INSTRUCTION

Procedures for Planning Instructional Field Trips, Athletic Trips, and Requests for Activity Buses

I. Definitions: In administering field trips, requesting activity buses, and for the understanding of this regulation, the following definitions shall be used:

A. Field Trip - Field trips are those trips that involve students leaving the grounds of the home school, under teacher supervision, whether motor transportation is used or not. Field trips must be based on educational reasons designed to reinforce or enhance the curricular program. The closest geographic location to meet the objectives of the field trip shall be selected.

B. Athletic Trip - Athletic trips are those trips that involve transporting student athletes and coaches to an athletic event.

C. School-Sponsored Field Trip - The school-sponsored field trip is one that is an outgrowth of the classroom or extracurricular activities. It has been planned as an integral part of the educational program (as opposed to a random, casual selection of opportunities) and is basically repeated from year-to-year as the learning activity with which it is planned is repeated, and the trip occurs during school hours.

D. School-Sponsored International or Non-Continental United States (CONUS) Trips - A trip which involves travel that includes transporting students to other countries, or outside of the continental United States that is scheduled and approved by school staff.

E. Extended Day Field Trip - A school-sponsored field trip which is planned to extend beyond normal school hours, to take place after normal school hours, or to occur on days other than school days (Saturdays, Sundays, holidays), but not planned as an overnight trip.

F. Overnight Field Trips - A field trip in which lodging away from the student’s home is required for completion of the trip.

G. Metropolitan Washington Statistical Area - The District of Columbia and suburban counties in Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia. (Virginia: Arlington County, Clarke County, Culpeper County, Fairfax County, Fauquier County, King George County, Loudoun County, Prince William County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County, Warren County, and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park. Maryland: Calvert County, Charles County, Frederick County, Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County. West Virginia: Berkeley County and Jefferson County.)
H. Non-School-Sponsored Trips - A trip which may involve groups identifiable as students and/or teachers of Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS), but the responsibilities for which (including scheduling, parental consents, liabilities, cost, and supervision) are assumed by individuals other than PWCS, School Board, its administration, or its staff, regardless of the destination (see Section III). Any trip not approved by the principal and the Level Associate Superintendent is considered non-school-sponsored.

I. Activity Bus - Activity buses are used to transport students home after scheduled after-school activities.

II. Scope: This regulation is applicable to all trips planned and requests made for activity buses for students, whether they be elementary or secondary and whether they be curricular or extracurricular including athletic trips.

III. General: The following practices and procedures shall be followed in planning field trips:

A. Whenever possible, county and district events shall be scheduled on weekends and on days and times when students will miss a minimum number of classes. To the extent possible, trips shall be planned during winter break, spring break, and at other times that minimize time missed from class. Coaches/sponsors shall seek cooperation from outside sponsoring agencies to have competitions or events scheduled on the weekends or holidays; e.g., Virginia High School League (VHSL), Virginia Music Education Association (VMEA), etc.

B. Field trips shall be planned, presented, and approved at the beginning of the school year so that sufficient notification, scheduling, and fund-raising can occur. This planning shall include how students who cannot afford the trip, will be allowed to attend. Field trips, using School Division buses, shall not be requested to occur after May 30 of each school year. This procedure allows time for billing and budget transfers involving transportation. Exceptions are:

1. Academic competitions;
2. Planetarium trips;
3. Aquatics Center trips;
4. Graduation ceremony support;
5. Athletic events; and
6. Rescheduled trips scheduled before May 30, but postponed by the agency/event being visited.
C. Each group scheduling field trips, shall schedule the trips so that no student misses more than two days of school per year. Level Associate Superintendents may approve additional trips of educational value in excess of the two-day limit. Out-of-school activities excluded from the two-day field trip limit are as follows:

1. Art museum programs and music, dance, and theater performances;
2. Elementary and middle school overnight trips to Prince William Forest Park;
3. All-county, regional, and state band, orchestra, choral, robotics, and art events;
4. Model United Nations trips and competitions;
5. Planetarium visits;
6. National Museum of the Marine Corps visit planned through the Teacher-In-Residence;
7. PWCS Aquatics Center;
8. Field trips taken on weekends or holidays; and
9. “Individual” academic competitions/awards in which students are successful (science fair competitions, math competitions, etc.).

D. The principal and appropriate Level Associate Superintendent shall approve all field trips prior to any action taken with students to prepare for the trip. Swimming, boating, other water activities, and skating are strictly prohibited during school-sponsored field trips, and requests of this nature shall not be approved except those trips involving water activities that are strictly and solely of an athletic or instructional nature; e.g., water safety instruction at the PWCS Aquatics Center, varsity crew, varsity swimming, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, etc. Such water trips shall be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Division Superintendent (Superintendent) or the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent in consultation with the Office of Risk Management and Security Services in advance of scheduling the trips. Only field trips of an instructional nature shall be approved during instructional time. While interest surveys may be appropriate, any attempts to raise money specifically for the trip in question, hold parent meetings, expend funds, or make definite plans shall be avoided until such trips are approved.

The source of funds, which would pay for transportation, shall be identified on all field trip requests. The Superintendent (or designee), shall have the authority to cancel or otherwise restrict any field trip, approved or otherwise, if in the judgment of the Superintendent (or designee), circumstances arise which pose a threat to the safety or security of students or staff.

E. Walking field trips shall be approved by the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent. Since no transportation is required, notice to the Office of Transportation Services is not required.
F. The principal and the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent shall approve all field trips. It is expected that all necessary provisions shall have been made to protect the health, welfare, and safety of the students and bus driver, as well as any liability to the School Board or its employees. Such overnight field trips shall contribute to the educational program of the School Division.

G. Field trips are generally restricted to the metropolitan Washington D.C. area. However, trips to other areas included in districts established by the VHSL for athletics, arts, and forensics shall not be restricted. Also, field trips to such places as Williamsburg, Fredericksburg, Richmond, Gettysburg, and other points of historical interest shall be approved, if the trip is an integral part of the instructional program.

H. School-sponsored field trips shall be built into the design of the educational program. As curriculum development takes place, suggested field trips shall be listed. Such a list shall not be restrictive, but act as a guideline for judgment as to whether the proposed trip meets the definition for a school-sponsored trip.

I. Although a field trip shall provide unquestioned educational opportunities, incidental opportunities for travel shall not be considered as the basis for proposing a school-sponsored field trip, unless the trip opportunity clearly relates to an ongoing learning activity which would be enhanced by the trip.

J. Groups or individuals who take responsibilities for planning and carrying out non-school-sponsored trips consisting of groups of students and/or teachers shall make parents aware that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the schools assume no responsibility for the trip in any way whatsoever. No school time, instructional, or otherwise, shall be consumed by the distribution of written and/or oral communication regarding non-sponsored trips. If a school building is used after school hours regarding non-school sponsored trips, a building rental contract shall be completed and signed by the agency sponsoring the trip. Notices, forms, and information concerning such trips shall not be circulated through the school’s communications system. Non-school-sponsored trips shall not be taken during school hours. School Division buses shall not be used for non-school-sponsored trips.

K. School-sponsored field trips shall have prior approval. For approval, the following items shall be in proper order:

1. The trip shall meet the definitions outlined in Section I above;
2. There shall be sufficient supervision which shall come from the teacher, the activity sponsor, and other responsible adults (parents, other teachers, teacher aides). The number of supervising adults required for each trip shall be determined by the principal (or designee);
3. Students shall have a signed Parental Consent Form (available at each school) for field trip approval and attach the form to the PWCS Trip Tracker request. Parents/Guardians of diabetic students taking overnight or extended field trips shall work with the school to ensure Glucagon trained staff shall be available to support the medical needs of these students. A copy of the Parental Consent Form is attached (Attachment II);

4. The activity sponsor shall complete a Field or Athletic Trip Request within the PWCS Trip Tracker application. This shall be forwarded through the appropriate approval chain automatically. The trip request shall arrive at the supporting Bus Operations Center 14 days prior to the trip;

5. The trip sponsor shall immediately notify the appropriate Bus Operations Center when a trip is postponed or cancelled. Coaches or sponsors shall not reschedule a postponed trip without checking with the Office of Transportation Services to determine if transportation is available;

6. Trips in the metropolitan Washington area shall be terminated prior to 5:30 p.m. for the elementary and middle school levels. This time limitation does not apply to the senior high field trips;

7. Field trips are subject to the availability of transportation. If private vehicles are utilized, the approval form shall state that private vehicles shall provide transportation and that these vehicles are of an authorized type that meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and are privately insured. This statement shall also be included on the parent permission form; and

8. No student shall be denied participation in a school-sponsored field trip based upon an inability to pay because of family circumstances.

L. Extended-day field trips shall follow the same procedures for approval as indicated for other school-sponsored field trips. In addition, the following items shall be in proper order:

1. The coach or sponsor shall leave with the principal (or designee) a list of all participating students and a phone number where a parent or guardian of each student can be reached in case of an emergency, and the complete round-trip itinerary with anticipated arrival and departure times;

2. The coach or sponsor shall have emergency information relating to each student and a copy of the itinerary;

3. The principal shall provide the coach or sponsor with the name and telephone number of the principal (or designee) to call in case of an emergency as well as the telephone number of the Director of Transportation Services (or designee);

4. The principal shall have, prior to the trip, an emergency telephone number where the coach or sponsor can be reached at the trip destination;

5. Overnight arrangements shall be made for participants when it is known, prior to taking the field trip, that the group would otherwise be returning after 1 a.m.; and
6. When it becomes apparent that the return trip shall be extensively delayed due to severe weather conditions, a disabling mechanical failure, accident, or other emergency pertinent to the safety and well-being of the passengers, the coach or sponsor shall call the principal (or designee) for further instructions, which may include permission to remain overnight.

M. International and NONCONUS field trips shall follow the same procedures for approval as indicated for other school-sponsored field trips described above. In addition, the following items shall be in proper order:

1. Trips sponsors and approving administrators shall review the United States Department of State Travel Advisories prior to approving trips.

   United States Department of State Travel Advisory Levels
   1 – Trip Approved by PWCS
   2 – Trip approved with communication to the parents advising of the warning
   3 – Trip will not be approved to countries/locations with this Travel Advisory Level
   4 – Trip will not be approved to countries/locations with this Travel Advisory Level

2. Requests to travel to locales with a Level Three travel advisory recommending reconsideration of travel plans shall result in requests being denied and previously approved trips being canceled.

N. Unless approved by the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent on a case-by-case basis, field and athletic trips shall be cancelled on Code Green and Code Red days.

O. Use of Student Drivers - No student drivers shall be used on a field trip. If private vehicles are used, these vehicles and their passengers shall be insured, and the parents or guardians of the students being transported shall give permission for the student to be transported by private vehicle.

P. Travel by School Bus

1. Students shall be under the direct supervision of a teacher, sponsor, or chaperone during transit on field and athletic trips;
2. The person(s) supervising students during transportation shall be responsible for ensuring student compliance with the PWCS “Code of Behavior”;
3. School bus drivers shall assist in the supervision of students as necessary to maintain safety while students are on the bus;
4. The school is responsible for the payment of bus tolls, parking fees, and admission fees (if any) for school bus drivers and attendants when drivers and attendants are required to attend the function; and
5. On overnight trips, the sponsor or coach is responsible for:
   
a. The bus driver’s reservations and payment for lodging;
b. Funding for meals at the standard rate or for providing food with the group;
c. Supplemental pay for driving when required to be in attendance with the group
   or when conducting required services to maintain the bus for the trip
   (mechanical repairs, refueling, cleaning, etc.); and
   
d. Ensuring the bus driver receives eight consecutive hours of rest and does not
   drive after being on duty more than 15 hours. On-duty times include driving
   time and the time required to remain with the bus and all other work.

Q. Travel Distance

1. Field trips during regular school hours, when the majority of buses are available
   (9:15 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.), are limited to a forty-five (45) mile radius (central point
   - Independent Hill). Requests for field trips aboard school buses extending beyond
   1:30 p.m. on a regular school day shall be approved by the appropriate
   Level Associate Superintendent in consultation with the Office of Transportation
   Services and based on the availability of resources. If the trip is approved by the
   Level Associate Superintendent but school buses/drivers are not available, the
   school may use charter buses for the trip; and

2. Extended-day and non-school-day field and athletic trips shall not exceed a
   150-mile radius from Independent Hill. Commercial transportation shall be used
   for all trips in excess of 150 miles.

R. Commercial Transportation

Periodically, the Purchasing Office shall provide to the schools, through electronic mail,
   a list of approved commercial bus carriers. Questions pertaining to commercial service
   contractors shall be directed to the Purchasing Office.

S. Transportation by Other Types of Vehicles

1. Any vehicle used to transport students shall meet Federal Passenger Car Occupant
   Protection Standards as defined by FMVSS. If a personal, rental, or leased vehicle is
   being recommended for use, a Field Trip Driver’s License and Vehicle Insurance
   Information form (Attachment I) shall be completed and attached to the PWCS Trip
   Tracker request for approval by the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent.

2. When a school rents or leases a vehicle, the school representative shall be required to
   obtain automobile liability coverage in the amount of $500,000 and to provide an
   insurance certificate with the Field Trip Driver’s License and Vehicle Insurance
   Information form (Attachment I). Minimum liability for privately owned vehicles is
   established by Virginia Law for personal, rented, or leased vehicles, the vehicle type
can be determined by referring to the data plate or decal affixed to the door jam or
door post on the driver’s side of the vehicle. The data plate provides the type
designation (e.g., passenger car, station wagon, truck, bus, school bus, or
multipurpose vehicle). The data plate shall also state that the vehicle meets Federal
FMVSS. Vehicle registration cards shall not be utilized as a method of determining
vehicle type since they will often have a different designation than that on the data
plate.

3. Even though school buses are the safest mode for student transportation, vehicles
with a data plate displaying the following vehicle types may be utilized for student
transportation:

   a. Passenger car;
   b. Station wagon;
   c. School bus;
   d. Activity bus;
   e. Commercial buses provided through contract carriers licensed to do business in
      the Commonwealth of Virginia; and
   f. Certain late model minivan passenger vehicles (manufactured 1995 or later)
      which are certified by the manufacturer to meet Federal Passenger Car Occupant
      Protection Standards. Vehicles that meet Federal Passenger Car Occupant
      Protection Standards have permanently-installed, full-size seats for the driver
      and each passenger. Seats may be convertible to cargo space, for example, by
      folding, but may not be designed to be readily removed and reinstalled. Each
      seat must have both a lap belt and shoulder harness. Vehicles manufactured after
      1998 must have air bags (vehicles manufactured before 1998 are not required to
      have air bags and therefore are not recommended).

4. Student transportation shall not be provided by the following vehicle types:

   a. Multipurpose Vehicle - except those that meet the standards described in
      paragraph 4(e) above;
   b. Truck;
   c. Van designed to carry more than ten people;
   d. Camper/Recreational Vehicle; and
   e. Motorcycle.

NOTE: This regulation does not prevent a parent or legal guardian from
transporting only their student(s) (child or ward) to and from a school-sponsored
event in a vehicle of an unauthorized type. However, the parent shall not be
permitted to transport other students.
5. The principal shall be responsible for ensuring that vehicles of an authorized type are used for student transportation.

IV. Procedures for Requesting an After-School Activity Bus

A. Principals requesting after-school activity buses shall submit their requests through the PWCS Trip Tracker system two weeks in advance. This applies to requests for after-school activity buses for general education students and students with mobility impairments or other special needs. Depending on availability, however, requests for individualized transportation due to a mobility impairment or other special needs may be filled in a shorter time frame.

B. The required information as listed below shall be submitted through the PWCS Trip Tracker system:

1. Budget code;
2. Start and end dates;
3. Number of buses;
4. Days and time required; and
5. Contact person and telephone number.

C. Activity (non-athletic) runs shall start no earlier than 4:30 p.m. and no later than 5:30 p.m. Parents and students must be informed that activity buses stop at central bus stops within the neighborhood and not at every stop where the students are picked up in the morning. Depending on the request, a student with a mobility impairment or other special needs may be taken to a stop other than a central bus stop.

D. The PWCS “Code of Behavior” states students serving detention for bus violations may not ride the activity bus without the principal’s approval.

The Associate Superintendent for Student and Professional Learning (or designee), the Associate Superintendent for Finance and Risk Management (or designee), and the Associate Superintendent for Support Services (or designee) are responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.
Driver’s License/Vehicle Insurance Checklist/Validation Form

(This form is required when transporting student on field trips in person or leased vehicles.)

To Be Completed by the School:

Date: ___________________________________________________________________________________

Destination: _____________________________________________________________________________

Purpose of the Trip: __________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Number of Students to be Transported: __________________________________________________________

Trip Sponsor: _____________________________________________________________

To Be Completed by the Driver:

Driver’s Name: __________________________________________________________________________

Driver’s Status:  □ Faculty/Staff  □ Parent  □ Other: ____________________________

License Number & Expiration: __________________________________________________________________

State: ______________________________________________________________________________________

Vehicle Manufacturer & Model: _________________________________________________________________

Year Manufactured: __________________________________________________________________________

Vehicle Type: (check appropriate box)

□ Passenger

□ Car/Station Wagon

□ Van/Mini-van (Must be manufactured in 1995 or later; have a FMVSS data plate affixed to door; and permanently install full-size seats for driver and all passengers.

Note: Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs), campers/recreational vehicles, multi-purpose vehicles (MPVs), motorcycles, and passenger vans designed to carry more than 10 people cannot be used for field trips.
Vehicle Equipment: (check all that apply)

☐ Factory-installed lap belts and shoulder harnesses for each seat (Mandatory)

☐ Air bags (Mandatory for vehicles manufactured in 1998 or later; vehicles manufactured before 1998 are not recommended for field trip use.)

Vehicle Owner: (check appropriate box)

☐ Privately Owned

☐ Leased

Insurance Information:
If Privately Owned:

Owner’s Name: ____________________________________________________________________________

Insurance Company: ________________________________________________________________________

Expiration of Policy: ________________________________________________________________________

Signature of Owner: _________________________________________________________________________

If leased: Attach an insurance certificate to this form indicating a minimum liability coverage of $500,000 per accident.

To Be Completed by the Principal:

My signature below indicates that the data presented above has been verified by me, or a staff member appointed by me, and the vehicle and the driver meet the qualifications outlined in Regulation 642-1.

___________________________________  ______________________________________
Signature                         Date

Note: A completed copy of this form will be presented to the appropriate Level Associate Superintendent along with the Field Trip Request. When the trip has been approved, the principal will provide a copy to the driver, vehicle owner, and the teacher/staff sponsor. A copy will be filed in the school office prior to the departure of the trip.

Form #61582450211G
Verified June 26, 2019
Field Trip Permission
This form is required for all field trips.

**Important Directions:** (efficient preparation and distribution includes): (1) complete only ONE form per trip, (2) complete the school portion (first page) of form, (3) duplicate *one form per student*, and (4) send a copy home for the parent's and student's signature.

**To Be Completed by the School**

**Field Trip Plan:**

_____ Specific Trip  ____ Repeated Trips

Date: ______________________________

Teacher: __________________________

Room: ____________________________

Explain: __________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Destination: _______________________________________________________

Purpose: __________________________________________________________

**Supervision:** (Check one)

☐ Students will be directly supervised by adults on this trip.

☐ Students will be directly supervised by adults on this trip with the following exception(s). (If space is insufficient, attach itinerary with explanation regarding supervision.)

____________________________________________________________________________

**Transportation:** (Check all that apply)

☐ Walking  ☐ School Bus  ☐ Commercial Carrier  ☐ Private Vehicle  ☐ None

☐ Leased Vehicle  ☐ County Vehicle

**Drivers of Private or Leased Vehicles:** (Check all that apply)

☐ Parent  ☐ Teacher/Staff Member  ☐ Other Adult

**Approval of Principal:**

Signature of Principal: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
To Be Completed at Home

Student Agreement:

While participating in this field trip, I will accept responsibility for maintaining good conduct and appearance, and I will follow directions at all times.

Date: __________________________ Signature of Student: __________________________

Parent Permission:

I give permission for __________________________ (Name of Student) to participate in the field trip(s) described above. As the parent or guardian of __________________________, I understand and agree that in the event the Superintendent, or the Superintendent's designee, cancels our trip to __________________________ for any reason, we will not hold Prince William County Public Schools, the Prince William County School Board, or __________________________ (Name of School), or their employees or agents responsible for any reimbursements of monies paid or invested in this trip.

Date: ______________ Signature of Parent/Guardian: __________________________

Signature of Student: __________________________

Distribution: One copy of this completed form will be sent from the Principal to Parent/Guardian, Teacher, and School Office.