

FIELD TRIPS PROCEDURES**Academic Field Trips**

The Merrimack School Board recognizes that academic field trips are an extension of the classroom experience that expand and reinforce concepts learned in the classroom and provide new and unique experiences not available in the classroom setting. An academic field trip is defined as a visit to a location not on school grounds that have a direct relationship to a curricular field. There are two types of academic field trips: core curriculum trips that are an integral part of the curriculum, and enrichment curriculum trips that require teacher approval for student participation. An example of an enrichment curriculum trip is international travel for language immersion. Merrimack School District will sponsor academic field trips for students only when trips meet the following criteria:

Curriculum Standards - The learning activities associated with the field trip map to the curriculum standards and satisfy instructional hour requirements.

Affordability/Accessibility Standards - All core curriculum trips must be provided free of charge to all students. The Merrimack School District may request voluntary contributions from students and families to defray the cost of core curriculum field trips.

Enrichment curriculum trips should be affordable and accessible to all qualified and interested students. Students may be encouraged to participate in fund raising efforts to defer the cost of an enrichment trip.

Educational Alternatives - Students who cannot participate in core curriculum trips will receive educational alternatives that have related academic value.

Health and Safety - The health and safety of students and staff is given utmost consideration in the approval, planning and conduct of all school sponsored trips. Students participating in any type of field trip are required to adhere to general school rules and regulations.

Supervision - Staff from the requesting school direct the trip, and a staff member is identified as the Staff-in-Charge and is in attendance to ensure compliance with this policy.

Non-Academic Field Trips

A non-academic field trip is defined as attendance at contests or regional events outside the school grounds that is not a part of the curriculum and does not count toward meeting the instructional hour requirement. Every effort should be made to mitigate the effect of non-academic field trips on instructional hours.

A standard main office permission slip for school field trips, overnight, and overseas trips must be completed, signed, and submitted to the teacher and administration before the scheduled event. On all such trips, all school rules shall apply. All trips require a minimum of two chaperones along with administrative approval.

Parents/guardians are allowed to pick up their own child/student from field trips but must submit the Alternate Field Trip Transportation Form at least 24 hours prior to the event. If a parent would like their student to ride home with another parent, they would need to submit the Alternate Field Trip Transportation Form at least 24 hours prior to the event.

If parents/guardians provide transportation to, or allow another adult to provide transportation to, scheduled school field trips, the parent/guardian or designated adult transporting the students shall assume all resulting liability, and the school shall assume no liability. Under no circumstances will students transport themselves or other students to or from any school event.

Related Definitions

Chaperone - A person, other than a teacher and instructional assistant, age 21 or older, who accompanies and supervises the students on a field trip.

Staff - All paid school personnel.

Staff-in-Charge - The teacher attending the trip designated to ensure compliance with this policy.

Approval Criteria

The table below lists the terms used for trips of various lengths and the approval required. Note that out-of-state travel requires School Board approval regardless of the trip length. In no case will a trip exceeding five school days be approved.

Trip Length	Principal	Asst Supt for Curriculum	Supt	School Board
Day - Within the school day. * Academic Non-Academic	X X	X		
Extended - A visit extending beyond the school day but not overnight. Academic Non-Academic	X X	X		
Overnight - A visit that involves an overnight stay. Academic Non-Academic	X X	X	X X	X X
International - A visit to another country. Academic Non-Academic	X X	X	X X	X X

* All Academic field trips, longer than half of the school day, require the approval of the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

X Approval is required by the indicated person.

Approval

Approval for all trips requiring School Board approval must be received prior to the school year in which the trip is to take place and prior to making any final financial contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in this policy.

The initial documentation to request a field trip must include:

Documentation

1. The purpose of the trip including a mapping to the curriculum frameworks.
2. Proposed dates.
3. Proposed itinerary.
4. Estimated number of students expected and percentage of eligible students participating.
5. Cost per student (if applicable).
6. Ratio of chaperones/teachers to students.
7. Description of transportation arrangements.
8. Description of arrangements for meals and lodging (if applicable).
9. Means of financing.
10. A draft copy of any contract associated with the trip.
11. A description of the educational alternative and mapping of that alternative for students not attending the trip.
12. A satisfactory criminal background check is required of all chaperones.
13. A description of the process that will be used to determine student eligibility. After the initial trip approval, subsequent approval documentation must include information detailing how the above trip conditions have changed since the initial trip was approved.