

Appropriate Field Trips

Alexander County Schools

*School-sponsored trips require the presence of school-district employees.

Philosophy

Field trips are a wonderful way to enable students to experience real-life places and activities that are tied to the curriculum they are learning in school. Through building students' background knowledge via field trips and virtual field trips, we help students see the connections between the content we have taught and the content we will teach in the future. In order to make it possible for students to attend field trips, all staff must follow the guidelines and procedures set forth in Field Trip Policy 3320 and district-wide procedures.

Each elementary and middle school should establish a Field Trip Review Committee to review field trip activity on an annual basis. The School Improvement Team can serve this function or appoint an additional sub-committee. At least two parents (not employed by the school system) should serve on this committee. School trips without at least 65% participation, should not be repeated. This is often an indication as to a parent's ability to afford the trip or concerns regarding safety. The chief role of the committee is to assure a balanced approach to field trips that meet the guidelines as defined in Board Policy 3320. The committee should examine the list of all trips taken during the school experience across all grade levels, and assure that the following issues are being considered:

- The appropriate grade level for each major trip taken
- Duplication of trips should not be allowed without strong justification
- Similar experiences should exist for all students in the Alexander County Schools regardless of the school of attendance
- The total costs to families, especially those with more than one child in the school, should be kept in mind when planning the total program
- Other issues mentioned in the policy, such as age appropriateness, safety issues, reasonable cost, access for handicapped students, time away from school, distance, end of grade testing, relevance to curriculum, and impact on the total school program should always be considered.
- Students should never be alone or allowed to be out of the sight of others on the trip.
- Adults on a trip should be prepared for dealing with emergencies. Ensure employees know procedures for field trips, including basic emergency action plans and incident reporting.
- Potentially risky trips involving trampoline parks, swimming, rafting, kayaking or water-related activities must be discussed with the county office approver before being submitted for approval in FMX.

- **Grades 3 - 8 may not take field trips after May 1. Occasional reward trips may be approved after testing if they meet guidelines.**
- **Grades K - 2 may take field trips until the last day of May.**

It is recommended that classes plan together as a grade level, and take no more than one major field trip per year. A major trip is defined as one in which students are gone overnight, or the cost to students exceeds twenty-five dollars.

Teachers are allowed to plan other minor trips, but should limit these to no more than one per nine-weeks, so as to minimize the cost to parents and time away from school. System-wide activities such as the conservation field day for 5th graders, Steely Pan Band, or activities at the Hiddenite Center, may be in addition to teacher-planned trips. School-wide reward trips may occur in addition to teacher planned trips, but should not exceed two per year. The total aggregate of all trips for the year should remain a consideration in maintaining a proper balance of all issues that are to be considered in this Board Policy 3320, *School Field Trips and Excursions*.

Overnight field trips are likely to be considered a major trip and thus should not exceed \$150.00 for elementary school students and \$350.00 for middle school field trips.

Grades K - 5 Suggested Field Trips for Approval: Other trips can be taken at the school principal's discretion, this is not to indicate that only these trips can be taken. These lists are provided to avoid duplication of trips.

Kindergarten Appropriate Field Trips

- Farms (different types of animals)
- Apple Houses
- Community Helpers Visit

First Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- Lazy 5 Ranch
- Devine Farm
- Zootastic
- Greenhouse
- Transportation Museum
- Dan Nicholas' Park
- Aviation Museum

Second Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- Community Trip (bank, library, social services, park)
- Rendezvous Mountain
- North Carolina or South Carolina Zoo
- Kaleidium Science Center
- Whippoorwill Academy

- Required: Speedway to Healthy

Third Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- Schiele Museum & Planetarium
- Courthouse
- Old Salem*
- Required: AG History Tour
- Grandfather Mountain/Linville Caverns

Fourth Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- Rendezvous Mountain
- Hiddenite Gem Mines
- Raleigh *
- Lucas Mansion
- Latta Plantation
- Required: Hiddenite Center Heritage Fair

Fifth Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- Camp Thunderbird/Harrison/White Water Center (no rafting/water activities) *
- Charlotte Motor Speedway
- Required: Soil & Water Environment Days

Field Trips denoted by (*) would likely be considered a major field trip for that grade level, costing over \$25.00. Per county policy only one major field trip is allowed per grade level. Maximum cost of \$150.00 for an Elementary major field trip.

The following trips could be appropriate for multiple grade levels.

- Drama appropriate to grade level literature at AC Auditorium, The Green Room, LR University, The Walker Center, The Broyhill Center, Appalachian State
- Multiple exhibits and special instructional focus could be offered at several locations making the following trips applicable to several grade levels also: Catawba Science Center, SciWorks, Discovery Place & Kid Senses.

Note: Special programs such as reward trips, competitions, and extracurricular trips are excluded from the above list.

Middle School - Suggested Field Trips for Approval: Other trips can be taken at the school principal's discretion, this is not to indicate that only these trips can be taken. These lists are provided to avoid duplication of trips.

Sixth Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- Rocky Face- Hiddenite, NC
- Carowinds *
- Hickory, Science Center
- Local Theatre Productions
- Charlotte Motor Speedway *

Seventh Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- International Civil Rights Museum/ UNC-G Campus tour *
- Hickory Science Center
- Anne Frank or other literary plays
- Price's Park Stream Study (Boone, NC)
- Appalachian State Science Expo
- Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg- Titanic Museum, Dollywood, Play *
- Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown *

Eighth Grade Appropriate Field Trips

- Washington, DC *
- Local College Tour(s)
- Rocky Face
- Graduation Celebration (Bo's and AJ's Steakhouse)
- Biltmore House *
- Local Theatre Productions

Field Trips denoted by (*) would likely be considered a major field trip for that grade level, costing over \$25.00. Per county policy only one major field trip is allowed per grade level per year not to exceed \$350.00

Appropriate Trips 9 - 12

The structure of the high school block system creates an even greater need to protect class time. Field trips will be limited to competitions, performances, and very direct correlation to the content of the class. Collaboration between the various departments and teachers must be intentional and specific to limit any adverse effect regarding students who miss class due to a field trip.

Whenever possible, service activities by clubs should be done after school. Early dismissals for any activity, including athletic contests, should be limited as much as possible to protect instructional time.

Issues regarding any negative impact of field trips in the high school should be brought to the attention of the principal and School Leadership Team.