



Bellevue School District

Field Trip Guidance: Frequently Asked Questions

What is school-sponsored? What makes a trip "school-sponsored" is not whether those going on the trip receive money from the school or fundraise. If the trip is planned at school, the school is being used to advertise a trip, and/or a teacher is using his/her position, as an employee of public schools to gain access to students to recruit and plan for a trip, then it is a school-sponsored trip. Trips that are not intended to be considered "school-sponsored" should not be organized at school or through the access that employees have to students or the school community.

When can spending for trip expenses proceed? No funds may be spent until the School Board has approved the trip. When booking airline tickets or hotel rooms, purchases for anyone other than coaches, chaperones or students is prohibited. Parents, family members, friends etc. must make their own travel arrangements.

Who should complete a prior approval form for travel? When department budgets are charged for the cost of staff members traveling with student groups, the department paying for those costs may require staff travel forms.

What do I need to do for fundraising? Complete the ASB Fundraising plan. Groups of students may fundraise for the costs of the entire group. Any groups unable to fundraise for the entire cost may request scholarship funds or additional funding from the ASB. Individual student fundraising may also occur; however, no student may be excluded from the activity due to inability to pay.

What do I need to do with funds? All funds for transportation and living accommodations related to the trip must be deposited into a school/district account prior to the departure date for the trip.

What do I do about students who may not be able to pay for trip costs? All trips that are curricular or co-curricular (classroom trips or associated with a course or when a grade or credit is provided) must not exclude students who may not be able to afford the costs of the trip. Provisions must be made for these students. Students qualifying for free and reduced lunch have fees for curricular trips waived. Trips that are extra-curricular in nature (sport team travel outside of season or competition out of state, international experiences etc.) are optional and therefore, there is no obligation to make provisions for students who may not be able to afford the costs. For high school sports, play-off travel is at no cost to student-athletes. Our current practice is to not leave anyone at home for financial reasons if the student wants to attend an extra-curricular event.

What should I do if I am not sure how many students will be attending? It is unlikely that the actual number of students will ever be known with complete certainty when planning a field trip. It is strongly recommended that trip sponsors complete a tentative plan with an estimated number of student participants for administrator approval.

What should I do if the number of students taking part in the trip changes drastically? Advise the Athletics and Activities Department as soon as possible.



Bellevue School District

Field Trip Guidance: Frequently Asked Questions

What is the process of approval for merit-based competition trips? Board policy 2320 (Field Trips) and Procedure 2320P do not exclude WIAA or club sport state championships or any ASB activities that provide a merit based competitive event at the regional, state, national, or international level such as DECA, mock trial, robotics etc. where student participants might be eligible to attend if they qualify. In these cases, where it is impractical to complete an application because schools do not know if their team, group, or students will qualify for the competition, the following will occur:

1. The BSD Athletic Directors/Activity Coordinators will submit a list at the beginning of the year that describe the competition, dates and location of the events that are not local and/or require an overnight stay (extended field trip). The board will review these potential trips, provide blanket approval, and allow the District Athletics and Activities Director authority to approve participation, if students qualify. Athletic Directors/Activity Coordinators should review the list and provide any additions to the Office of Athletics and Activities by September 15 each year.
2. If the board pre-approved trip is a WIAA athletic team (post season) traveling to **State competition**, the AD provides the following information in an email to the District Athletic Director (cc to Principal) prior to travel:
 - a) Title of the State competition
 - b) Travel arrangements (How are groups getting there?)
 - c) Accommodation (Where are groups staying? Provide hotel name, address, and phone number.)
 - d) Funding arrangements (What is the source of revenue: ASB or General Fund?)
 - e) Chaperones (Provide names of chaperones and a contact number for the primary chaperone.)
3. For **all other board pre-approved trips** for athletic teams or for ASB activity/school groups that qualify for state-level, regional, or national competition, the trip sponsor must complete the full field trip application BSD Procedure 2320P Exhibit B with all building signatures and documentation. Trip sponsors submit that application to the District Athletics and Activities office for final risk assessment and approval before the group can travel.

Can parents/chaperones prepare and serve meals? In general, it is preferable to purchase meals at restaurants or food services at host facilities, provided by commercial vendors, or by purchasing pre-packaged food items from grocery stores. For large groups, a trip sponsor may request from Risk Management for meal preparation by parents/chaperones for some or all meals. If approved by Risk Management, adhere to the following guidelines:

- Hot foods must be kept hot and cold foods kept cold in appropriate containers/equipment. Generally, homemade hot foods should be avoided.
- Appropriate food preparation hand washing techniques must be followed, including removing rings.
- Appropriate food handling techniques must be followed, including wearing gloves when serving food.
- The lead chaperone must verify any student food allergies and all food ingredients must be reviewed to maintain student health and safety.
- Perishable items and ingredients such as mayonnaise should be avoided. Meats must be thoroughly cooked.
- Avoid homemade dips, soups, casseroles etc. Sandwiches and chips are a safe choice.
- When possible, food should be individually packaged and prepared as close to the consumption of the food as possible.

How many chaperones should be included in the trip? As stated in 2320P.K, "The number of adult supervisors should be based upon the age of students, duration of the trip, safety considerations, and nature of the activities planned. That ratio shall be approved by the principal." **At least two** chaperones should accompany a single student and **at least one male and one female chaperone** must accompany mixed groups.

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Bellevue School District

Field Trip Guidance: Frequently Asked Questions

Who can chaperone students? Again, principals must approve who chaperones will be and approve of the selection criteria. **All chaperones on overnight field trips must complete the parent volunteer process.** Spouses may serve as chaperones as a last resort upon approval by the principal. The State Auditor has indicated that the presumption is that a spouse cannot act as a chaperone when also supervising their own children, so chaperones are prohibited from bringing their own children on school trips. High school students may be used as chaperones for students in lower grades with principal approval, subject to being approved through **the student volunteer process** and approved by their principal.

Care should be taken to ensure that there is appropriate adult supervision of all students (including high school student chaperones); therefore, high school students who are serving as chaperones must be at least eighteen years of age. **In addition, all chaperones must complete an orientation/training through the sponsoring school prior to the planned trip. The orientation/training will include specific guidelines for chaperones, including but not limited to line of site supervision, and district policy 5281, which discusses use of alcohol.**

Should chaperones have separate rooms? Yes. Any exceptions (i.e. 10 students in a cabin) need to be approved by the school principal.

Can students who are not enrolled in Bellevue Schools take part in Bellevue fieldtrips? Children from another district or private school cannot be included in BSD approved extended field trips or activities. BSD would have to have some connection with the school or students, such as participation in an athletic or activity program as an ancillary service. Children who live in the attendance area participating in district and WIAA authorized sports or official school clubs may be included on district teams and take part in the travel of the team (local and distance).

Where is the original field trip application forms kept? The original application forms are filed with the Office of Athletics and Activities. Schools are provided are provided with a copy of the application form following School Board approval.

How do I know to which country I can travel? Trip sponsors planning international trips should check with the Centers for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov/), World Health organization (<http://www.who.int/countries/en/>), and the State Department (http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis_pa_tw_1168.html), for information on the specific countries to which they are planning to travel with students given the risks posed by terrorism and different diseases. One year several trips were canceled because of SARS. Possible risks to students when traveling should not be underestimated and parents should be fully informed of potential travel risks.

What is a certificate of insurance? There are two types of certificates. The first is where an organization shows or provides the BSD with a proof of insurance. The second, additional insured, is when BSD asks an organization to include the BSD on their insurance. It usually requires an agreement and a fee.

What are some common or recurring risky activities that have come to the attention of Risk Management?

- **Swimming Pools:** Activities or parties in public, private, or hotel pools are not approved unless it is part of the athletic event or practice, with an approved number of qualified lifeguards at an appropriate public facility.
- **Water Activities:** Water activities are prohibited. Water activities include kayaking, canoeing, rafting, body surfing, white water rafting, scuba diving, ice fishing, ice skating on lakes and ponds, water tubing, water skiing, and boogie boarding.
- **Travel on Watercraft:** Travel on commercial watercraft and government ferries may be approved. Please check in advance. Private watercraft and boats are not approved.



Bellevue School District

Field Trip Guidance: Frequently Asked Questions

- **Activities Near Open Water:** Most activities near open water are not approved. Some exceptions are made for activities such as highly supervised tide pool exploration and restoration and scientific exploration projects may be approved. Please check in advance.
- **Water Parks and Amusement Rides:** Generally, these are not an approved activity unless the group is participating in an event, competition, or performance in the park that is sponsored by the field trip event host.
- **Camp Activities:** Some camp activities are not approved, including: high ropes courses, outdoor rock climbing, tents on the ground, bon fires, fireworks, go carts, and mountain biking.
- **Hikes:** Are only allowed in a tightly controlled environment, during the day and only on well-marked flat maintained trails (no cliffs and no off-trail hiking) with adequate chaperones. Please inform the risk management team of athletic events that might involve hiking.
- **Equestrian Events:** Please inform the risk management team of equestrian events. The type of equestrian event may vary considerably including the student's level of experience, trainer, horse, equipment, safety gear, ring or location. The type of event will affect risk management's decision.

What is a potential risky activity mitigation technique? Some risks may be reduced. For example, a group mitigates the risk of hiking by staying on well-maintained and marked trails during daylight hours. Another example would be excluding thrill rides from amusement park trips.

Can my students stay in hostels? What about home stays? Accommodation in hostels is prohibited. Home stays may be approved if they are organized and sponsored by a host organization or as part of an ongoing relationship. Home stays require parent approval in advance and that parents are notified about details (addresses, phone numbers, names, and proposed housing units and transportation between home stays and activities). It is strongly recommended that BSD students stay in pairs and background checks of host family parents is required. If hotels or college dorms are the housing provided, BSD students are not permitted to stay in rooms with students not from the BSD. In addition all BSD rooms in hotels and dorms should be located together for supervision purposes.

What modes of transport can we use? Private or chartered boats or planes cannot be used for international extended field trips. Extended field trips within the United States cannot use chartered boats unless they obtain insurance approval from Risk Management.

Can leased vehicles or charter bus companies be used? Who can drive students on trips? Leasing vehicles and chartering busses is permitted. Ensuring the safety of students, staff, and volunteers on trips is the primary goal. To this end, the District does not allow the use of passenger vans larger than 10-passenger capacity to transport students for any purpose. This decision is based on state and federal regulations regarding the use of larger passenger vans, research on vehicle safety, and advice we have received from our insurers. Passenger vans with a passenger capacity greater than 10 (removing seats does not reduce the capacity of the vehicle) generally have an extended cargo/ seating area beyond the rear axle which causes an unstable center of gravity with the van swerves increasing the risk of rollover.

Schools choosing to use a charter bus service must first verify the company has a current carrier profile, assuring proper insurance and operation of a safe bus fleet. Please check with the Transportation Department or use the following website to check on the charter company's permit status: www.utc.wa.gov/permits.

Any staff member or volunteer transporting BSD students must be approved by the Transportation Department in advance of the trip. Volunteers must be approved through the BSD volunteer application process before accompanying students on a trip or driving students on trips. Furthermore, only students and approved advisors or chaperones may travel on any trip including regular sport events.



Bellevue School District

Field Trip Guidance: Frequently Asked Questions

Requirements for Planning Overnight and Out of State Trips: Application materials (Procedure 2320P -Exhibit B) for overnight and out of state field trips must be submitted to the Office of Athletics and Activities at least 2 school weeks prior to the intended School Board meeting. Applications for international travel (Procedure 2320P -Exhibit B) must be submitted to Office of Athletics and Activities at least 8 school weeks prior to the planned trip. Estimated travel costs may be collected as a deposit in advance of approval. However, no costs, such as travel arrangements or program fees, may be incurred until Board approval is received. **Each year, administrators will ensure that all staff members who sponsor overnight field trips receive an orientation/training to reinforce district policy and procedure.**

Staff members, coaches, advisors leading trips, school administrators and athletics and activities directors are expected to follow the guidelines for extended field trips provided by the Office of Athletics and Activities.

When do student Emergency Health Forms (2320P Exhibit E – Out of State or Overnight Field Trip Emergency Health Form) and Medication Authorization Forms (3416P Exhibit A – Medication Authorization Form) need to go to the school nurse? Completed forms must be given to the school nurse before the start of the trip a minimum of 2 school weeks for Day Field Trips and a minimum of 6 school weeks for Out of State, Overnight or International Field Trips. This allows the nurse adequate time to contact parents/guardians and health care providers to get additional information and medications as needed.