

**Academic Field Trips**

The Westford School Committee (SC) 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 language immersion in a foreign country. Westford Public Schools will sponsor academic field trips for students only when trips meet the following criteria:

**Time and Learning** - The learning activities associated with the field trip map to the curriculum frameworks and satisfy time and learning requirements.

**Affordability/Accessibility** - All core curriculum trips must be provided free of charge to all students. The Westford Public Schools 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 are 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 receive educational alternatives that have related academic and intellectual value. Instruction of students unable to attend the enrichment program should not be lessened due to a change in resources.

**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 time and learning requirements. Every effort should be made to mitigate the effect of non-academic field trips on time and learning.

**Compliance with State Ethics Disclosure of Financial Interest**

If the travel costs of a chaperone/staff member employed by the school district are paid by either student fee assessments or by a private travel agency/organization, the staff and chaperone(s) members(s) must file a Disclosure of Financial Interest Form with the School Committee and Town Clerk - M.G.L. (c. 268A, § 19).

The School Committee shall first make the determination that the trip serves a legitimate educational purpose and that the benefits to the students and the education process outweighs the private benefit to the teacher, the tour company and/or the chaperones.

**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 Committee approval regardless of the trip length. In no case will a trip exceeding five school days be approved.

<b>Trip Length</b>	<b>Principal</b>	<b>Asst Supt for Curriculum</b>	<b>Supt</b>	<b>SC</b>
<b>Day – Within the school day. *</b>	<b>Academic</b>	X	X	
	<b>Non-Academic</b>	X		
<b>Extended – A visit extending beyond the school day but not overnight.</b>	<b>Academic</b>	X	X	
	<b>Non-Academic</b>	X		
<b>Overnight – A visit that involves an overnight stay.</b>	<b>Academic</b>	X	X	X
	<b>Non-Academic</b>	X	X	X
<b>Foreign – A visit to a foreign country.</b>	<b>Academic</b>	X	X	X
	<b>Non-Academic</b>	X	X	X

\* All Academic field trips, longer than half of the school day, require the approval of the Assistant Superintendent.

X Approval is required by the indicated person.

**Approval**

Approval for all trips requiring SC 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 Offender Record Information (CORI) 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.
14. **Compliance with State Ethics Disclosure of Financial Interest**

**Other References:**

Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 27.00:

Time and Learning.

M.G.L. 71:55B – Tuberculosis Examinations

Education Reform Act of 1993, Section 95 November (ST. 1993, c. 71, § 95)

M.G.L. (c. 268A, § 19) – Disclosure of Financial Interest By Municipal Employee and Determination By Appointing Authority

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WESTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Westford, Massachusetts 01886