

AMHERST, MONT VERNON, SOUHEGAN POLICY

IJOA – FIELD TRIPS & EXCURSIONS

Field trips/excursions are designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry and to provide opportunities for intellectual, social, and physical development and considered appropriate extensions of the classroom. All (Amherst, Mont Vernon and Souhegan) students shall be given opportunities to participate in such field trips/excursions. Field trips/excursions must be authorized by the building principal, or his/her designee. Any exception to this policy must have prior authorization through the Superintendent's Office. Travel outside of New England must have Superintendent and School Board authorization.

To be educationally beneficial, a field trip/excursion requires thoughtful selection, careful advance preparation of the class, and opportunities for pupils to assimilate the experience during and at the conclusion of the trip. To this end, teachers and principals will be expected to consider the following factors in selection of field trips/excursions:

- a. value of the activity to the particular class group or class groups;
- b. relationship of the field trip/excursion activity to a particular aspect of classroom instruction,
- c. number of opportunities for field trips/excursions for group involvement in relation to opportunities for other students;
- d. suitability of the activity and distance traveled in terms of age level;
- e. busing as the preferred mode of transportation; and
- f. adequate funds are available/allotted in budget.

The teacher, in requesting authorization to take his/her class away from school grounds, should submit the details of such a trip to the principal, or his/her designee. A permission/consent form shall be sent to the parents/guardians of each child which they will sign and return. This is to be done after the field trip/excursion has been authorized. No child may leave the school grounds on a field trip/excursion unless a permission/consent form has been signed by the parents/guardians and filed with the school office.

Adequate supervision is also necessary to ensure protection for everyone concerned. A chaperone ratio of one adult for **no more than ten** children will be in effect for field trips/excursions unless otherwise specified by the principal.

Financial arrangements for all field trips/excursions, including a detailed written budget, must be approved by the building principal prior to the trip. If student contributions are involved, the necessary funds must be in the hands of the principal before the trip will be taken. All fundraising must be in compliance with school fundraising policies.

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FIELD TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

Educational field trips and excursions shall be planned and conducted in accordance with the following guide-lines:

1. When a field trip/excursion will extend beyond the school day the teacher will provide parents/legal guardian with information concerning the purpose and destination of the trip, transportation and eating arrangements, date and time of departure, estimated time of return, and a detailed itinerary.
2. If students return to the school from a trip after school hours, the teacher and/or the principal shall make provisions for their safe departure home, taking into account the age of the students and the hour.
3. Participating students may be assessed a fee for field trips or excursions. The district will reasonably and discreetly provide funds, in part or in total, to those students who are unable to assume the costs of such fees. If a field trip/excursion requires fundraising, it must be in compliance with the fundraising policy.
4. The sponsoring teacher is responsible for informing accompanying adults and/or teachers of their duties and responsibilities.
5. The teacher should review acceptable standards of conduct with the students in advance of the trip. The teacher has primary responsibility for implementation of such standards of conduct.
6. The sponsoring teacher will be responsible for arranging, with the principal's authorization, for supervision of students who do not participate in the trip. An alternative activity with similar educational objectives will be provided without cost to students.
7. Students' safety will be a primary consideration for all field trips. Should an emergency occur, the teacher is responsible for notifying the principal as soon as possible.
8. Students will not be permitted to leave the field trip group during the trip unless prior written arrangements are made by parents and transmitted to the sponsoring teacher.

Field Trip Guidelines - Basic Steps (domestic travel):

Make a determination whether or not the field trip/excursion is a school sponsored event* (has it been approved by your governing board or their designee? The exact determination needs to take into consideration your internal procedures).

If not, make sure that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the fact that the district is not involved and be mindful that you are not so involved in the event that a reasonable

person might infer that you are sponsoring the event (i.e. distributing information through school channels, materials printed on school letter head, staff collecting funds for the trip etc.)

If yes, make sure that you are conducting your due diligence in order to keep everyone out of harm's way and to protect the district from unneeded exposure to risk (see below).

All chaperones for school trips/excursions must have updated background checks.

If any employees and/or chaperones are asked to drive please make sure that you have checked their driving records and that specific criteria has been established by the district to determine who would not be eligible to drive.

All chaperones/volunteers should be asked to sign a volunteer agreement/release form (sample attached; the district's legal counsel should review and approve prior to implementation)

Train staff, chaperones/volunteers regarding trip logistics and school district expectations:

- Number of students a chaperone is responsible for
- How often a chaperone should check on students (depends on age)
- Trip schedule/itinerary
- Students that have special needs, medical restrictions and/or requirements (make sure to obtain the appropriate parental releases specific to medical needs/medications, have needed medications available, know procedures regarding medical emergencies, etc.

All parents should sign parental release forms acknowledging their student's participation in a specific event. The release forms should be specific to the event and list the risks involved in the specific event/activity (the school district's legal counsel should draft this release).

- Clarify expectations with students and what's considered an acceptable standard of conduct. Make sure to enforce the standard of conduct throughout the trip.
- Have an attendance list of all students and verify that all students are present periodically throughout the trip

*Coverage only applies to school sponsored events. All terms, conditions and exclusions set forth by the coverage documents and declarations apply. When in doubt, check with your risk management pool regarding availability and/or limitations of coverage.