

11. SCHOOL-SPONSORED TRIPS

Reference: DoDEA Regulation 2051.1, "Disciplinary Rules and Procedures," April 4, 2008

a. DoDEA Policy. It is DoDEA policy to enrich school curriculum for all students by taking advantage of the cultural, historical, and natural geographical attractions of the local community. Curricular activities, in and out of school, are intended to broaden the scope of a student's education and interests. All school trips must relate to and augment the school's curricular goals and standards, and enrich the scope of a student's education and interests. The value of school trips and the educational benefits derived from participation on such trips should be weighed in relation to the impact that trip participation has upon both the student's and the school's regular educational programs. Both preparation and follow-up lessons for field trips should be planned. In addition, parents/sponsors should be notified of the purposes for all school-sponsored trips.

b. Curricular Trips

(1) Curricular trips should meet specific learning objectives and promote the integration of curricula. Trips normally take place within the instructional day, off the school grounds, but under school sponsorship.

(2) Participation in curricular trips and in evaluation activities should be considered as part of the grade for a course.

(3) Participation is required in curricular trips. Examples:

(a) A music teacher takes all students in one or more of his or her classes to a symphony performance to demonstrate the characteristics of orchestral instruments.

(b) Students participate in physical education by using local facilities for an activity such as swimming that cannot be provided using school facilities.

c. Co-curricular/Extracurricular Trips

(1) A co-curricular/extracurricular trip must meet DoDEA academic and educational goals and objectives. Participants are members of DoDEA-sanctioned and DoDEA-sponsored activities.

(2) Participation is voluntary, usually involves students from the school at large rather than specific classes or subjects, and is conducted off the school grounds.

(3) Participation has no bearing on student grades.

(4) Some examples of co-curricular/extracurricular trips are trips to the Model United Nations, Model U.S. Senate, science symposiums, visiting artists, Special Olympics, outdoor education experiences, Media Feast, drama festivals, music festivals, leadership seminars, community performances, interschool athletic or academic competitions.

d. Other Trips. All transportation and trip expenses will be borne solely by the participants. The cost to students in no way should be increased to cover sponsor or chaperone expenses. Staff members are not considered in a travel status, nor are they authorized reimbursement of any expenses on these trips.

e. Transportation of Local Nationals. Transportation may be provided to local national students and adults who participate with DoDDS students in jointly-sponsored host national intercultural activities under the following conditions:

(1) Program arrangements call for DoDDS and local schools or organizations to alternate in providing transportation to jointly sponsored activities.

(2) The local school or organization is not able to obtain transportation to a jointly sponsored activity and would otherwise be forced to cancel its participation in a jointly sponsored activity.

(3) The local nationals are to provide DoDDS students a demonstration or exhibit of activities, crafts, or products typical of the host nation at no cost to DoDDS other than the transportation.

(4) It is more desirable educationally or because of security considerations, or it is more cost efficient, to stage the local national demonstration at the DoDDS or other U.S.-controlled sites.

(5) All students in DoDDS or in the appropriate classes or courses can attend the demonstration/exposition.

f. Approval of Trips

(1) A trip is to complement and supplement the curricular unit content, scope, and sequence. For optimum educational benefit, curricular trips should take place as an integral part of the curriculum unit under study. The trip may be at the beginning, the middle, or near the end of the unit depending upon the unit and school trip objectives.

(2) Before any information is given to parents, all trip requests for DoDEA-sanctioned/sponsored trips will be submitted in writing to the school principal. The faculty sponsors should review the value of the trip with the principal and receive approval prior to making arrangements for the trip. The faculty sponsors should provide the principal with a description of the trip, its goals, the tentative schedules, the costs, and the proposed funding sources. Estimates of transportation costs and availability of funds can be obtained from the school bus office.

(3) A security risk assessment should be conducted, and approval coordinated with the local commander, in accordance with local policy.

(4) The principal's decision will be based on a trip's educational value, its appropriateness, the availability of funds, and the adequacy of student supervision.

(5) Superintendents must approve student trips outside the local community/host country. The principal should elevate requests for approval of all overnight and out-of-country trips to district superintendents, except for the following activities, which the principals may approve:

(a) Competitions or meets listed on the DoDEA Interscholastic Athletic Schedules.

(b) The DoDEA sponsored/arranged/approved/funded activities such as leadership seminars, Honors Music Festival, Model United Nations, and Junior Science Humanities Symposium.

(6) Faculty sponsors should provide a post trip evaluation to the principal.

g. Trip Information

(1) Once trip approval is received, faculty sponsors must provide the following information where applicable, to participants, parents, and the principal:

(a) Trip purpose.

(b) Trip destination, with contact addresses and telephone numbers.

(c) Detailed trip itinerary.

(d) Trip eating arrangements.

(e) Trip costs to be borne by participants.

(f) Dates, times, and locations of departures and returns.

(g) Clothing to be worn or taken.

(h) Materials, equipment, or supplies that must be taken.

(i) Alternate activities in case of inclement weather.

(j) Travel documents or forms, which must be submitted or acquired before trip participation or which must be carried on the trip.

(k) Student requirements and responsibilities for accomplishing work missed at school while on the trip.

(l) Behavior expectations and consequences for misbehavior.

(2) Faculty sponsors must receive permission statements from participants and parents.

(a) A parent permission statement is required for each trip; a blanket trip permission form issued at the beginning of the year is not acceptable. The statement must include:

1. Full name of the student.
2. Full name(s) of the parent(s)/sponsor(s).
3. Duty/work phone numbers and duty/work locations for both parents/sponsors, if applicable.
4. Home phone number and address for the parent/sponsor.
5. Emergency contact name, with duty/work and home phone numbers.
6. Parental power-of-attorney authorizing teacher-sponsors to act in the parent/sponsor's behalf in medical emergencies.

(b) A single permission form may be used for transportation of participants in interscholastic athletics to all away games, meets, and play-offs in DoDEA schedules.

(3) Faculty sponsors must have copies of, and provide the school principal with copies of, the following:

- (a) List of trip participants, teacher-sponsors, and parent chaperones.
- (b) Parent/sponsor-signed permission forms.
- (c) Powers-of-attorney.
- (d) Detailed itinerary and travel arrangements including destination contact addresses and phone numbers.
- (e) Parent/sponsor contact forms with full student and parent/sponsor names, both parents/sponsors duty/work phones and locations, home address and phone number, and emergency contact duty/work and home addresses and phone numbers.
- (f) Copies of all information sheets given to participants and parents.
- (g) Copies of permissive travel orders for teacher-sponsors (not required for day trips).

(4) The faculty member sponsoring a trip will be responsible for arranging an appropriate in-school educational experience for students who do not participate in the study trip. Students who are not able to participate in a study trip will not be penalized for nonparticipation.

h. Time/Distance

(1) One-day trips should be made primarily to locations within the school's local area. Only under exceptional circumstances should trips be authorized to locations more than 100 kilometers or 60 miles from the school. Study trips should be scheduled within the normal school day so that participating students may use the scheduled school commuting bus services to and from school.

(2) To provide adequate time during study trips for visits or tours, the recommended rule of thumb is that total travel time (there and back) should not exceed the "time on site."

i. Participation

(1) Trips shall be open to the widest possible student participation based on the purpose and goals of the trip.

(2) If a trip is designed for a specific group, only those students may participate.

(3) Family members of teachers and adult chaperones may not participate in the trip, travel with the group, nor join the group at the trip's destination, unless they are members of the group for whom the trip was designed. Sponsors and chaperones are to devote full-time supervision to the group members on the trip.

(4) Sponsor participation (both U.S. and local national) must be voluntary.

(5) Substitutes are authorized.

(6) Guidance for background checks of volunteers is in Part III, Section 6.e. of this Guide.

j. Transportation

(1) Transportation of students will be arranged through the school bus office, where available. Otherwise, it should be arranged via other government agencies, by using government-owned vehicles on a user-driver basis, or by using public transportation. Students are not permitted to ride in student or parent-driven vehicles while on field trips. Only in unusual circumstances, and with full knowledge and approval of the principal and parents, will staff members transport students in their private vehicles for field trip purposes. If such transportation is utilized, it is the joint responsibility of the staff member and the principal to assure that full liability insurance is carried and that the insurance will provide coverage even though the vehicle is being used to transport students on a school field trip. Under no circumstances will staff members be required to transport students in their private vehicles.

(2) No other provisions for transportation are to be suggested, solicited, or authorized by school officials. Parents or other adults utilizing other vehicular resources to transport students

to an event or activity with parental permission should be advised that they are assuming full responsibility for the students' conduct and safety.

k. Trip Supervision, Safety, and Security

(1) The faculty sponsor, with the assistance of the other chaperones, is responsible for the care of the students during the entire time they are away from the school.

(2) Of paramount importance is continual concern for, and attention to, the health and the safety of the students.

(3) Special care must be taken to ensure that host nation customs and manners are observed, and that the image of Americans in the host nation environment is positive.

(4) A measure of independent and responsible behavior is expected of all field trip participants. Breaches of this expected standard of behavior will be reported to the school administration as soon as possible. Students with past behavior problems on study trips may be excluded from trips after other reasonable alternatives, such as the parent/sponsor accompanying the student on the trip, have been exhausted. This also requires the approval of the principal.

(5) Trips shall not be planned to areas where the security of the group cannot be reasonably assured. During times of increased security, the final decision to carry out or cancel a trip shall be made by the local community commander.

(6) The faculty sponsor will arrange adequate adult supervision.

(a) A maximum ratio of at least one teacher and two adults per 30 students is authorized. If more than 30 students are involved in a trip, the principal may consider a second teacher chaperone.

(b) The adult to student ratio should be one adult to ten students in grades 7–12 and one adult to six students for grades K–6.

(c) A minimum of one teacher and one adult should accompany each study trip.

(d) The teacher-sponsors are responsible for informing accompanying adults of their responsibilities and limitations.

(7) The teacher-sponsor is responsible for notifying the principal of an emergency as soon as possible. The principal, in turn, will notify the school bus office. If local police or authorities are involved, assistance will be requested from the local U.S. military commander or from the nearest U.S. embassy or consular office. The school must have two independent methods available to communicate with school buses.

(8) The prohibition against smoking while on school grounds or wherever a student is involved in school activities will be followed while on school trips. Smoking by students is prohibited at all times.

(9) Smoking by teacher-sponsors and accompanying adults is permitted. However, students should not observe adults smoking or smell the smoke.

(10) A student may not consume alcoholic beverages on school trips. Consumption of alcoholic beverages by adult chaperones is unconditionally not permitted while they are directly supervising students.

(11) Standards of conduct for students to follow while on the field trip are defined in DoDEA Regulation 2051.1 (Reference).

(a) A school-wide code should reflect student and parent/sponsor involvement, be developed with the local faculty representative, and be in accordance with the reference above. The code should be written and should be available to students and parents/sponsors to assure a clear understanding of the standards and expectations. The code should address such matters as dress, behavior, and decorum.

(b) Students should be made aware of and continually reminded about their obligation to show proper respect for and care of the environment where they travel and stop. They will be seen not only as individuals but as representatives of both their school and the United States. Thus, they should continually act in a manner that brings credit upon themselves, their family, their school, and their country.

1. Trip Funding

(1) In trip planning, a special effort should be made to keep costs to the individual student to a minimum. No student should be kept from participating in a trip because he or she does not have money for entrance fees and similar "mandatory" costs. Students will not be required to pay transportation expenses associated with study trips.

(2) Participating students will pay for all appropriate costs based on the exact cost of their items or service. Student costs will not be prorated in any manner to cover sponsor or chaperone expenses.

(a) DoDEA-funded trips. Transportation services in support of curricular and co-curricular activities are normally charged to the district appropriated funds issued to the schools for this purpose. The principal must operate the activities within the funds assigned. As a guide, 75 percent of the study trip funds should be committed by the end of April of the school year.

1. The following costs should not be charged to appropriated funds:

a. Transportation to/from school-sponsored activities such as pep rallies and school dances.

b. Entry fees, activity tickets, and similar charges, regardless of the purpose or classification of the trip.

c. Room and board for students, sponsors, and chaperones.

d. Transportation in conjunction with “other” trips.

2. No TDY expenses are authorized for teacher-sponsors unless travel is directed by the Area superintendent. Non-funded permissive TDY orders will be provided by the principal for all overnight travel. TDY orders are not required for day trips.

3. Administrative leave will not be granted to DoDEA employees to participate in community sponsored trips.

4. If a trip is canceled, students may be liable for hotel costs prepaid in advance.

(b) Non-school sponsored trips (i.e., non-school related athletic trips with a teacher/sponsor)

1. Student contribution of shared costs or moneys given to the teacher for payment of student expenses or for safeguarding must be handled in accordance with DoDEA regulations governing student activity funds (SAF).

2. School personnel and parents should understand that any arrangements made by the school on behalf of students are done merely as a courtesy. Any contracts that result are between the individual students or families and the tour agency. DoDEA can neither pay for the travel nor reimburse families for losses resulting under the travel agreements.

3. When planning non-school sponsored trips/tours through travel companies, principals should state on their advertisement that the school is only acting as an intermediary and that the contract for services is strictly between the parents and the travel agent. The advertisement should clearly state that cancellation charges, if any are assessed, will be borne by the parents.

4. As appropriate, the SAF custodian should sign the contract on behalf of the fund only. The moneys are then collected and placed into the SAF. If the trip is canceled for whatever reason and a cancellation fee is assessed, the SAF will pay the fee out of the encumbered account and will return the remaining amount. This information must be presented to all participating students and their parents.

5. Transportation costs for “other” trips must be borne solely by the participants.

6. All entry fees, activity tickets, and similar costs, as well as room and board costs for student and adult participants, for all trips whether curricular, co-curricular, or extracurricular, must be borne by the participants.

7. Projects to raise group money to help defray individual expenses are acceptable. Such projects should be well-planned and should include students in their planning and execution. Merely soliciting for donations should be avoided, and care must be taken to keep fund-raising activities from assuming too much importance or from consuming too much of student or school time. A strict and complete accounting for all moneys raised or handled with regard to any field trip must be maintained in accordance with appropriate regulations or directed fiscal procedures.