

FIELD TRIPS

I. PURPOSE

To establish minimum standards and procedures for District field trips.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all school-sponsored field trips, including in-town, out-of-town, overnight and international travel.

III. DEFINITIONS

Field Trip - an activity sanctioned by the District which requires students to be in a location other than the assigned school campus, including:

- A. In-town – travel within Shelby County, TN.
- B. Out-of-town – travel out of Shelby County, TN, within the United States and its territories.
- C. Overnight – travel that involves stay of at least one night and requires lodging.
- D. International – travel to any country outside of the United States.

School-sponsored - an activity planned by the school staff, authorized by the Principal and when required approved by the appropriate designated District administrator.

IV. POLICY STATEMENT

A field trip experience is an extension of concepts taught in the classroom and such experiences are encouraged and supported by the District. While the District supports participation in approved school-sponsored field trips to contribute to student achievement, such trips must be based on established standards.

Consideration shall be given to the following standards:

1. Educational benefit or value
2. Alignment with educational standards and/or curriculum
3. Celebration or culmination of work as a means to enhance the school culture and climate
4. Age appropriateness of the activity and distance traveled

5. Mode and availability of transportation
6. Cost

In the planning of field trips, interruption of instructional time should be limited and restricted to the least number of school days possible.

Principal Approval and Parental Consent

School sponsored field trips must be authorized by the Principal and, when required, approved by the appropriate designated District administrator. Students participating in approved school sponsored field trips must have signed parent/guardian permission forms on file at the school.

Fees

Schools may request payment of fees associated with field trips in accordance with applicable State law, minimum rules and regulations, and Board policy. Requested fees should be kept to a minimum (see policy [6047 School Fees and Debts](#))

Written notice regarding refunds shall be provided to parents prior to the collection of fees for each field trip.

Supervision of Students

Student safety is a vital concern for the District; therefore, appropriate supervision on school sponsored field trips by teachers, school staff or other District officials shall be required. Additional supervision may be provided by volunteer chaperones. Volunteers serving as chaperones shall be required to submit to and receive favorable results from background checks that shall be conducted in accordance with Board policy (see policy [4053 Background Checks](#))

Only volunteer chaperones approved for the school field trip will be permitted to participate in the scheduled activity.

Transportation

Transportation to school-sponsored field trips should be by school or commercial bus. The commercial bus company must be on the District's approved vendor list that is updated on a regular basis.

Shelby County Schools only insures District-owned vehicles; therefore the use of private vehicles is strongly discouraged.

Non-Sanctioned Field Trips

Field trips sponsored by individuals/entities other than Shelby County Schools are neither approved nor sanctioned by the District. This shall include, but is not limited

to employees acting as independent agents, parent groups, and individuals/entities that recruit and/or solicit the participation of District students and/or staff. The use of the District's name, forms, and/or other information in association with any non-sanctioned field trip shall be prohibited. Additionally, the District shall not assume liability for any non-sanctioned field trip.

V. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. Parents are responsible for providing written authorization for students to participate in field trips.
- B. Teachers and principals are responsible for compliance with the provisions of this policy and the accompanying administrative rules and regulations.
- C. Questions concerning the implementation of this policy and the administrative rules and regulations should be directed to the offices responsible for academic operations and student support services.
- D. The Superintendent is responsible for ensuring that this policy is followed.

Legal References:

- 1. TCA 49-2-114
- 2. TCA 40-39-201, *et seq*
- 3. TRR/MS 0520-1-3-.03 – School Fees
- 4. TRR/MS 0520-1-5-.02 – Operation of School Buses

Cross References:

- 1. 7010 School Volunteers
- 2. 6047 School Fees and Debts
- 3. 4053 Background Checks

Administrative Rules and Regulations
FIELD TRIPS

General Provisions for District-Sanctioned Field Trips

The following general provisions shall apply to all school-sponsored educational or extracurricular student trips, including in-town, out-of-town, overnight, and international field trips. The principal shall be responsible for maintaining field trip records, ensuring the safety of students attending the field trip, and certifying that the field trip meets Board standards.

Fees, as authorized by the Board, may be requested for participation in a field trip in accordance with Board policy (see policy [6047School Fees and Debts](#)). Written notice regarding refunds shall be provided to parents prior to the collection of fees for each field trip.

Written parental consent must be provided prior to any student participating in any District-sanctioned field trip.

A. Planning and Approval

1. In-Town Field Trips (**excluding overnight**)

All in-town field trips, including the mode of transportation and the transporter (driver), must be approved by the principal.

- a. Requests, along with required documentation, must be submitted by the trip sponsor to the building principal a minimum of fifteen (15) business days prior to the date of the anticipated field trip for his/her approval.
- b. Notification of principal approved field trips shall be submitted to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations a minimum of ten (10) business days prior to the scheduled field trip.

Under special circumstances, timeframe requirements may be waived for approval and notification. For example, special consideration may be given

for requests when the school receives late notification that a student has earned a privilege and is invited to attend an in-town event (e.g., national convention, academic workshop, or special recognition event). Approval from the principal and notification to the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations shall be given as soon as practicable.

- c. Permission for students to participate in in-town events as calendared by the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA), other scheduled competitions and/or performances; and participation in academic activities that are a routine part of the teaching methodology and that are within the scope of a specific academic program (i.e., college/university partners in early college high school initiatives and STEAM Academies) shall require a one (1) time approval by the principal. The approval shall be valid for the entire academic year. A list of students along with signed parent permission slips are required for each student participating in the scheduled event or enrolled in the academic program.

2. Out-of-Town and Overnight Field Trips

All out-of-town and/or overnight field trips must be approved by the principal and the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations.

- a. Requests, along with required documentation, must be submitted by the trip sponsor to the principal a minimum of thirty-five (35) business days prior to the date of the anticipated field trip.
- b. Requests approved by the principal, along with required documentation, must be submitted for approval to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations a minimum of thirty (30) business days prior to the anticipated out-of-town and/or overnight field trip. The name, location, and contact information of the hotel shall be required for overnight field trips involving hotel/overnight accommodations.

The Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations may waive timeframe requirements under special circumstances. The principal shall seek approval from the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations as soon as practicable.

- c. The office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations shall notify the appropriate District-level staff with direct supervisory authority over the principal of all approved out-of-town and overnight field trips.

Exception to approval timeframe

Events such as JROTC, athletic and performing art activities calendared in advance by Shelby County Schools, shall require a one (1) time approval by the principal and the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations. The approval shall be valid for the entire academic year.

Principals shall submit a copy of an approved list of students and updates, as required, to the office of the Associate Superintendent of Operations and the Director of Athletics prior to travel outside of Shelby County, TN.

3. International Field Trips

All international field trips must be approved by the principal, office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations, and Superintendent or designee. Requests, along with required documentation, must be submitted in accordance with the following guidelines.

- a. Seven (7) travel months prior to date of travel – Request must be submitted by the trip sponsor to the principal.
- b. Six (6) months prior to date of travel – Request approved by the principal must be submitted to the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations for approval. Such requests must include
 - 1) a detailed itinerary of the trip;
 - 2) an orientation plan;
 - 3) a list of all students participating in the field trip;
 - 4) the names of the parents/guardians of students participating in the field trip with a minimum of two (2) working telephone numbers;
 - 5) signed parental permission slip from the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each student who intends to participate in the field trip;
 - 6) where appropriate, medical information about the students and/or medical requirements for travel; and
 - 7) the names of approved chaperones (see policies #4053 Background Checks and #7010 School Volunteers).
- c. Five (5) months prior to date of travel – The office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations shall forward a copy of the approved request and required information to the Superintendent or designee for review and approval.

- d. Three (3) months prior to date of travel – The Superintendent or designee shall notify the Board of approved international field trips.
- e. Five (5) business days prior to date of travel – An updated and finalized list of students participating in the field trip, the names of their parents/guardians and phone numbers, and approved chaperones must be submitted by the principal to the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations.

4. **District Administrative Authority**

The District reserves the right to (a) deny/cancel any approved in-town, out-of-town, overnight, and/or international field trip; and (b) terminate or redirect such field trips in progress for any reason deemed necessary or appropriate, including but not limited to health/safety concerns or misconduct. Denial, cancellation and/or termination of a field trip shall be in accordance with guidelines established by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

B. Supervision

1. All District-sanctioned field trips shall be supervised by a minimum of two (2) adults, one (1) of which must be a school staff member.
2. Parents and/or volunteer chaperones approved by the principal are permitted to assist in such supervision. All volunteer chaperones must be cleared at the level appropriate for the trip (see policies 7010-School Volunteers and 4053-Background Checks).
3. The student-to-adult ratio shall not exceed twenty (20) students to one (1) adult for local trips and ten (10) students to one (1) adult for out-of-town and international trips.
4. Only school staff members and parents and/or volunteers serving as approved chaperones shall be permitted to attend and/or participate in any District-sanctioned field trip.

C. Transportation

Care must be taken to provide an adequate and safe means of transportation for field trips and excursions. Vehicles used to transport students shall meet the appropriate federal and state safety guidelines. Students are expected to ride to and from field trips in school approved transportation. Exceptions may be granted

upon written consent by the principal in accordance with guidelines established by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

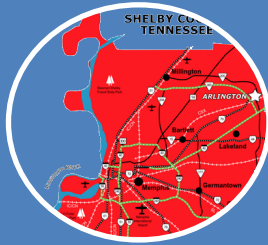
1. Contracted Transportation /Adopters (Company-Owned Transportation)

- a. Drivers of contracted buses must have appropriate training and be properly licensed to drive in accordance with state law and regulations. Contracted companies providing transportation must be approved as vendors by the District prior to providing services.
- b. Adopters providing company-owned transportation must meet the same liability expectations and driver licensing as required of school bus drivers.
- c. A minimum of one (1) staff member or approved chaperone is expected to accompany students in District-contracted vehicles.

2. Private Vehicles

- a. Use of private vehicles for field trips is strongly discouraged. When use of privately owned cars is absolutely necessary, such use by any employee and/or volunteer must be approved by the principal. All volunteer chaperones must be cleared at the level appropriate for the trip (see policies 7010-School Volunteers and 4053-Background Checks).
- b. Vehicles must be designed to carry no more than 8 passengers, have a functioning seat belt for each seat, and must be in good working condition.
- c. The driver of a private vehicle must present a current copy of his/her valid drivers' license and show proof of liability insurance. The driver must be notified that in case of an accident, his/her personal insurance is completely liable for occurrences resulting from the accident, including third party bodily injury, third party property damage, and any damage to the transporting vehicle.
- d. Transport of students by any District employee must be voluntary for the driver.

FIELD TRIP APPROVAL FLOWCHART



In-Town

(no overnight accommodations)

- Parent signed permission slip required
- Principal approval required
- A one (1) time approval by principals for in-town events such as JROTC, athletics, other District calendared competitions and/or performances; and routine academic activities (valid for the entire academic year)
- Exceptions for timeframe of approval may apply under special circumstances
- Notification provided to the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Academic Operations (OASAO) a minimum of 10 days prior to the approved field trip



Out-of-Town/Overnight

- Parent signed permission slip required
- Principal approval required
- OASAO approval required a minimum of 30 days prior to the anticipated out-of-town and/or overnight field trip. Exceptions for timeframe of approval may apply under special circumstances
- A one (1) time approval by principals and OASOA for out-of-town events such as JROTC, athletics, other District calendared competitions and/or performances (valid for the entire academic year)



International

- Parent signed permission slip required
- Principal approval required
- OASAO approval required a minimum of 6 months prior to the anticipated international field trip
- Superintendent or designee approval required a minimum of 5 months prior to the anticipated international field trip
- Board notified of approved international field trips a minimum of 3 months prior to scheduled departure

The District may deny, cancel, terminate, and/or redirect any field trip