

Administrative Procedures for Field Trips

(Attachment for Policy No.121)

Purpose

The safety of District students, staff, and parents/chaperones during field trips is paramount.

The purpose of this administrative procedure is to support all schools in planning field trips that are safe, equitable, educationally meaningful, and compliant with Board Policy and District requirements.

Definitions

Parent/Guardian: Anyone legally responsible for a student.

Chaperone: A School District employee, or an adult volunteer, who supervises students on a field trip.

Athletic Trips: Managed by the Athletics Office; requires coach presence and annual forms.

School-Sponsored Field Trip: Any activity, event or travel experience, tied to learning or academic goals, that occurs at a location other than the school building(s) or school property and is initiated, organized, approved, supervised, or otherwise facilitated by the school or District, regardless of the funding source.

Non-School-Sponsored Field Trip: Any activity or travel experience outside of regular school programming that is not initiated, organized, approved, supervised, and facilitated by the school or School District. District forms, letterhead, logos, or official communications may not be used, and the activity may not be represented as school or District-endorsed. Any involvement in a non-school sponsored field trip by District staff members is in a personal capacity and outside of their employment with the District.

Procedures

General Requirements & Timing

All trips must:

- Have a clear educational purpose or academic goal.
- Include all students regardless of ability to pay.
- Use District-approved locations and transportation.
- Follow established timelines and chaperone ratios.
- Avoid the use of private vehicles, ride shares, or unapproved fundraising.

Scheduling and Timing

- Trips may occur anytime throughout the school year, but trips sponsored and supported by schools during the summer must also follow these Administrative Procedures.

- **Trips should not be scheduled during PSSA testing windows.** Trips scheduled during that window require Assistant Superintendent approval.
- When an activity extends beyond the school day, **Chaperones are required to supervise students until each student is picked up by an authorized parent, guardian, or designated adult.**

Permission Slips

- **No student shall be allowed to attend a trip without a signed permission slip by the parent or guardian.** Revised permission slips may be found [here](#).
- Digital or electronically signed permission slips using Online Cash are acceptable. Additional information may be found on the [Field Trip Website](#).

Field Trip Planning & Approval

Schools are responsible for completing pre-planning activities and submitting a trip proposal via Google Form. **Schools should start the pre-planning process at least six weeks prior to your trip** to allow Central Office departments to review and obtain any additional approvals for physical activities, insurance requirements and nursing assistance on your behalf as needed.

The steps below provide an overview of the process for submitting a trip proposal for approval:

Active Certificate of Insurance (COI): Every destination, venue, or vendor used for a District-sponsored field trip must have an active COI on file with the District.

Before planning your trip, check the [List of Locations with Active Insurance](#) to determine whether your destination has already met this requirement. If your destination is not listed, additional time may be needed to obtain and review the required insurance documentation before your request can move forward. Please make sure to provide accurate contact information for your destination or travel agent.

Step 1 **Pre-Planning**

Detailed Itinerary: Prepare your detailed itinerary ([example here](#)). A complete itinerary should include:

- Departure and return times
- All destinations and addresses
- All scheduled activities
- Meal or rest breaks, if applicable
- Transportation between locations (if applicable)

Nursing Support: For trips requiring nurse support, compile the names and student ID numbers for all students requiring a nurse. Having this information

ready before you submit your request helps ensure that appropriate medical support can be coordinated in a timely manner.

Step 2
Complete Google Form

At least **six weeks before the trip**, complete and submit the [Field Trip Pre-Approval Form](#) with trip details and your detailed itinerary attached.

Step 3
Receive Confirmation & Respond to Follow Up

Schools will receive an automated email confirming receipt of the submission.

Address any questions or missing information requested by the Learning Network Executive Assistant or central office reviewers.

Provide additional documents or clarifications promptly to avoid delays.

Step 4
Review Your Trip Status

You'll receive a Trip Status Update indicating whether your trip is approved, pending school-level requirements, or denied. If additional action is needed, comments from District reviewers will be included.

Once approved and signed, the Trip Status Update may be used to begin making approved trip-related purchases.

The update will include:

- A link to your Trip Folder for uploading all required documentation
- The Trip Status Update Form for principal review and signature

All required documents must be uploaded to your folder before final approval is granted.

Step 5
Complete School-Level Requirements

In this step, you'll complete all the required school-level compliance steps, [using this checklist](#). Note that the required school-level compliance steps are different depending on the type of trip (i.e., day trips vs. overnight and international trips). Compliance steps include, but are not limited to:

- Finalizing the student roster and headcount.
- Preparing a chaperone list and confirming required ratios.
- Confirming transportation.
- Collecting parent permission slips.
- Getting Principal signature on the [School-Level Compliance Acknowledgement Form](#)

Schools must upload all required documents to the designated trip folder and email the Learning Network Executive Assistant when your folder is ready for final review.

Step 6
Receive Final
Authorization

The Learning Network Executive Assistant reviews all submitted documents and confirms that school-level requirements are complete. Once verified, final authorization is issued. The principal then receives confirmation that the trip is fully approved or denied.

Please visit the [Field Trips website](#) for more detailed information about each step in the field trip submission and approval process.

Trip Types, Chaperone Ratios & Required Submission Deadlines

Trip Types

- Day Trips
 - In-City: Locations with a 191XX zip code; requires Principal approval
 - Out-of-City: Requires Principal approval.
- Overnight: Requires network and District approval
- International: Requires network and District approval and parent airport pickup

Chaperone Ratios and Approval Levels

Trip Type	Chaperone Ratio	Gender Specific	Approval	Required Notice
In-City	1 adult per 10 students*	Not required	Principal	6 weeks
Out-of-City	1 adult per 10 students	Not required	Principal	6 weeks
Overnight	1 adult per 10 students	Required	Network/Division	6 weeks
International	1 adult per 5 students	Required	Network/Division	12 - 24 months

* Visits to Fox Chase Farm only require two chaperones per class.

Volunteer Requirements & Chaperone Responsibilities

- **Clearances (Board Policy 916):** All non-District staff chaperones must have clearances on file at the school in accordance with Board Policy 916. The Family and Community Engagement (FACE) Office provides guidance for how to obtain necessary clearances.
- **Principal Approval:** Principals must complete the [Confirmation of Volunteer Chaperone Clearances Form](#) prior to the trip.
- **Definition:** A chaperone is a responsible adult who escorts and supervises students as a guide to ensure their safety and proper behavior. **Chaperones should be present with students at all times.** For more information about a charperone's responsibilities and safety requirements, please visit the Field Trips Website.

Submission Process/Deadlines for International Field Trips

Because international travel involves additional planning, documentation, and approvals, schools are encouraged to begin planning 12–24 months before the anticipated departure date. The following steps provide an overview of the process for international trips:

Pre-Approval Statement of Intent: 24–12 Months Before Departure

Once your school has identified an international travel opportunity and selected a travel provider, the first step is to notify the District of your intent to move forward with planning. Please note that all travel providers must have or begin the process to produce a contract and meet District insurance requirements.

Submitting a [Statement of Intent](#) Google Form allows the District to review the proposed experience early, ensuring it aligns with District priorities while identifying any compliance, safety, or planning considerations to obtain pre-approval before significant commitments are made.

During this phase, schools will:

- Submit the [Statement of Intent](#) using the District's Google Form.
- Review the *Statement of Intent* document auto-generated when you submit the Google Form.
- Obtain the Principal's review and signature.
- Submit the request to the Learning Network Executive Assistant for Assistant and Associate Superintendent review and approval.

Planning and Development: 23–3 Months Before Departure

Once the Statement of Intent has been approved by your Assistant and Associate Superintendents, schools may begin working with their selected travel provider to prepare for the international experience.

During this phase, schools, families, and travel providers work together to prepare students for travel while ensuring all District expectations are met.

Planning activities typically include:

- Financial planning and fundraising
- Student and family communication
- Reviewing and refining the educational itinerary
- Coordinating travel logistics
- Accessibility and inclusion planning
- Teacher and chaperone preparation
- Student pre-departure meetings and orientations

Throughout this phase, schools should remain in regular communication with their travel provider and begin preparing the documentation that will be required for final District approval.

Submission and Final Approval: 12 Weeks Before Departure

Approximately twelve weeks before departure, schools will submit their completed international field trip package by uploading all compliance documents to your trip folder. Please email your Learning Network Executive Assistant for final District review.

In addition to the [standard trip required documentation](#), the submission includes:

- Student List with Name and ID numbers
- Fully Completed and signed [EH-80 Permission Slips](#) for Each Student (Must indicate that parent or guardian has reviewed and approved of the draft itinerary)
- Safety plan documentation
- Detailed Dated and Final Trip Itinerary
- Flight Confirmation and List of Passengers
- Hotel Accommodations
- Room Assignments for Students and Chaperones
- Self Medication Form for high school students, if applicable
- Any additional required supporting documentation

Please use the International Trip Checklist to ensure you have all required documents before submitting your final international field trip package to the Learning Network Executive Assistant.

Following submission:

- The Learning Network Executive Assistant verifies compliance.
- Schools receive final authorization via email before the trip may proceed.

Transportation

Schools may request a District bus or use an approved transportation vendor when District transportation is unavailable. Because availability may be limited, schools should review their options early and begin making arrangements as soon as their trip receives approval pending completion of school-level requirements. Please note that Septa may be used but private vehicles and ride shares like Uber and Lyft are not approved by the District to transport students.

Request a District Bus

District buses for field trips are generally available only between morning arrival and afternoon dismissal. Transportation is scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis and is not guaranteed.

To request a District bus:

1. Complete the [S-175 Transportation Request Form](#).
2. Email the completed form to transoperations@philasd.org.
3. Wait for confirmation from the Transportation Services Office before considering transportation finalized.

When planning your departure and return times for off-peak use, be sure to account for the school day and the limited availability of District buses.

Use an Approved Transportation Vendor

When a District bus is unavailable or does not meet the needs of the trip, schools may arrange transportation through one of the District's [approved vendors](#) for a fee. The vendors on this list may also be used for off-peak trips. Please refer to the list of approved transportation providers which may be found [here](#).

Approved Coach Bus Transportation

The list of approved coach bus transportation vendors is [here](#). These vendors are under contract and meet District insurance requirements. Transportation through approved vendors is available for a fee and schools should confirm pricing and available funding before making arrangements.

To use an approved coach bus vendor:

1. Contact the vendor directly to confirm availability and request a quote.
2. Select the vendor that best meets the school's transportation needs.
3. Create a requisition using a SMART Form in Oracle.
4. Do not treat transportation as confirmed until all required purchasing steps are complete.

Before Final Authorization

Transportation arrangements must be confirmed before the trip receives final authorization. Schools should retain any confirmation, quote, purchase documentation, or other records required for the designated Trip Folder.

A submitted transportation request, vendor inquiry, or requisition does not by itself confirm that transportation has been secured. Schools should verify all arrangements directly with the Transportation Services Office or selected vendor.

For questions about District buses, approved vendors, or transportation procedures, contact the Transportation Services Office (transoperations@philasd.org).

Insurance & Contracting

Verifying or obtaining insurance approvals and securing a contract, if needed, is no longer the responsibility of schools. The Learning Network Executive Assistant will send requests as needed for approval of the location through the new Field Trip Approval Process. Guidance is provided below for planning considerations and standards for review and approvals.

The Office of Risk Management maintains a [List of Locations with Active Insurance](#) that schools can reference for planning consideration. This list identifies locations with an active Certificate of Insurance (COI) that meets

District requirements but **does not constitute approval for all activities that may occur while visiting that location**. Physical activity approval is determined separately (*see below*).

Trips Requiring a Limited Contract Agreement (LCA)

Trips coordinated through a specific organization, travel agent, or tour company require:

- a Limited Contract Agreement (LCA)
- an approved Certificate of Insurance

All activities, services, and responsibilities must be reflected in the contract scope of work. Use this new [form](#) to provide basic information about the agreement. It generally takes about 6-8 weeks to produce a fully executed contract.

The following organizations have current contracts and insurance on file for travel and related trip activities:

- Education First (EF Tours)
- World Affairs Council (WAC)
- Tiger Woods Foundation
- Discovery Pathways
- Outward Bound

Locations that do not require a COI include:

- Federal, state, or municipal facilities and parks (e.g., the U.S. Capitol, Smithsonian museums, Parks)
- Museums operated by government entities
- State universities and colleges
- Movie theaters, production theaters like Broadway shows
- Restaurants and hotels (chain establishments are preferred for safety and quality assurance)

Physical Activities

As part of the pre-approval process, schools will provide a detailed itinerary describing all physical activities students will undergo while on the field trip. The Learning Network Executive Assistant will send a request to the Office of Health, Safety, and Physical Education who will review the activities as part of the field trip approval process and determine whether any additional safety considerations or approvals are required. Providing a complete itinerary allows Central Office to conduct a thorough review and helps prevent delays in the approval process. Any comments or specific guidance from the Office of Health, Safety and Physical Education will be included in the Field Trip Status form.

Activities That Receive Additional Review

Examples of activities that are reviewed as part of the District review and approval process include, but are not limited to:

- Climbing walls

- High and low ropes courses
- Ziplining
- Boating, canoeing, and kayaking
- Swimming
- Skiing and snowboarding
- Camping
- Outdoor adventure programs
- Other activities involving an increased level of physical risk

Including one of these activities **does not automatically prevent a trip from being approved**. Each activity is reviewed based on the information provided in your itinerary.

Activities That Cannot Be Approved

Certain activities are prohibited for school-sponsored field trips because they present an unacceptable level of risk. Examples include:

- Bungee jumping
- Skydiving or indoor skydiving
- Trampoline parks
- Jet skiing
- Scuba diving
- Ocean or open-water swimming
- Amusement park rides

Student Safety and Well-Being

Lodging and Room Assignment Requirements

Room assignments will be designated by gender, and under no circumstances will more than one student be assigned per bed.

Accommodation for Gender Identity

Transgender and gender non-conforming students will be provided with accommodations, which may include a single room or in the alternative, a roommate assignment based on the student's confidential request and in alignment with Board Policy 252.

Student Health and Medication Requirements

Students participating in field trips may need medication administration during the course of the field trip. Schools must coordinate with the school nurse, and if necessary, with families, to determine how medication

can be administered in accordance with Board Policy 121 and Board Policy 210. Careful coordination with the school nurse is essential to support students' health needs on trips.

Advance Notice and Nurse Coordination

- While notification earlier than two weeks is strongly encouraged to ensure adequate planning and staffing, schools must notify the school nurse of the planned trip no later than two (2) weeks prior to departure and provide a copy of the class list of participating students.
- The school nurse will review participating students to determine what, if any, health supports are required and communicate necessary arrangements to the principal, parents, and appropriate staff. If the nursing request is submitted the day of the trip, nursing support will not be available.

Medication & Plan of Care Requirements

For any student requiring medication or health services during a field trip:

- A current plan of care, developed and maintained by the school nurse in accordance with Board Policy 210, must be in place for the duration of the trip.
- The plan of care must clearly describe:
 - Medication formulation
 - Dosage
 - Route of administration
 - Timing/frequency
- Medications must be provided in the original container labeled with the student's name.
- The plan of care must identify who will be responsible for administering medication during the trip.
- Students (high school students only) who will self-carry and self-administer medication must have a completed and approved on file, signed by the parent/guardian and healthcare provider. The school nurse must assess and [Self Medication Assessment Form](#) confirm the student's ability to self-administer prior to the trip.

Permissible Medication Administration During Trips

Medication administration during a trip may be provided by:

- Parent/Guardian, who may voluntarily attend to provide care. Schools may not require parent attendance. A parent/guardian may designate, in writing, a responsible adult to provide care, subject to District restrictions. A parent/guardian may not designate a school staff member, school-designated chaperone, or secondary student.
- Agency Nurse: When notified with sufficient advance notice, the District may provide an agency nurse, when available, to accompany the student and administer medication.
- Licensed Volunteer: The District may permit a licensed volunteer to administer medication whose license is active and in good standing and is appropriately trained to administer the required treatment using the student's prescribed equipment and medication.

- A high school student may self-carry and self-administer medication only if a completed and approved [Self Medication Assessment Form](#) is on file, signed by both the parent/guardian and healthcare provider.
- Staff may administer emergency medication (e.g., inhalers, EpiPens) in accordance with Board Policy 210.

Fiscal Rules

- No commitments, fundraising, or payments should occur until the trip is approved and you have received either a signed Field Trip Status Update or Statement of Intent for international trips
- Trip-related expenses must align with an approved scope, budget, and itinerary.

Support

- **Website:** <https://sites.google.com/philasd.org/sdpfieldtrips>
- **General Email:** fieldtrips@philasd.org
- **Weekly Office Hours:** Fridays, 11:00–12:00, Join the meeting [here](#).
- **School-Specific Questions/Concerns:** Contact the school's Learning Network Executive Assistant

Maintenance Schedule

These administrative procedures shall be reviewed upon the review of the policy, or upon the occurrence of a triggering event.

Related Information:

- [Policy 121 - Field Trips](#)
- [Policy 210 - Medications and Emergency Health Procedures](#)
- [Policy 252 - Transgender And Gender Non-Conforming Students](#)