



District-Sponsored Trips & Tours -- FAQ

- 1) **Are there any Board of Education policies that explain District requirements for student trips?**
Yes, Policy & Procedure [3350](#) addresses field trips, excursions, and extracurricular activities; Policy & Procedure [5100](#) addresses Domestic and Foreign Tours; and Policy & Procedure [8350](#) addresses the vehicle and driver requirements if students will be transported by a method other than a commercial carrier. In addition, Policies & Procedures [3340](#) (School Activity Fee Waiver) and [7543](#) (Volunteers) impact trip planning.
- 2) **What are the different types of student trips sponsored by the District?**
 - a. Field trips are student trips which are planned and scheduled as part of the class' educational program to support and extend their knowledge through firsthand observation and experiences. Hence, all students from the particular class, grade-level or school are expected to attend. Students may walk to the location being visited or may be transported via District-provided/arranged transportation.
 - b. Extra-curricular trips are usually planned by an athletic team or a club and are planned to advance the team or club purposes. The District does not always provide transportation to extracurricular trips.
 - c. Excursions are optional, school-approved student trips made for one specific purpose that supports curriculum, with an immediate return after completion of the purpose. An example of an excursion would be an optional trip for music or drama students to view a major musical production.
 - d. Extended trips are those which are over 150 miles each way or overnight, and the District provides or arranges transportation.
 - e. Domestic or foreign tours are trips which are optional for students, are longer than one day, and take place when school is not in session unless authorized by the SUPERINTENDENT or his/her designee. To be considered District-sponsored, the tour must a) accommodate participation by any qualifying student regardless of disability or economic circumstances; b) be related to, consistent with and an extension of curriculum and aligned with coursework; and c) be pre-approved by the PRINCIPAL and SUPERINTENDENT or his/her designee prior to any employee using school time or resources to announce, organize, arrange, advertise and/or promote the event.
- 3) **What are a Principal's responsibilities related to all District-sponsored trips?**
Regardless of the type of trip, the principal must:

- a. approve the rationale for the trip, including the learning objectives/curricular extension for the trip;
- b. approve the transportation plan including ensuring that the appropriate driver & insurance information is submitted if applicable;
- c. ensure that criteria for participation is equitable;
- d. approve the arrangements for supervision of students, and ensure that non-staff chaperones have completed the appropriate volunteer forms;
- e. ensure that known student health issues can be addressed (verify that a staff member has the appropriate DPI-approved training in the administration of medicine and that an adult has emergency first aid training);
- f. ensure that the appropriate District authority has signed any contract that is needed for the trip; and
- g. ensure that the complete itinerary and participant list (students and adults), along with participants' emergency contacts, is available to District staff other than the chaperones should an emergency occur.

4) Does a Principal have additional responsibilities for extended trips?

Yes. In addition to the responsibilities for all trips, the principal should:

- a. ensure the appropriate number of staff or other responsible adults will be supervising (1:10 adult-to-student ratio) and that the Superintendent or designee has approved any use of a parent/volunteer as a supervising adult counted in the ratio ;
- b. if parents/volunteers will be attending/supervising an overnight trip, ensure the appropriate background screening has taken place;
- c. review the trip itinerary to ensure it meets the rationale given for the trip;
- d. confirm use of commercial, common, bonded carriers for transportation except as pre-approved by superintendent or designee;
- e. ensure adequate lodging has been secured; and
- f. ensure that parents are informed of any early release at the conclusion of a trip and of the plan for those students whose parents object to the early release for their student.

5) Does a Principal have additional responsibilities for domestic or foreign tours?

Yes. In addition to the responsibilities listed for all trips and for extended trips, the principal should:

- a. ensure that a staff member does not use District time, space or other resources to advertise or promote the trip until conditional approval has been given by the Superintendent or designee, and that such approval has been sought at least 3 months in advance of a foreign trip or 2 months before a domestic tour;
- b. ensure that there is a reasonable timeline for students and adults to obtain required travel documents;
- c. review the criteria for participation to ensure it is equitable;

- d. ensure that only authorized chaperones and qualifying MMSD students are participants in the trip (no siblings or other family members or friends who aren't from the same class/school/grade level, etc.)
- e. ensure that any free or reduced tickets or accommodations or anything of value is offered to the District, and not to a specific staff member;
- f. if applicable, designate the person who may receive the benefit of the free or reduced ticket or accommodation or other item of value;
- g. ensure that parents have received adequate notice concerning the trip, itinerary, transportation plans, supervision of students, and expectations for student behavior, including under what circumstances a student may be sent home, as well as reminders that laws prohibiting certain behaviors may differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction; and
- h. ensure that all restrictions on transportation placed by the Superintendent or his/her designee are followed.

6) What are the requirements if a staff member wishes to drive a small group of students on a trip?

If there are fewer than 18 students attending the trip, and the principal has approved the plan to drive, then a privately owned or leased vehicle may be used to transport nine or fewer students plus the driver/per vehicle when:

- a. the vehicle has insurance coverage for property damage in an amount of at least \$50,000, for bodily injury liability in an amount of at least \$100,000 per person, and liability for each accident in an amount of at least \$300,000;
- b. the vehicle complies with state safety standards, and has been inspected for compliance within the past year;
- c. the vehicle is not used to transport more persons than can be seated on the permanently-mounted seats facing forward;
- d. the vehicle may not be a 15 passenger van, or one on a 15-passenger chassis with fewer seats installed;
- e. safety seats are used for children who do not meet the age and weight minimums set by state law;
- f. the driver is at least 18 years old and has a valid driver's license;
- g. the driver has a satisfactory driving record and criminal record background; and
- h. the driver provides medical verification regarding his or her ability to safely operate an automobile and transport students.

7) What other considerations, such as completion of special forms, are there related to trips and tours?

- a. Field trips are part of the curriculum, so parental consent is not required for such trips, although informational notices (dates, times, activities to be undertaken, etc.) should be provided to families. Requests for contribution toward the cost of a trip should be separate from the informational notice provided to families, and should not be sent to those families who have requested and qualified for student activity fee waivers.

- b. Extended trips and domestic/foreign tours require certain forms be completed. The staff only web pages for both the Elementary and the Secondary Schools contain links to these field trip forms. The process to receive final authorization for extended trips or tours requires substantial lead time of *at least* two (2) weeks unless it is a trip related to a contest for an athletic team or a club for which the group qualified with less than 2 weeks' notice. (There are abbreviated forms available for such events.) Please note that failure to follow the required timelines may result in the Chief of Schools or Superintendent withholding authorization for the trip.
- c. There are no District-required forms to complete for the planning of a field trip that is not an extended trip, but there are [links](#) at the Elementary Schools staff-only "frequently used forms" to a great checklist and approval request. At a minimum, the staff member in charge of the trip should plan and gather the information required for principal review of the items in #3 above. A school principal may develop forms to assist in his/her duties of reviewing field trips.
- d. Driver/vehicle forms for trips that involve the transporting of 18 or less students via privately owned or leased vehicles are also linked on the Elementary and the Secondary pages, and are also available through Risk Management.