

Melrose Public Schools



Guidelines for Field Trips and Student Travel

The Melrose School Committee recognizes that field trips, international excursions, class trips, and co-curricular trips can provide students with an effective and worthwhile means of learning and growing. Such activities (collectively referred to in this document as “field trips”) are intended to stimulate student interest and inquiry, providing them with opportunities to acquire insights, information and knowledge that enhance regular classroom instruction. The School Committee encourages those activities that reinforce and extend classroom instruction and promote healthy social development.

Teachers and Principals are encouraged to promote field trips as an integral part of the instructional program of the Melrose Public Schools in accordance with the guidelines set forth below.

A. Types of School-Sponsored Field Trips

1. Academic Field Trips. These include all off-campus trips that are organized as part of a class curriculum. Participation by all members of the class is encouraged.
2. Co-curricular Field Trips. These are off-campus trips that are organized by a school-sponsored club or group in which students participate on a voluntary basis. Away games or matches that are part of the athletic program are considered to be Co-curricular Field Trips.
3. Overnight/Multi-Day/Foreign Field Trips. These are off-campus trips that involve travel between midnight and 6 a.m. or require a student to stay overnight away from home. With limited exceptions (e.g., E-camp), only single-day field trips are permitted at the elementary and middle school levels.

B. Planning and Approval Process

1. To be educationally beneficial, field trips require thoughtful selection, careful advanced planning and preparation of the class, and relevant follow-up activities. All field trips must comply with the conditions set forth in the Melrose School Committee’s field trip policy.

2. A Field Trip Leader (i.e., a teacher, advisor or athletic coach) is responsible for coordinating the planning activities for a field trip and for obtaining all necessary approvals in advance of a field trip.
3. Field trips must not interfere with the overall academic program of the school due to repeated teacher and/or student absences. Field trips and student travel should be planned to minimize loss of school time. It is recommended that multi-day, overnight and foreign field trips be scheduled during weekends and/or vacation periods, where possible. Likewise, it is recommended that field trips be scheduled so as not to interfere with the end of a term, exams or MCAS.
4. All activities on a field trip must be planned and scheduled for specific dates and times. A complete itinerary for the field trip and a breakdown of all costs and expenses connected with the proposed trip must be submitted with each request for approval of the field trip.
5. All field trip requests made to a Principal, the Superintendent/designee, or the School Committee must include a completed field trip request form and a template for the field trip permission and release of liability form. Overnight, multi-day and foreign field trips may require additional forms. (See attached Forms)
6. All field trip requests must contain, at a minimum, the following information:
 - a. Dates of proposed field trip;
 - b. Destination(s);
 - c. Detailed itinerary for proposed trip;
 - d. Estimated number of students who will participate
 - e. Estimated number of chaperones who will be needed
 - f. Projected costs and expenses for proposed trip
 - g. Educational rationale for proposed trip, including –
 - Academic subject to which the field trip relates, if applicable;
 - Grade(s) of students attending;
 - Title of field trip/lesson;
 - Purpose of field trip;
 - Learning objectives;
 - Expected student outcome(s);
 - Instructional procedure(s) and activity(ies);
 - Learning reinforcements;
 - Plan for students not attending.
7. The following approvals are required for field trips in advance of the trips:
 - a. Single-Day In-State Field Trips. If the destination of the field trip is within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and requires no overnight travel, the Principal may authorize the field trip. The Principal, however, must forward a copy of the

proposal along with his/her written approval to the Superintendent/designee, who will review and approve the proposal.

- b. Single-Day Out-of-State, Overnight, Multi-Day and Foreign Field Trips. If the destination of the trip is outside of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, requires overnight travel, or is a multi-day or foreign field trip, the proposal must be approved by the Principal and the Superintendent/designee. Additionally, such field trip must be approved by the School Committee.

The School Committee may grant preliminary approval to a field trip; however, final approval by the School Committee will not be granted until all preparations for the field trip have been completed, including, but not limited to, all logistical details involving transportation, accommodation arrangements and fundraising efforts. Final approval of an overnight, multi-day or foreign field trip must be sought from the School Committee at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled departure date.

8. Field trips must receive the approval of the Principal, the Superintendent/designee and, where required, the provisional approval of the School Committee, before trip arrangements and/or fundraising plans are finalized and before informational materials are distributed to students and parents/guardians.
9. For athletic and scholastic teams, the advisor, coach or Athletic Director may submit one proposal per team for the regular season with an attached schedule of competitions, to include the date, time and location of each competition.

C. Students Not Participating in Field Trips

1. Teachers must be cognizant of the educational needs of those students who are not participating in a field trip. The teacher must provide those students who are not participating in the field trip with an educational experience that is meaningful and, to the extent possible, comparable.
2. For those students who remain in school, the teacher will provide a lesson plan that clearly addresses the following:
 - a. Learning objectives of the lesson plan(s) for students;
 - b. Expected student outcome;
 - c. Activities that students will complete in school during the field trip; and
 - d. Follow-up activities students will complete following the field trip with their peers (e.g., a student who does not attend a museum trip may participate in a virtual museum in-class field trip, which will allow the student to take part in follow-up activities with the whole class and contribute to the discussion and learning of the subject).

D. Cost Guidelines

1. In planning field trips, staff members are expected to be aware of and sensitive to the cost to families. Therefore, single-day field trips will not be approved unless maximum efforts are made to assure that costs remain reasonable, and that no student is denied the opportunity to participate because of his/her family's inability to pay.
2. In all cases, students and their parents are responsible for the cost of multi-day (e.g., E-camp) and foreign field trips. All multi-day and foreign field trips are strictly voluntary. No student will receive extra credit or special grading considerations for attending, or not attending, a multi-day or foreign field trip.
3. Each field trip will be reviewed the Principal to ensure that expenses are not cost-prohibitive for the majority of student participants.

E. Fundraising

1. Fundraising events and activities may be planned to help offset the costs of field trip.
2. If students are charged a fee for a field trip, the Principal and/or the PTO may provide a partial or full scholarship to a student if, due to financial hardship, such scholarship is necessary to allow the student's participation. No student, however, is guaranteed a full or partial scholarship for the purpose of attending a multi-day or foreign travel field trip.
3. If a club, team or group of students is responsible for raising some or all of the money needed to fund a field trip, group fundraising activities are preferred. The amount of time that students are expected to devote to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with their obligations for homework, after school activities and jobs.

F. Transportation

1. When vehicular transportation is required for domestic field trips, the Melrose Public will contract with a commercial carrier that meets the following specifications.*
 - a. All commercial carriers utilized to provide transportation for field trips must be licensed to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and licensed for passenger transport by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.
 - b. All transportation vendors must provide evidence to the school district that their drivers are licensed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to operate the type of vehicle being used.
 - c. Transportation vendors will not be used if their Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration safety ratings are "conditional" or "unsatisfactory."

- d. All transportation vendors must maintain liability insurance with a minimum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence for bodily injury.
- e. All drivers used by transportation vendors for field trips must have successfully completed a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check prior to the field trip.
 - f. All contracts with transportation vendors must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless sufficient notice is given to the school district to allow verification of the subcontractor's qualifications through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.
- 2. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements. Whenever practicable, trip schedules should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m.
- 3. The use of privately owned vehicles or leased vans to transport students to and from field trips is strictly prohibited, except in the case of a bona fide emergency, as determined by the Principal or, in the absence of the Principal, the Field Trip Leader. Staff and parents who utilize their own vehicles risk being held legally liable if students are injured while riding in their vehicles.

** The district may use one of the Transportation Department's vans occasionally.*

4.

G. Field Trip Leaders and Chaperones

- 1. Field Trip Leaders are responsible for the activities of the field trip. During a field trip, the Field Trip Leader will determine whether there is a need to change the itinerary, mode of transportation, or other similar issues. Should an emergency occur, the Field Trip Leader is responsible for notifying the Principal by telephone as soon as possible, and the Principal, in turn, is responsible for notifying the Superintendent by telephone as soon as possible.
- 2. The Field Trip Leader will recommend the level of chaperone coverage for a field trip, which recommendation is subject to the approval of the Principal. Ordinarily, an acceptable ratio of adult chaperones to student participants is as follows:
 - Grades K through 2 – 1:5
 - Grades 3 through 8 – 1:10
 - Grades 9 through 12 – 1:15
- 3. In the case of overnight, multi-day and foreign field trips, chaperones should be representative of the group and include males and females.
- 4. The Superintendent/designee will ensure that a successful Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check has been conducted for all individuals (including

- chaperones and drivers) who may have direct and unmonitored contact with students while on a field trip, as set forth in Massachusetts General Laws chapter 71, section 38R. Principals should distribute CORI check application forms to parents/guardians at the start of the school year, so that such forms can be submitted and CORI checks completed for any field trips that may occur during the course of the school year.
5. For overnight, multi-day and foreign trips, the Field Trip Leader must ensure that any area where students are housed is overseen by chaperones or security personnel during the overnight period.
 6. The Field Trip Leader will maintain a list of all chaperones who are on the field trip. The list must include the following information: (a) name, (b) address, (c) telephone number, (d) designation as to whether the chaperone is a school district employee or volunteer.
 7. Each chaperone will be given access to a list of the names of all students participating in the field trips. The list also must include the names of each student's parents/guardians, their home address(es), and their contact telephone numbers.
 8. The Field Trip Leader must provide a copy of the final chaperone list and final student list to the Principal before departing on a field trip.
 9. Chaperones are expected to observe all school rules and School Committee policies while on a field trip, including, but not limited to, those relating to staff conduct, drugs and alcohol, and sexual harassment.
 10. Chaperones are required to carry appropriate documentation regarding itinerary, contacts and student information, and should wear some form of identification so that they are easily identifiable.
 11. Upon completion of the field trip, the Field Trip Leader must prepare and submit to the Principal a written report assessing the educational benefit of the trip, and detail any injuries, discipline problems or other incidents that occurred while on the field trip.

H. Additional Requirements

1. The Field Trip Leader is responsible for the following:
 - a. Sending **all faculty** in the building a list of students who will be going on the trip.
 - b. Notifying **the food services staff in the building** at least two (2) days prior to a scheduled field trip, if a class will not be having lunch in the cafeteria.
 - c. Notifying the school **nurse** of a scheduled field trip at least four (4) days before the trip so that necessary arrangements may be made for administration

of **medication** or special procedures for students who require either. In the event that it is medically necessary for a student to be administered medication while on a field trip, the procedures are as follows:

1. Prescription medicine must come in the original bottle with a label showing student's name, medication name, dosage and a label showing the physician's name.
2. The student must have an up to date medical form is completed.
3. Confidential Student Health and Emergency Information form completed and on file with School Nurse.
4. All medication must be delivered by a parent or designated responsible adult.

I. Student Participation and Behavior

1. Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities to allow them to participate in field trips.
2. A student may not be allowed to participate in a field trip if he/she is serving a suspension, expulsion or other form of exclusion from school due to violations of the school district's code of conduct and/or school-based rules at the time of the field trip. Additionally, a student at the high school level who will be missing two or more school days for a field trip, must receive permission from his/her other teachers which can be denied based on material to be covered during the absence or the student's attendance or grades.
3. Students are subject to the authority of the staff and chaperones at all times during a field trip.
4. Student safety is of the utmost concern on any field trip.
 - a. Special attention should be paid to any activities that include swimming, boating, fishing or any other experience that will require students to be in or near a body of water. A review of the principles of water safety should be completed prior to the start of the trip.
 - b. Special attention should be paid to any other activities that will require students to be near or engage in new activities or physical activities. A review of the applicable safety principles should be completed prior to the start of the trip.
 - c. Students are prohibited from operating any motor vehicle and from operating or being a passenger on any motorbike during a field trip.
5. Students participating in a field trip are expected to take part in all planned group activities unless excused by a chaperone. Additionally, all students must leave and return with the group on all field trips unless the student is leaving or returning with his/her own parent/guardian, or the student's parent/guardian has signed a written

waiver granting permission for the student to leave or return from the field trip by himself/herself.

6. Students participating in a field trip are expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to the circumstances of the trip, including but not limited to adhering to general school rules and codes of conduct, as well as any rules that have been established for the trip. Participation in field trips is a privilege, not a right.
7. In the event that a student fails to meet these expectations, the school staff may contact the student's parents, and the Field Trip Leader will have the authority to send the student home, following notification to the student's parent/guardian or emergency contact if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.
8. The student's parent/guardian will be responsible for any additional expense incurred as a result of the decision to send a student home earlier than the scheduled return date or time due to the student's unacceptable conduct. Students may also be disciplined in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct.
9. Students and their parents/guardians will be held responsible for any damage done to hotels, rental properties, real property or personal property by the student during a field trip. Parents/ guardians must agree to pay for any damage that may be done by their son/daughter and/or aid school officials in collecting money necessary to do so.
10. Students who participate in a field trip must identify and make up any school work that may be missed as a result of such participation.

J. Consents and Waivers

1. A permission and release of liability form, approved by the School Committee, must be signed and submitted to the school district by a student's parent/guardian prior to the student's participation in any field trip. The form will contain appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication. The release will include any and all claims related to or arising out of the field trip, as well as those claims related to or arising out of cancellation of the field trip by the Superintendent.
2. If a student is eighteen years of age or older, s/he must sign the permission and release of liability form prior to participating in the field trip.
3. If a student is under the age of eighteen (18), the student must acknowledge that s/he understands the consent form and the behavior expectations. For athletic or scholastic teams, parents/guardians and students may submit one permission and release of liability form to cover all events for the regular season with an attached schedule of competitions, to include the date, time and location of each competition.

K. Cancellation

1. The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel any field trip up to the time of departure, and to recall any field trip in progress, if he/she believes there is a potential for danger to students, or for any other reason deemed appropriate. The Superintendent will review State Department travel warnings, as appropriate.
2. In the event that a field trip is cancelled or recalled, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. The school district, however, does not guarantee that such monies will be refunded.
3. Trip cancellation insurance will be made available for all multi-day, out-of-state and foreign field trips, and parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to purchase it. The school district may require that parents/guardians purchase trip insurance for some overnight, multi-day or foreign field trips.
4. The Field Trip Leader is responsible for ensuring that parents/guardians are informed of the rules of the trip as well as other pertinent information, including but not limited to the fact that any field trip may be cancelled or recalled if the Superintendent determines that such action is warranted, and the school district and School Committee will not be responsible for any financial obligations incurred or monies lost as a result of the cancellation or recall of a field trip.