

## FIELD TRIP POLICY

The Cambridge School Committee recognizes that first-hand experiences provided by field trips and school-sponsored trips are a most effective and worthwhile means of learning; therefore, the Cambridge School Committee encourages that field trips and school-sponsored trips of significant educational value, which are related to the total school program and curriculum. Additionally, due to the inherent educational value of field trips and school-sponsored trips, it is the School Committee's goal that all students be able to participate in and have equal access to field trips and school-sponsored trips.

Consistent with this goal, the Superintendent of Schools shall establish guidelines for field trips and school sponsored trips. These guidelines shall address the process for screening, evaluating and approving field trips and school-sponsored trips in order to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken for the health, safety and welfare of the participants and to ensure no substantial disruption to the educational process and the inherent educational value of the field trip and/or school-sponsored trip. Additionally, the guidelines shall provide that no student shall be denied participation in a field trip or school-sponsored trip as a consequence or form of punishment for previous behavior for which he or she already has been disciplined. A student may only be excluded from a field trip or school-sponsored trip if the date or dates of his/her suspension or expulsion from school for a violation of school-based rules or the codes of conduct set forth in the *Rights and Responsibilities Handbook* coincides with the scheduled date or dates of the field trip or school-sponsored trip, or if, in the judgment of the principal, a student's previous or current behavior poses a substantial risk to the health, safety and welfare of the student, other students and/or staff participating in the field trip and/or school-sponsored event. The guidelines also should require the prior approval of all field trips or school-sponsored trips by the principal/head of upper school, and the prior approval by the Superintendent of Schools and/or his/her designee of all overnight and out-of-state or out-of-country trips. Furthermore, the guidelines shall establish procedures to assure that: (i) all students have parental/guardian permission for trips; (ii) all trips are properly supervised, (iii) all safety precautions are observed, (iv) all student files have been reviewed to determine if any accommodations or modifications are required in order for a student to participate in and have equal access to any field trip or school-sponsored trip; (v) all trips contribute substantially to the educational program; (vi) the district is monitoring whether students are excluded from participation in and/or having equal access to field trips and/or school-sponsored trips and, if so, for what reasons; and (vii) there are procedures in place for parents/guardians to appeal a decision to exclude a student from participation and access to a field trip and/or school-sponsored trip. Field trips and school-sponsored trips shall not require approval of the Cambridge School Committee.

Approval of all field trips and school-sponsored trips shall be conditional. Approval for any field trip or school-sponsored trip may be revoked if a change in circumstances, whether man-made or natural, would warrant cancellation of this field trip or school sponsored trip in the interest of the safety of the students and staff of the Cambridge Public Schools.

The Cambridge Public Schools and the Cambridge School Committee will not be responsible for any financial obligations incurred as a result of the planning of the field trip or school sponsored trip, or for any monies that are non-refundable or are otherwise lost due to the subsequent cancellation of the field trip or school-sponsored trip or due to a student's exclusion from participation and access to a field trip or school-sponsored trip as a result of the student's suspension or expulsion from school on the date or dates of the field trip or school-sponsored trip.

No student shall be denied participation in a field trip or school-sponsored trip that takes place during the school day (and is not an overnight trip) because of financial inability to pay the fee. Each club, team or group is responsible for raising all of the money necessary to fund a field trip or school sponsored trip that is being proposed by a group of students. No fundraising or other preparations for a field trip or school sponsored trip should occur until the field trip or school sponsored trip has been approved. No financial support will be available from the Cambridge Public School Department or the Cambridge School Committee for any overnight, out-of-state or out-of-country travel unless an athletic team or academic team or competition has qualified for an overnight, out-of-state or out-of-country competition and in these narrow circumstances final approval of funding for such travel by an athletic team or academic team is subject to final approval by the Superintendent.

The Cambridge Public School Department and the Cambridge School Committee will not be responsible for any expenses incurred as a result of a chaperone's decision to send a student participant home earlier than the scheduled return date due to the student's unacceptable behavior. Students and their parents/guardians will be held responsible for any damage done to hotels, rental properties, real or personal property. Parents/guardians must agree to pay for any damages that may be done by their son/daughter and/or aid school officials in collecting money necessary to do so.

For all field trips requiring transportation, transportation must be provided by a common carrier that is licensed to do business in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is licensed for passenger transport by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, or in an approved Cambridge Public Schools licensed vehicle or by public transportation, such as the MBTA, bus, train or other form of public transportation. All charter services for field trips or school sponsored trips must be provided by a common carrier that is licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to provide charter services and is licensed for passenger transport by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. All vendors that provide transportation for field trips or school sponsored trips must provide evidence that their driver(s) are licensed in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to drive the vehicles being used to provide the transportation for the field trips and/or the charter services for the field trips. All transportation vendors also must maintain liability insurance with a minimum of \$500,000 (five hundred thousand dollars) per occurrence for bodily injury. No transportation vendor shall be used to provide transportation and/or charter services for field trips or school sponsored trips if it has a rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. Nothing in this field trip policy should be construed to prohibit field trips where students travel by means of walking.

Use of privately owned vehicles or leased vans to transport students to and from field trips, athletic events or school sponsored trips are strictly prohibited, except in the case of a bona fide emergency. Determination of the existence of a bona fide emergency will be made by the Principal/Head of Upper School and/or Trip Leader if the Principal is not present. Staff and parents/guardians who use their own vehicles risk being legally liable for any injury a student sustains while in the vehicle.

Overnight accommodations should be made in advance with safety and security in mind and, whenever possible, travel between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m. should be avoided, trip itineraries should leave enough room for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense and take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic and unanticipated factors.

**LEGAL REFS:** M.G.L.c. 71, §37N  
Massachusetts Department of Education Model Policy

*Adopted: December 17, 2013*