
Field Trips, Excursions, and Outdoor Education

Field trips, when used as a teaching strategy integral to the curriculum or to extra-curricular programs, are educationally sound components in the instructional/extra-curricular programs of the schools. Such trips must supplement and enrich classroom/extra-curricular programs by providing learning experiences in an environment beyond the school.

Field trips are defined as any travel (including walking) away from school premises, under the supervision of coordinating staff members, for the purpose of affording students a direct learning experience not available on the school site, which aligns with grade and curricular standards or provides valuable extensions to the school program.

Field Trip Categories:

Category 1: Non-Overnight (School Day/Saturday/Sunday) trips with no activity on water require Principal or Athletic Director approval only.

Category 2: Overnight/Multi-Night, Out-of-State/Country, or any student activity on water require approval by the Principal or Athletic Director, the Superintendent, and the Board of Directors.

General Provisions:

- **Student Trip Requests and Approval:** Staff should not promote or advertise field trips prior to submitting the “Student Trip Request” form to the program administrator for approval. The timelines detailed below represent minimum submission deadlines. Whenever possible, staff are encouraged to plan further ahead.
- **Transportation:** In most circumstances, field trip transportation should be by school bus or other district-owned vehicle. Requests for transportation must be entered into the online trip request system no less than 10 days prior to the trip. Walking field trips may occur at all grade levels with supervision appropriate to the age and location.
- **Adult Supervision:** Each trip must include adequate adult supervision, taking into consideration the age of the students and the nature of the activity. On overnight trips, at least one adult supervisor (over 21) is required for every ten students, including one male and one female when the trip is coeducational. Volunteers may be used pursuant to Policy 5630 and its accompanying procedure. Volunteer chaperones must be approved by the Human Resources department. Pursuant to Policy 5005, the background check for any adult chaperone (staff or volunteer) with unsupervised access to students must include a FBI check (i.e. fingerprinting). This applies to all overnight travel. Adult supervision responsibilities include:
 - Students must be supervised at all times while at school-sponsored events. Staff members and adult supervisors must be readily available to respond to student requests and to provide balanced supervision. Adult supervisors are expected to travel with students on the chosen mode of transportation.

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- Adult supervisors will enforce all school rules. Consequences, as necessary, shall be determined and enforced by the building administrator and/or staff member.
 - No tobacco, drug, or alcohol use by staff members or adult supervisors is permitted during the trip.
 - Confidentiality of student information must be maintained.
- **Student Health Needs:** The school nurse should be notified of the participating students, and a plan must be in place for any participant's health needs.
 - **Meals:** Meal allowance rates for students will be determined by the business office.
 - **Fiscal Arrangements:** Field trips must be at no expense to students if the trip is required, is connected to the core curriculum, and/or a grade or credit is attached. Optional field trips must accommodate eligible low-income students (pursuant to Procedure 3520P and HB 1660) and give assurance that the cost will not cause undue pressure or hardship on the individual student, parents/guardians, or on other school activities. Organizers must plan for any necessary financial arrangements. Fundraising activities must be conducted in accordance with Procedure 3530P. Category 2 field trips require a financial plan.
 - **Informed Consent (Parent/Guardian Permission):** Parents/Guardians must have full knowledge of all aspects of a field trip before signing the Student Permission Form permitting their child to attend. Parents/Guardians must be provided with a written field trip description and itinerary for the trip, including type of transportation, time of departure and return, a brief agenda of planned activities, housing and meal plans (as applicable), special equipment or clothing requirements, and notification that all school rules and consequences apply during the field trip. Arrangements must be made for non-English speaking parents/guardians to receive information. No student will be permitted to leave school on a field trip without submitting a Permission Form signed by their parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of the coordinating staff member to ensure that all Permission Forms have been completed and returned for each student prior to departure.
 - **Outdoor Education:** An overnight outdoor education experience may be provided for students in fifth grade or higher. Specific school arrangements and pre-planning shall be the responsibility of the building administrator and coordinating staff member(s) and should follow procedures for Category 2 field trips.
 - All staff to be involved will be notified of plans after board approval.
 - The proposed curricula for the outdoor education school will be presented to teachers at least one month prior to the session.
 - Information to parents regarding fees and waivers or reductions if offered, special clothing, dates, supervising proposed activities, and other duties will be sent to parents at least one month prior to the session. The parent must sign an approval form.

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- If feasible, parents may opt to have their child participate in daytime activities only.
 - Students who do not elect to attend will engage in meaningful learning experiences at school.
 - Students must purchase accident insurance or have family accident insurance.
 - Low income students must be accommodated pursuant to HB 1660.
 - **Student Activity on Water:** Any student activity on water must be approved by the superintendent and board, following procedures for Category 2 field trips. A “Watercraft Use Reporting Form” with proof of marine liability insurance is required.
 - **Service Contracts:** Any contract for vendor services must be approved using the “Contract Approval Routing Form” prior to signing the contract.

International Travel

Approval of international travel is subject to the United States Department of State travel warnings. Travel warnings are issued when the state department decides, based on all relevant information, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. District travel to Canada and Mexico will be approved unless either country is identified through a travel warning. No district sponsored international travel will be approved to any other country as long as the worldwide caution is in effect. Approval of international travel will follow the procedures for Category 2 field trips, with an expectation for increased advanced planning as appropriate for the trip. Low income students must be accommodated pursuant to HB 1660.

Privately Sponsored Travel

Field trips and international travel not conforming to the eligibility criteria for district sponsorship will indicate that the activity is a privately sponsored excursion and therefore may not be district sponsored. If a staff member organizes a trip that does not conform to these criteria, the Lynden School District will neither approve nor disapprove the trip. Responsibility rests with the coordinating staff member and the travel agency involved in the planning of the trip. To safeguard the district from liability, the following procedures must be followed:

- Classroom time will not be used to organize or participate in privately sponsored trips.
- Promotion and advertisement of the trip must conform to Policy 4237.
- Staff members shall not use district equipment, materials, or email in planning or promoting a privately sponsored trip.
- All materials developed to advertise the trip shall clearly inform parents/guardians that the trip is not sponsored by Lynden School District.
- There shall be no relationship between involvement in the trip and course grades or credit.