will approve ways to defray the cost for that student. During the preliminary planning stages all parents are to be notified of the anticipated cost and other regulations that will affect the trip.

6.3 School Expenses: Each school will receive a yearly excess levy allocation of funds that will help defray the travel expenses. The school will pay the expenses beyond the allocation. Fees & Toll Charges: Each school will pay all turnpike fees and toll charges on the day(s) of each event. Bus operators will not be expected to pay any out-of-pocket expenses (this includes meals; and private lodging on over-night trips).

7.0 Equipment and Luggage

The bus operator will determine the best and safest way for transporting equipment and luggage. All of the regulations in the State Transportation Policy will be followed

7.1 Specific Regulations – Band Instruments & other objects :

- A. Any instrument carried on the bus must be carried on the student's lap or between his/her feet.
- B. Only one instrument will be allowed in each seat, no matter how many students occupy that seat. The instrument must be placed with a student against the side wall of the bus.
- C. To insure maximum protection, no object larger than 24" x 8" x 8" will be permitted. In general this would allow instruments in size, up to and including all alto saxophones. Instruments with an overall length of 15" or more must be carried on the floor between the student's feet.

8.0 Procedural Considerations:

8.1 In- State Trip Considerations: The following requirements must be observed in connection with all trips whether day or overnight:

- a. All pertinent Wirt County Board policies and regulations, including the Student Discipline Policy and Safe Schools Plans must be observed by students, participating staff and chaperones.
- b. Students of any grade level can participate providing they meet the eligibility guidelines written by the individual school. During curricular trips the activity conducted must follow the plan submitted to the Transportation Director.
- c. Curricular trips may be limited to one each year per group or grade level.
- d. The number of chaperones needed will be recommended by the sponsor of the trip and be approved by the principal and Director. The number of chaperones will be determined by the nature of the activity.
- e. No swimming activities shall be permitted outside the supervision of a certified lifeguard.
- f. Proper diet and any special needs of participating students must be planned.
- g. Students must have on file a Parent Consent Form for the trip.

Approval of In-State Trips

All in-state trips must be approved by the Principal and the Transportation Supervisor. If school bus transportation is requested, the principal must send the transportation and curriculum plan forms to the

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Transportation Supervisor in a timely manner to allow the Transportation Department 10(ten) days' notice prior to the trip.

8.2 Out-of-State Day and Overnight Trip Considerations: The protocol involved in the approval process for all out-of-state travel is consistent whether involving curricular or extracurricular activities or overnight or same day travel. Due to the limited availability of bus operators and equipment, Out-of-State trips requesting the use of county school buses will be considered on an individual basis. The requests must be submitted to and approved by the Wirt County Board of Education. Criteria for determining the use of county buses is as follows:

- a. Availability of bus operators and equipment.
- b. Weather conditions.
- c. Distance traveled outside of Wirt County and the State of West Virginia. Out-of-State trips requesting the use of county buses may or may not be considered if the destination is greater than a 250 mile radius from the Wirt County Board Office.
- d. All pertinent Wirt County Board policies and regulations, including the Student Discipline Policy and Safe Schools Plans must be observed by students, participating staff and chaperones;
- e. The number of chaperones needed will be recommended by the sponsor of the trip and be approved by the Principal and Transportation Director. It is expected that the amount of adult supervision of students be determined by the nature of the activity.
- f. Safety shall receive prominent consideration in planning all trips. No swimming activities shall be permitted outside the supervision of a certified lifeguard.
- g. Students of any grade level can participate providing they meet the eligibility guidelines written by the individual school;
- h. Arrangements must be made for proper diet and any special needs of participating students.
- i. Students must have on file a Parent/Legal Guardian Consent Form.
- j. All requests for out-of-state day trips must be approved by the Principal, the Transportation Director, Transportation Supervisor, Superintendent, and Wirt County Board of Education. If school bus transportation is requested, the principal must send the transportation and curriculum plan forms to the Superintendent in a timely manner to allow submittal for approval to Wirt County Board of Education for the trip, at least 10 days' notice prior.
- k. All other non-school bus trips must be to the appropriate Director and the Superintendent designee 20 days before the trip date.
- l. Out-of-state, overnight trips must be approved by the school administrator and the transportation supervisor at least 90 days prior to the departure date and forwarded to the Superintendent for consideration and must be approved by the Wirt County Board of Education.
- m. The sponsor of the trip will be required to complete a form and submit it to the principal. A copy should be filed with the appropriate Supervisor. At the conclusion of trips using county buses, the trip supervisor must sign and date the trip form agreeing to the hours and miles traveled.

9.0 Bus Operator Options:

The Wirt County Board of Education will operate school buses for curricular and extracurricular events. Trips will be planned and made according to the following procedures.

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- a) Only Wirt County Schools approved employees with WV state school certified school bus operators license will operate school buses for curricular or extracurricular trips
- b) Full-time Drivers will be given the opportunity on rotating basis, based on seniority, to fill extracurricular trips.
- c) If unable to fill the trips with full-time employees, then substitutes will be asked by seniority until list is exhausted.

10.0 Out-side Agency:

Any out-side agency requesting the use of Wirt County equipment, bus operators, and/or transportation aides must place the request in writing to the Superintendent at least 30 days in advance. Cost for outside agencies will be based on hourly rates for employees, mileage, fuel, and other expenses. Liability insurance must be provided by the requesting agency for all passengers.

11.0 Severability:

If any provision of this policy or application thereof to any persons or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this policy.

Review Schedule:

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the policy review schedule published by the Superintendent.

Authorization: West Virginia School Bus Transportation Policy 4336, §§29A-3B-1

Replaces: JGG-R, 1998, Reviewed: March 16, 2015