

## Educational Field Trips/Excursions

Field trips or excursions are defined as educational experiences conducted during school hours and planned by a teacher to correlate with the regular classroom instructional program. Field trips should be an integral part of classroom instruction. The experiences gained during field trips should give relevance and meaning to knowledge. Field trips should be carefully considered before permission is granted. Bear in mind that a student who is on a field trip for one class is missing instructional time in other classes. Thought should be given to what the student will miss while off campus on a field trip. Notification of all field trips should be shared with the faculty by the principal at a faculty meeting, through an email, and/or through the principal's newsletter.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please note that no money should be collected from students or through fundraisers until approval is given from the principal and/or the Chief Academic Officer. All money collected for an educational excursion must be deposited to the school's checking account on a daily basis. Checks drawn from a field trip account must be made to vendors only. After receiving approval from the principal, teacher and chaperones may be reimbursed for legitimate expenses after the trip has concluded upon presentation of documented receipts.

► **Educational Field Trips/Excursions Procedures** - In planning a field trip, the following guidelines and procedures are listed to assist the principal in granting permission to teachers to take students on designated educational field trips/excursions. Various forms related to field trips can be found in the forms section of the website. Local schools are responsible for planning field trips, securing transportation, and collecting required fees. Pre-approved field trip documentation should be kept on file at the school in the front office.

1. **Pre-Approved Field Trips** -- All educational excursions listed on the Curriculum and Instruction website for grades PreK-12 are pre-approved; however, pre-approved out-of-county and overnight field trips must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer for approval *at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the excursion*. Any school system school sponsored activities are pre-approved and have blanket approval. Examples: Scholar's Bowl, local school performances, SECME, Spelling Bee, *GoDaddy* Writing Competition, Student Council, JROTC, Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) competitions, arts productions, academic/athletic competition, and state and local music competitions. Field trip sponsors must ensure that teacher permission forms are signed by all teachers seven days prior to the actual excursion.

2. **Requests for Field Trips**: *Schools must forward the proper paperwork for preapproved out-of-county excursions to the Chief Academic Officer for final approval at least four (4) weeks prior to the date of the excursion*. Any excursion not included on the preapproved list –either local or out-of-county -must be submitted to the Chief Academic Officer for approval four weeks prior to the date of the field trip.

3. **Notice to Parents/Students**: *Teachers shall not publicize/finalize arrangements without first receiving notice of approval from the principal and/or Chief Academic Officer*. Teachers are not allowed to make any announcements, to have any fundraisers, or to collect any monies until approval is given from the appropriate personnel depending on the nature of the trip.

4. **Permission Forms**: Students must have a signed parental permission form in order to participate in any off campus activity. (Verbal permission by telephone will not suffice.) For

those students who do not participate in the educational excursion, provisions shall be made for learning to continue at school.

5. **Principal/ Central Office Approval:** All information related to the educational excursion, including the permission form, is to be sent home only after the principal and/or Chief Academic Officer has approved the trip as well as the date, time and arrangements.

6. **Emergency/Health Forms:** The completed student Emergency and Health forms will be taken on each field trip. *Schools may elect to make copies of the Student Health Cards (the cards parents complete at registration) in lieu of using the Emergency and Health Information Field Trip Form.*

7. **School Documentation:** The following documents will be kept on file at the local school:

- Copies of signed permission slips (required for all field trips)
- Copies of Emergency and Health Information Form - required for all field trips
- A copy of the letter from the organization hosting the event outlining the terms and costs of the trip for each student and chaperone - required for all field trips.
- A copy of the letter or contract from the bus company transporting the students or chaperones to and from the trip destination - letter must include cost of trip and terms of agreement (if applicable).
- A copy of the letter from the vendor estimating the cost of food (if applicable).

8. **Fees / Fares:** Trips that require students to pay entrance fees, fares, or any other money should be kept to a minimum. No child will be denied the opportunity to participate in a field trip experience because of a prohibitive cost. Local schools will provide the fee for students unable to pay for in-county field trips. Costs will not be encumbered by students who can pay.

9. **Supervision:** Primary supervision for students participating in educational excursions is rendered by professional employees of the Mobile County Public School System. It is recommended that one adult accompany each group of 5 students in grades PreK-Grade 1; one adult accompany each group of 10 students in Grades 2 – 5; and one adult accompany each group of 15 in Grades 6-12 to assist in supervision. Chaperones are adults who accompany teachers and students with the understanding that the teacher holds the leadership position and is responsible for all decisions. Principals may determine that a chaperone be excluded from an educational excursion for the following reasons:

- Parents exhibiting inappropriate behavior
- Parents who are unable to stay for the duration of the excursion
- Parents who wish to include other small children and babies.

**NOTICE: No siblings may attend field trips/excursions.**

10. **Medications/Special Health Needs:** The school nurse must be informed of a field trip as soon as the trip has been approved. If special arrangements need to be made for students, there will be time to do so without panic. The nurse must check the student roster of the field trip and let the teacher know if a child has to have medication or special nursing set up while on the field trip. The Supervisor of Health and Social Services often has to send a nurse on the trip or train a teacher to give medication while on the trip.

11. **Teacher Absence:** In the event a teacher is absent on the day of an excursion that is prepaid or is a one-time performance, it is recommended that the principal make necessary adjustments to avoid cancellation.

12. **Excursion:** The actual educational excursion will include only those places identified on the request form.

13. **Transportation:** Any educational excursion must require transportation **by bus only**. The Mobile County Public School System does not have insurance for vehicles that are not system owned; therefore, **the use of private vehicles is PROHIBITED**. Activity buses have been purchased by MCPSS to transport small groups of children to special events and contests. Schools can contact the Office of Transportation for an activity bus driver. The cost per mile will be determined by the State Department of Education Pupil Transportation Division.

14. **Allowable Transportation:** All excursions or field trips should be taken in a school bus or commercial bus. At no time should 15-passenger vans be used.

15. **Code of Conduct:** Supervising teachers are expected to discuss the Code of Conduct and appropriate rules of safety prior to each educational excursion with students and parents before the trip and to adhere to the established safety procedures throughout the trip. All system and local school Code of Conduct will be enforced.

16. **Student Behavior:** Students should be made aware of the importance of behavior and the image they project on excursions from school. Special attention should be given to the dress of students and adults. Educational excursions are school functions, and as such, students are expected to adhere to uniform guidelines unless exceptions have been made by the principal.

\* 17. **Name Tags:** All students are expected to wear name tags (student name, school, and teacher).

\* 18. **Student Exclusion:** Principals may determine that a student be excluded from an educational excursion for the following reasons:


- Students refusing to complete assignments on a regular basis
- Students exhibiting inappropriate conduct on a regular basis which may create a unsafe situation
- Students with excessive absences

19. At the middle and high school levels, the principal shall not authorize **entire** grade level trips. (Example: grade 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 – Senior Trips)

20. **School Sponsored Excursions:** Any school trip that is paid for by a school check is considered a school-sponsored event and must follow the field trip guidelines. If the funds are not deposited in the school account, it is considered a non-sponsored function and the ***Notification of a Non-School Sponsored Excursion*** form must be sent to the parents. Non-school sponsored excursions may not be booked in the school's name. An approved Educational Excursion and Bus Authorization Form must be on file.


21. **Non-School Sponsored Excursions:** Trips scheduled for weekends and holidays (Christmas, spring break, summer vacations) shall not be considered as school functions and become the complete responsibility of the sponsor(s) and parents of those students participating in the activity. Senior trip is an example of a non-sponsored excursion.

22. **Recreational / Holiday Trips:** Trips for recreational or holiday celebration purposes are a parental obligation and should not be undertaken by the school.


 23. **End of School Year:** Educational excursions are not allowed during the last three weeks of school

24. **Irregularities/Accidents:** Supervising teachers must notify the principal immediately if an accident occurs during a field trip. Principals must notify the appropriate Assistant Superintendent if the accident. Supervising teachers shall report in writing to the principal any irregularities or accidents that occur during an educational excursion.

▶ **In-County Field Trips/Excursions** -- In addition to procedures 1-24, the following procedures must be followed during all field trips within Mobile County:

 25. **At least four weeks prior to the date of the excursion** to an approved in-county trip, the teacher should request approval from the principal and provide specific information related to date, time and location on the **Local Field Trip Request form**. This form should be kept on file at the local school. Arrangements for transportation and parental assistance are the responsibility of the teacher.

Permission/denial for all pre-approved **in-county trips** is the responsibility of the principal.

 26. In-county educational excursions should be planned and conducted in a manner that would allow students to be back at school for lunch. However, if the distance, length, and purpose of an educational excursion necessitate eating away from school, arrangements must be made with the school lunchroom. The teacher is required to **notify cafeteria personnel at least two weeks prior to the trip** in the event lunches are needed. No picnics will be approved as an educational field trip.

▶ **Out-of-County and Overnight Field Trips/Excursions** -- In addition to procedures 1-24, the following procedures must be followed during all field trips outside of Mobile County:

IMPORTANT NOTE: If out-of-county and overnight field trips require contracts, schools must submit requests *at least five (5) weeks prior to the date of trip.*

27. Out-of-state and out-of-country trips that are related to athletics, fine arts, foreign language, academic/CTSO competitions must have approval from the Chief Academic Officer and should follow the same time frame as #1.

While most band, choir or dance performances have a duration of 30 to 60 minutes, student groups performing these programs have prepared months in advance, spending hours perfecting every selection. This is part of the performance often overlooked. .

Band, choir, dance festivals, competitions, or festival prades are all educational from the months of preparation to the 30-40 minute execution of student performance. In accordance with the Alabama Course of Study in Arts Education, performance and evaluation of performance are significant

standards in all areas of performing arts. Festivals provide an educational performance venue for evaluation, adjudication, and feedback.

**Examples of Adjudicated venues are as follows:**

**Festival Disney** is a positive and educational festival experience and due to the festival's focus towards music education, The National Association for Music Education officially endorses Festival Disney. Each ensemble performs for 3 adjudicators, and receives written and recorded feedback, as well as a personal ensemble clinic.

**San Antonio Music Festival** is a positive, constructive adjudication with written and recorded comments from a panel of nationally acclaimed adjudicators and on-stage clinic.

Other recommended adjudicated festivals are the Smoky Mountain Music Festival, Southern Star Music Festival, High School Dance Festival, and the Honda Battle of the Bands International Showcase. Parades, festivals, and showcases provide evaluation and or adjudication.

Theatre/Vocal/Dance:

Trips to New York should be reserved for students who have been enrolled in the listed elective for a minimum of three semesters. Trips should be planned in advance to ensure students will be participating in classes approved by the Fine Arts Supervisor and Chief Academic Officer. Attendance at Broadway shows must be approved by the Fine Arts Supervisor and Chief Academic Officer due to the content of shows.

Parades and concerts that honor the military and our country are examples of acceptable field trip excursions.

28. In order to obtain approval for any out of state and out of country trips which include extended and overnight trips, the excursion must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The excursion must be for a competition appropriate for Grades 3 -12 students, such as participation in math contests, science fairs, social studies fairs, oratorical contests, spelling bees, or other academic competitions.
- The excursion must be for attendance and participation in regional or national meetings as representatives of schools to assemblies and organizations appropriate for middle/high school students, such as participation in National or National Jr. Honor Society conventions, student council conventions, yearbook workshops, cheerleading clinics or other such activities.
- The excursion must be for attendance and participation in band or choral events appropriate for middle/ high school students. Participation in such contests must be by invitation with adjudication by proven, qualified judges. The number of out-of-school days must be limited to two.

29. Schools may use the parental permission letter on overnight excursions found on the website. The details outlined in this letter are specific, giving parents and teachers specific security precautions. This letter or a similar facsimile should outline the following:

- Any medical needs of the student that should be brought to the attention of the person in charge.
- Permission to give treatment such as medicine or hospitalization.

- Directions for contacting parent or guardian in case of an emergency.
- Outline of steps to be taken in an emergency.
- A brief narrative itinerary outlining objectives, which justify the nature and importance of the trip plus all times and places of stops.

30. Extended/overnight field trips will require adult supervision at a minimum ratio of 1 adult per 10 students.

31. For out-of-county and overnight field trips, the school principal must receive the documents listed below from the classroom teacher requesting trip approval and submit them to the Chief Academic Officer *at least four weeks prior to the date of the trip:*

- Trip Itinerary (short, precise schedule of daily events)
- Content Standards (ALCOS objectives)
- Emergency Contact Numbers (cell numbers of teachers and administrators)
- Educational Excursion and Bus Authorization Form
- Any other items deemed necessary by the principal

32. A copy of the Educational Excursion and Bus Authorization Form must be sent to the Office of Communications and to the Office of Transportation for all out-of-county and overnight trips. This form serves as notification, not approval.

\*Field Trips/Excursions to movies, skating rinks, participating/riding on water crafts of any description, bowling alleys, mazes, pumpkin patches etc. are NOT approved. No field trips/excursions are authorized during the instructional day for incentives or rewards. Any such field trip/excursion must take place beyond school hours.