

FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER STUDENT TRAVEL

The Board recognizes the educational value of school-sponsored trips as a means of supplementing the curriculum and as a vehicle for encouraging and supporting student participation in academic, artistic, and athletic activities, performances and competitions. In addition, some school-sponsored trips may provide social experiences and contribute to the development of a positive school culture.

This policy provides guidance for the various kinds of trips that may be sponsored by the RSU 13 schools.

Field Trips

“Field trip” means a trip that takes place during the school day and is organized and conducted by one or more RSU 13 employees as a means of accomplishing particular curriculum objectives. All students within the class or grade, or curriculum related subgroup within a class, will be eligible to participate unless deemed ineligible by administration.

Field trips must be approved in advance by the building principal and the Superintendent.

Teachers and principals will be expected to consider the following factors in planning and approval of field trips:

- A. Objectives of the proposed trip and the anticipated learning outcomes;
- B. Specific learning activities to be experienced during the trip;
- C. Suitability of the activity and distance traveled to the age of students;
- D. Mode and availability of transportation, with school bus transportation arranged so as not to disrupt school bus schedules;
- E. Arrangements for meals (if applicable);
- F. Availability of funding for all necessary expenses through the school budget or other appropriate sources.

In addition, the Board requires that:

- A. Parents/guardians give written permission for field trip participation;
- B. Adequate supervision be provided to maintain discipline and safety and to respond to emergencies; and
- C. Students participating in field trips conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Board policies and school rules.
- D. Any overnight school sponsored trip must be approved by the Board.

Swimming or Water-Related Trips

No swimming is allowed on field trips, unless swimming is supervised and controlled by a certified organization that has water safety expertise, such as the YMCA, YWCA, Bates College, University of Maine 4-H Camp & Learning Center in Woodstock.

- Students on trips to a state park where there's no authorized organization with swim safety expertise may go into the water but only up to their knees.
- Parents will be provided with detailed consent forms that more clearly explain activities and risks. That information will be given or translated in a language parents understand.
- Boating and rafting activities will not be allowed unless supervised by an authorized organization or a qualified Maine Guide.
- Students on all field trips will use a buddy system, and meet to go over rules before trips.
- All field trips will have at least one adult trained in CPR and basic first aid, and the ratio will be one adult for every 10 elementary students, one adult for every 15 middle school students, one adult for every 20 high school students.

Competition Trips

“Competition trip” means any trip related to an academic, artistic, athletic, or other student competition or performance that involves individual students or teams. Any competition trip that is outside of those scheduled for the year must be approved in advance by the Superintendent. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding through the school budget or other sources.

Other School-Sponsored Trips

Other school-sponsored trips are those that are organized and conducted by one or more employees of RSU 13 as a supplement to the curriculum, as a class social activity, or as an activity planned by a student club or organization. Such trips may include overnight, long-distance in-state or out-of-state travel, or foreign travel. To be school-sponsored, the trip must relate directly to the curriculum or to activities for which the student club is organized.

Participation in such trips is entirely voluntary. There shall be no loss of credit for not taking a trip.

Participation may be limited to students taking courses related to the purpose of the trip or to students who are affiliated with the student club or organization planning the trip.

The Superintendent and Board must approve, in advance, any trips involving out-of-state travel and all overnight and foreign trips. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding from the school budget and other sources, including student fundraising.

Staff or administrators seeking approval for school-sponsored trips must furnish the following information: Three months for trips requiring Board approval and one month for all other trips.

- A. Objectives of the trip and anticipated outcomes;
- B. Specific experiences to be provided;

- C. Number and grade(s) of students;
- D. Criteria for student participation;
- E. Maximum number of students who may participate;
- F. Cost per student, including funds requested from RSU 13 and from individual students;
- G. Fundraising plans (if applicable);
- H. Transportation arrangements;
- I. Itinerary;
- J. Arrangements for meals and lodging;
- K. Arrangements for adult supervision/chaperones;
- L. Plans for safety and emergencies;
- M. Plans for communicating information to parents and obtaining parental permission; and
- N. Accountability for student conduct.

Adequate supervision must be provided to maintain discipline and safety and to respond to emergencies.

Students participating in field trips and other school-sponsored trips must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with Board policies and school rules. Students who violate Board policy or school rules will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Non-School-Sponsored Travel

Travel organized by RSU 13 employees, parents or others that is not an extension of the instructional program or school-sponsored activities and has not been approved as a school-sponsored trip in compliance with this policy will be considered a non-school-sponsored trip.

All responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips lies with the individual(s) or group(s) organizing them. The Board accepts no responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips, and organizers should be aware that such trips or excursions are not covered by the school unit's liability insurance. To minimize the impact of these trips on the instructional program and operation of the schools, the Board strongly encourages organizers/sponsors to schedule non-school-sponsored trips during weekends and/or vacation periods. Staff members planning or participating in non-school-sponsored travel must notify the building principal of such plans. Student absences due to participation in non-school sponsored travel will be considered unexcused absences.

Instructional time may not be used to promote the trip or distribute materials. Individuals or groups who wish to use the schools for the purpose of publicizing trips or recruiting participants and parents/chaperones may do so in accordance with the Board's facilities use policy. Individuals or

groups wishing to distribute promotional materials may do so only in accordance with Board policy. Non-school-sponsored trips must not be represented as school functions or as related to, or an extension of, the District's school unit's instructional, co-curricular or extracurricular programs.

It is the responsibility of any staff engaging in such trips or activities to notify the parents of prospective and participating students that this is not a school activity, but an independent voluntary trip organized or lead by that teacher or staff member. To minimize any risk of misunderstanding, the following statement must be made in any informational meetings or materials promoting the trip:

“This trip is not sponsored by RSU 13. It has not been reviewed, approved or endorsed by authorized RSU 13 administrators and it is not covered by any of RSU 13's insurance policies.”

Cross Reference: EEAG - Use of Private Vehicles or School Buses
 KHB – Advertising in the Schools
 KHC - Distribution/Posting of Non-School Materials
 JEA – Compulsory Attendance
 JEAA – Student Attendance

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