

## **STUDENT TRAVEL AND FIELD TRIPS**

### Purpose

The Cape Elizabeth School Board recognizes that the educational program for students can be enhanced through the wise use of off-campus experiences. The objectives for all student trips are to be clearly defined and consistent with the objectives of the class or activity of the school or Department.

### General Policy Guidelines

1. All student travel must be approved and recommended by the principal (or, in the case of athletic trips, by the athletic administrator) after safety, supervision and educational justification or connection to school activities has been verified.
2. School employees are not to solicit students to participate in any commercial or non-school sponsored trip without advance approval in writing from the Superintendent or his designee.
3. Out of state trips or trips of a distance greater than 100 miles should not be requested if comparable experiences are available closer to home. Students are not to remain overnight if it is practical to return home.
4. Whenever students travel, there shall be adequate and mature supervision to provide for the safety of students.
5. Extended trip planning should be started as far as possible in advance of the trip to permit adequate time for students to earn the necessary funds. Parent information is required for overnight travel.
6. No student will be subjected to pressure to participate in school-sponsored travel activities except for competitions, events, and performances that are integral to membership on an athletic or other extracurricular team or club and pre-season, athletic scrimmages, provided the cost of such events, contests and performances are not borne by the student or the student's family. Subject to the exceptions described above, non-participation in student travel may not result in loss of credit, removal from a team or any other negative consequence to students.

### Special Circumstances

In certain circumstances, for example, trips of short-duration and high-frequency, involving junior and senior students only, within a 10-mile distance from the high school, students may drive themselves or car-pool with other students provided this method of transportation is specifically disclosed to and approved in writing by parents. Such arrangements are an exception to this policy and must be approved by the Principal with notice to the Superintendent. Factors that will be considered in determining whether approval will be granted for such trips are: 1) the distance from school; 2) the number of students involved; 3) the feasibility and cost of school bus transportation; 4) the age of the students; and 5) the frequency of the trips.

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### **School Sponsored Trips – Academics, Extra-curricular & Athletic**

#### Cost of Travel

The cost of travel shall be kept as low as reasonably possible without compromising the safety of the students and chaperones involved. No student at any grade level shall be denied participation due to lack of funds.

#### **Approval of Travel**

##### Parent Approval

Parents/guardians should be given adequate notice prior to any student travel and must give written approval for all travel. A parent/guardian consent form may be signed at the beginning of each school year giving permission for students to participate in all regularly scheduled local field trips. Overnight trips require a separate consent form that is specific to the particular trip. Overnight trip consent forms must include the nature of all of the activities in which the student will participate. They must also include permission to participate signature line(s), emergency contact telephone numbers, any specific medical needs and conditions, and permission to provide emergency medical care. The Field Trip/Medical permission slip shall be taken on the trip by the sponsor:

##### Travel Requiring Principal Approval

All travel must first be approved and recommended by the principal or, in the case of athletic trips, the athletic administrator. The principal and athletic administrator are permitted to approve in-state day trips (no overnight stays) without the endorsement of the Superintendent or School Board.

##### Travel Requiring Superintendent Approval

Out-of-state trips within 125 miles, one-way, must be approved by the Superintendent. In-state extracurricular trips requiring no more than one night's stay must also be approved by the Superintendent. The School Board will be notified of all travel approved by the Superintendent at their next scheduled meeting. Travel requests needing approval from the Superintendent or Board should be submitted at least two months in advance of the trip.

##### Travel Requiring School Board Approval

Board approval is required for out-of-state trips farther away than 125 miles, one-way; for curricular trips requiring an overnight stay; for all trips requiring more than two nights or more overnight stay; and for all trips requiring a per-student cost or fund-raising of \$500 or more. The Board reserves the right to require travel insurance for all approved trips.

### **Student Eligibility for Travel and Conduct of Participants**

Students who travel under the name of the school and adults who supervise that travel become role models for others and help establish and maintain the reputation of the school and district. Behavior and conduct of students and chaperones fall under the rules

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and policies of the school, district, and Maine law. Student members of the travel group who violate applicable behavior expectations will not be allowed to participate in future trips for the remainder of the school year. In the case of serious violations raising safety or health concerns, the staff member shall immediately consult with the principal to determine one of the following responses: 1) contact the parents/guardians and require the parents/guardians to pick up the student, 2) send the student home by public carrier with a chaperone or in a vehicle driven by a chaperone, after notifying the parent of the travel plans.

### Travel Safety

#### General

The safety of participants is the primary concern when travel occurs. Schools are to provide clear safety instructions to students and chaperones prior to leaving for a travel experience and review safety instructions periodically during extended travel experiences. Travel planning should include consideration of weather conditions and provide for cancellation or extended travel time in the case of inclement weather conditions. Except when taking school or charter buses, all passengers must wear seat belts while traveling under the approval of the Cape Elizabeth School Department.

#### Transportation

Only under the conditions described in "Special Circumstances" on page 1 above is travel approved with student drivers. Otherwise, students are not approved to drive other students to, from or during school-sponsored field trips.

All in-state trips must generally be by school bus or licensed carrier. However, the student may travel with his/her own parent provided the parent assumes all legal liability associated with personal transportation. With the approval of the Principal, in the case of trips within ten miles of school, with six or fewer students, staff may transport students in private, rental, or Department-owned vehicles. All staff driving vehicles transporting students to or from a school activity must have satisfactorily completed a license and background check conducted by Community Services.

All drivers of private vehicles carrying students on approved trips must sign the *Cape Elizabeth School Department Authorization to Transport Students* form, providing evidence of a current driver's license in good standing and automobile liability insurance of at least \$1 million. All drivers of rental vehicles must obtain insurance through the rental company. All trips shall be planned to minimize danger through wise choice of roads and decreased speeds.

No student of any age should travel anywhere alone with a staff member or parent, other than his/her own parent except with prior written approval by the student's parent and a school administrator.

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Extended travel should not be initiated after 11:00 pm and should end prior to midnight, unless it takes place on a commercial carrier.

### Supervision of Students

Students should never be left behind and/or unsupervised while under the custody of the Department. One adult for each twelve students is recommended supervision for day trips. Whenever students participate in overnight trips, the following supervision is required: one adult per ten students (elementary level); one adult per twelve students (secondary level), with the number of adults rounded up to the nearest whole number. Chaperones will be approved by the principal. Before any overnight trip, the trip organizer is responsible for holding a meeting with chaperones to review trip guidelines, including guidelines around curfew, bed check, emergency information forms, confidentiality, student and chaperone behavior, supervision, and permitted and non-permitted items. Mixed groups of male and female students should have the benefit and protection of male and female adult supervisors. The adult chaperones should be parents of the students, or school staff. Other chaperones (if used) must be over age twenty-one. Chaperones shall not share private sleeping rooms, such as motel rooms, with students other than their own children.

### Emergencies and Accidents

In case of an emergency occurring during the trip, the chaperone is authorized to make those adjustments necessary to insure the safety and well-being of the students and will immediately report the emergency to the principal of the school. All circumstances related to any accident will be documented and reported in writing to the Department business administrator.

### Insurance

Approved trips are covered by the school Department's liability insurance. However, as part of the approval process the Board or Superintendent may require additional travel insurance to protect the financial status of the Department and to help families cover expenses should accidents occur.

### Travel Conditions

Travel shall not be approved if unsafe conditions exist. If unsafe conditions arise after travel has been approved, travel shall be cancelled or changed accordingly. Thus, prior to departure on a trip, the Principal, Superintendent and/or Board reserve the right to conduct a safety review of the trip and to cancel the trip if conditions warrant such action. Unsafe conditions include, but are not limited to, adverse weather conditions, outbreaks of serious, communicable diseases and actual or threatened violence or terrorism. Should a trip be cancelled due to safety concerns, the school and/or Department will not reimburse travelers for unrecoverable lost fees. Therefore, the Department encourages travelers to secure cancellation insurance (at their own expense) to provide protection against possible trip cancellation.

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### Non-School Sponsored Trips

Private trips are not activities of the Cape Elizabeth School Department, and the Department assumes no liability for such trips. If a staff member organizes a private trip unconnected to school, the Cape Elizabeth School Department will neither approve nor disapprove the trip. Responsibility rests with the staff member and the travel agency involved in the planning of the trip. To safeguard the Department from liability, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. Classroom time shall not be used to organize or participate in privately-sponsored trips
2. The use of school facilities and the promotion and advertisement of the trip shall conform to the Department policies and guidelines for community use of school facilities.
3. Staff members shall not use school equipment or materials in planning or promoting a privately-sponsored trip.
4. All materials developed to advertise the trip shall clearly inform parents that the trip is not sponsored by the Cape Elizabeth School Department
5. There shall be no relationship between involvement in the trip and course grades or credit.
6. The Board recognizes that travel may impact other programs, services, and the general operation of the schools. To minimize the impact, the Board does not approve absences for non-sanctioned trips that require staff to miss work days.

CROSS REFERENCE: JICC – Student Conduct on School Buses

JICC-R – Good Manners and Safety on the School Bus  
(Administrative Guidelines)

IHOA-R - Student Travel and Field Trips Guidelines

IJOB - Athletic Policy-Athletic Trips

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