

LATE NIGHT & OVERNIGHT SCHOOL SPONSORED STUDENT TRAVEL

A. Trip Approval Process:

1. Advance approval by the school committee must be required for any student trip involving late night or overnight travel.

- The approval process should be completed 30 days prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
- Overnight trips should offer significant educational benefit to students that clearly justify the time and expense of the trip. Such trips should be appropriate for the grade level.
- Teachers and other school staff should be prohibited from soliciting privately run trips through the school system. The trip approval process should apply only to school sanctioned trips; school committees should not approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.
- Policies and procedures for trip approval should take into account all logistical details involving transportation, accommodations, fundraising required of students, and the educational value of the trip in relation to its costs.

B. Transportation:

- The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel is prohibited. Such trips should generally use commercial motorcoaches. An exception will be made for MIAA sanctioned activities/events.
- Trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should involve pre-trip checks of companies, drivers, and vehicles.
- School officials should ensure that the selected carrier is licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The district should not contract with any carrier that has an FMCSA safety rating of “conditional” or “unsatisfactory.” FMCSA carrier ratings are available at <http://www.safersys.org/>.
- Districts which are unable to conduct their own in-depth reviews of bus carrier qualifications may elect to use rating and pre-qualifications established by other public entities, such as the Department of Defense’s approved list of motor carriers for troop transport. (<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>)
- The contract with the carrier should prohibit the use of a subcontractor unless sufficient notice is given to the district to allow verification of the subcontractor’s qualifications.

C. Trip Scheduling:

- Overnight accommodations must be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Whenever possible, the trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m., due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.
- Whenever possible, overnight trips should be scheduled on weekends or during school vacations to minimize lost classroom time. Non-academic field trips are considered “optional school programs” and do not count toward meeting structured learning time

requirements under 603 CMR27.00. However, academic field trips may be considered structured learning time (see the Department's Student Learning Time Regulations Guide). School districts may consider travel for field trips as included in students' schedules, but the Department recommends that schools consider scheduling additional structured learning time when significant travel time is anticipated (i.e., time outside the hours of the regular school day).

- Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense.
- Trip scheduling should take into account the likelihood of delays due to weather, traffic, stragglers, and other unanticipated factors.
- If substantially all members of a class are participating in a trip, the school should provide appropriate substitute activities for any students not participating.

D. Fundraising:

- The amount of time to be devoted to fundraising should be reasonable and commensurate with students' obligations for homework, after-school activities, and jobs.
- Group fundraising activities are preferred. Students should not be assigned individual fundraising targets.
- If students are charged individual fees for participation, the district should make every effort to provide scholarships where needed.

E. Student Supervision:

- Students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones, taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI check in accordance with M.G.L. c.71 s. 38R.
- CORI checks must be conducted for bus drivers who do not regularly work for the school district.
- All participating students must submit a signed parent/guardian permission form. Such form shall include appropriate authorization for emergency medical care and administration of medication.
- Advisor must meet with building principal to review trip preparation plans and to ensure all requirements have been met.

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Agawam Public Schools 2004

Approved by School Committee on June 14, 2004 by a vote of 7 - 0