

Instruction

School-Sanctioned Trips

The Ledyard Board of Education recognizes that valuable experiences can be derived from student field trips and educational tours when properly planned, executed, and evaluated. To the extent that budgetary resources permit, the Board encourages student trips or other out-of-district school activities, including participation in interscholastic events, community civic projects and international travel, which are of value in helping achieve each participating student's educational objectives.

Types of Student Trips

Field trips must be directly related to or be an extension of the classroom learning experience. In this respect, field trips may be used as springboards or culminating activities for units presented in the classroom or to provide "hands on" experience for students involved in the study of specific topics. In addition, field trips may introduce students to new learning experiences through participation or observation of such activities as exhibits, dramatic presentations and other timely and appropriate events.

Educational tours are generally of longer duration than field trips and are typically targeted to a very specific student group (e.g., students studying a third or fourth year of a foreign language). Educational tours should be scheduled to occur outside normal school hours to minimize the impact on the student's overall educational program. While educational tours do enhance the student's educational experience, these trips are not considered as essential as field trips that are conducted as an extension of the approved curriculum.

Athletic and academic competitions or other school-approved extracurricular activities supplement the student's regular education program and contribute to the educational objectives of the schools.

Activities, which are solely recreational in nature, are typically precluded from inclusion as field trips during instructional time. Parent involvement either individually or through parent organizations is encouraged in planning recreational trips during non-school hours.

Approval Requirements

All proposed student trips must receive the initial approval at the appropriate level prior to announcing the trip to students and/or parents. Approval from the appropriate authority must be received prior to accepting any monies from participants or entering into any contracts for services in support of the trip

Proposed field trips that take place during the normal school day or that may begin prior to the opening of school and/or end after dismissal the same day require prior approval by the building administrator. All other student trips resulting in missed classroom time also require the building administrator's approval.

All trips to athletic competitions require the prior approval of the Athletics Director.

All proposed student trips that involve travel outside the state of Connecticut or include an overnight stay require the approval of the Superintendent.

All proposed trips that result in students missing two or more days of school or involve travel outside the continental United States require the approval of the Board of Education.

General Guidance

All school-sanctioned trips shall begin and end at a Ledyard Public Schools facility, unless otherwise approved by the Superintendent.

Students shall not receive extra credit toward a grade for taking a trip, and students shall not lose credit toward a grade by not taking a trip.

Students not participating in a school trip, whatever the reason, shall be assured of an opportunity for a quality educational experience at school (which is equivalent to regular instructional activities) during the time of the trip.

The participation of a teacher in a school-sanctioned trip shall not negatively impact the educational process of his/her students who are not participating in the trip. If the participation of a particular teacher is essential to the educational value of the trip, the administration shall take appropriate measures to ensure the continuation of the educational process for that teacher's students remaining at school.

All trips shall be within budgetary allotments for such purpose. Students may be asked to pay all or part of the expenses of the trip. Parent organizations may supplement the schools' expenses for student trips in accordance with the Board's policy for the acceptance of donations.

Student Participation

The prior written approval of the student's parent or guardian is required for each student participating in a school-sanctioned trip. Facsimiles of signed permission slips and/or oral permission from the student's parent/guardian is permitted only under extraordinary circumstances at the building administrator's discretion.

All school-sanctioned trips are considered an extension of the school boundaries for the purpose of the applicability of all Board policies. Prior to each trip, students shall be reminded that all school rules are in effect during the trip.

Attendance policies will be adhered to regarding student participation in student trips.

Students are responsible for making up all schoolwork missed in other classes while on a trip.

No student shall be prevented from attending a field trip because of the need to administer routine or emergency medications that have been properly authorized for that student under Policy 5141.21 and its attendant regulations. A parent or guardian may be asked to accompany the student on the field trip to facilitate administering medication. However, the student's participation in the field trip shall not be contingent upon the parent or guardian's attendance.

Unless a Pupil Placement Team (PPT) determines otherwise, no special education student shall be denied participation in a field trip because of his/her disability.

The District shall make funds available from the appropriate student activity fund for those students who have represented, via their parents or guardians, that they cannot afford to pay for a field trip, but wish to go. Affordability will be determined in general by the use of federal reduced price lunch guidelines for screening purposes; however, exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Superintendent or building administrator.

Since participation in school-sanctioned trips is a privilege, student behavior and/or academic record may be considered in determining a student's eligibility to participate. The building administrator shall make that judgment based upon the student's welfare and/or that of other students participating in the trip. The Superintendent shall be

informed whenever a student is denied the opportunity to participate in a school trip. The building administrator shall also directly inform the student's parents or guardians of the decision.

Staff and Parent/Guardian Participation

The school staff, under the direction of the administration, shall take all reasonable and prudent steps to safeguard the physical and educational welfare of participating students.

All school-sanctioned trips will provide for proper supervision by Board employees so that student and staff safety will be assured. A parent or guardian, with approval from the administration, may assist with this supervision. The administration shall ensure an appropriate student-to-chaperone ratio taking into account the age of the students, the specifics of the trip, and potential hazards.

All school-sanctioned trips will normally require the participation of at least two staff members (who are not married or otherwise related to each other). The Superintendent may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis when the students will be accompanied by parents/guardians.

Whenever possible, at least one male staff member or chaperone shall participate in each student trip involving male students, and at least one female staff member or chaperone shall participate in each student trip involving female students. The Superintendent may make exceptions to these requirements when the students will be accompanied by their parents/guardians.

Use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, or any illicit substance by Board employees or other adult chaperones is prohibited during school-sanctioned trips.

Staff participation should normally be limited to the number sufficient to accomplish the educational objectives of the trip and provide for adequate student supervision and safety. This will minimize the impact on the educational program of those students not participating in the trip in addition to limiting the need to hire substitute teachers.

Trip Sponsor

One Board employee shall be designated as the trip's sponsor, the point of contact for all trip details and preparations, and shall be responsible for communicating all information and requirements to the participants and the administration.

The sponsor's responsibilities shall include informing teachers that students will be missing their class for the trip and also informing cafeteria staff (or other groups providing student lunch items) when several students will be absent during the normal lunch time.

The designated sponsor, with the assistance of other Board employees participating in the trip, shall provide a written report following the completion of the trip that shall include an evaluation of the educational value derived, any unexpected difficulties encountered and how they were overcome, recommendations for changes in future trips to the same area or for similar purposes, and a complete financial accounting of all monies collected and expended.

Insurance

Approved chaperones on school-sponsored trips will be covered for liability purposes by the District's insurance policies.

Since school-sanctioned trips may potentially involve significant risk of financial loss to the District and students, the District may require the purchase of additional insurance

coverage or the transference of such risk to a third party. Any cost attached to such additional insurance coverage or risk transfers may be assessed against the participants in the proposed trip.

Parents are responsible for obtaining trip cancellation insurance. The Board is not responsible to refund students for cancelled trips or to pursue reimbursement from travel agents or trip insurance carriers, under any circumstances.

Transportation

School buses, or other District-owned or leased vehicles, shall normally be used for student transportation on school-sanctioned trips, when practicable. If commercial carriers are contracted with for a trip, the appropriate approval authority shall verify that the carrier has the proper insurance coverage.

By contract or by any other means, the District will not assume any liability for the operations of any third party providing services to the District, its employees, volunteers or students for student activities or travel. The District will not provide any physical damage comprehensive or collision coverage to any vehicles or other property not directly owned or leased by the District.

The Board strongly encourages all transportation of students on field trips to be on buses or other transportation vehicles that conform to the requirements of the Connecticut General Statutes and regulations of the State Department of Education. However, the Board recognizes that, on limited occasions, it may be more cost effective and/or responsive for students to be transported in private vehicles. In such cases, parental permission slips will explicitly state that private transportation will be used, and the appropriate approval authority shall verify that each driver has the proper insurance coverage.

During long trips, videos may be shown in vehicles so equipped. Whenever possible, videos should be selected to complement the educational focus of the trip or some other aspect of the classroom instruction. In all cases, the selection of videos must comply with Board policy.

Standards of conduct governing pupil behavior on school buses shall be applicable to pupil behavior on other vehicles used for school-sanctioned trips.

All drivers, either commercially contracted or employed by the District, shall comply with Section 14-274 of the Connecticut General Statutes regarding hours of motor vehicle operation.

Requesting Approval for Student Trips

Requests for student trips must be submitted to the appropriate approval authority early enough before the planned trip date to allow for thorough review of the itinerary and supporting accommodations for the proposed trip.

Requests for school-sanctioned trips shall include a statement describing the educational reasons and the educational values that will accrue as a result of the trip and shall list the curricular goals of the trip, pre-trip activities in the subject area(s), student activities during the proposed trip, and follow-up activities in the subject area(s). The request shall also include any other plans and/or procedures needed to comply with the guidelines of this policy and its attendant regulations.

Factors to be considered in approving a trip request include applicability to the curriculum, provisions for student and staff safety, degree of disruption to the participants' educational process, as well as that of non-participant students, and the District's and participants' cost for the proposed trip.

Any subsequent changes in the approved itinerary or accommodations must be immediately communicated to the approval authority for review.

Trips Outside the Continental United States

Initial proposals for trips involving travel outside the continental United States shall be submitted to the Board by the Superintendent at least six (6) months prior to the proposed date of departure. All travel-related costs including those for insurance will be paid in full by the participants.

In addition to the other requirements of this policy and its attendant regulations, the trip proposal shall include a copy of applicable travel warnings from the U.S. Department of State for all countries the students plan to visit, including any countries in which participants will be stopping while traveling.

Changes in Federal border crossing/country entry laws will require travelers to obtain passports or other accepted travel documentation in order to visit and return from countries in the Western Hemisphere. All participants on school-sanctioned trips involving travel to a foreign country must be informed early so that the required documentation can be obtained in time to participate in the trip. As of December 31, 2005, a passport or other accepted travel document will be required for all travel to or from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Central and South America. As of December 31, 2006, this requirement will be extended to travel to or from Mexico and Canada.

Non-School-Sanctioned Trips

The Board recognizes that staff members in their individual capacities may conduct on their own initiative, educational trips involving the participation of students. The Board neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor does it assume any responsibility for them. School facilities and school time shall not be used by staff members to promote or solicit such non-sanctioned activities.

The Board encourages staff members acting as private agents for non-school-sanctioned trips to follow the same guidelines delineated in this policy, as appropriate. When a Board employee acts as a private agent for non-school-sanctioned trips, the organizational plans for such a trip must not interfere with the educational process for the employee or students. In addition, staff members sponsoring non-school-sanctioned trips shall avoid misrepresenting the school district as a sponsor.

The Board will not endorse or support trips sponsored by private agencies and considers advertising and soliciting participation in such trips on school premises to be inappropriate.

Responsibilities

The Superintendent shall develop and implement procedures outlining the requirements for school-sanctioned trips in accordance with the guidance of this policy, including, but not limited to, process and timeline for submitting trip requests, required contents of trip requests, insurance requirements, medical and safety provisions, supervision requirements, and post-trip reporting requirements.

At the end of the school year, each building administrator shall submit to the Board of Education, via the Superintendent, a list of all field trips taken by students in the school. The list will include the date, location, purpose, grade level, number of hours/days of school time consumed by each trip, and number of participants (students, staff members and parent chaperones).

Related Policies:

1331 – Tobacco Free Environment
3280 – Gifts, Grants and Bequests
4118.231 / 4218.231 – Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco
4119 / 4219 – Staff Conduct
5113 – Attendance and Excuses
5114 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process
5131 – Conduct
5131.1 – Bus Conduct
5131.6 – Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco
5141.21 – Administering Medications
5144 – Discipline/Punishment K-12
6177 – Use of Commercially Produced Video Products

Legal References:

Connecticut General Statutes

10-220. Duties of boards of education.

10-235. Indemnification of teachers, board members, employees and certain volunteers and students in damage suits; expenses of litigation.

10-236. Liability insurance.

14-274. Hours of operators of motor vehicles with commercial registration or requiring a passenger endorsement or a passenger and school endorsement.

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LEDYARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Ledyard, Connecticut