



Superintendent's Circular

NUMBER:
CAO-22
Version 01

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL FIELD TRIPS

This Circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version.

IMPORTANT NOTE: These guidelines might be impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and are subject to change based on public health, international security, or other emergent issues that could impact travel. For the most up-to-date information and guidance, contact the Department of Global Education (OPL@bostonpublicschools.org) for assistance and guidance.

This Superintendent's Circular provides instructions for implementing the field trip policy passed by the Boston School Committee on November 20, 2019.

Program leaders (chaperones) must read this circular in its entirety. Principals/heads of school (and/or the district department sponsoring the trip) are responsible for ensuring that all field trip policies and procedures outlined in this circular and all the field trip circulars are adhered to.

BPS SPONSORED FIELD TRIP: DEFINITION

A BPS sponsored trip is any trip involving BPS students and employees that: uses BPS funds in any way; takes place during regular school operating hours; is organized by BPS employee(s)

during normal employment hours, either while on BPS property or while using BPS-issued technology; and/or is related directly to the instructional program at the school. Cases where students elect to participate in a third-party travel program with the consent of their family, whereby they will travel alone, and not with a school group, are not considered BPS sponsored field trips, even if students receive funding support from their school or district.

TYPES OF FIELD TRIPS

BPS has divided field trips into three types:

- Day field trip
- Overnight field trip
- International field trip

This division ensures that permission forms and procedures are directly relevant to the type of trip and activities students will engage in.

Refer to the circular appropriate for your type of trip for further details:

- Day field trips — Superintendent Circular CAO-23
- Overnight field trips — Superintendent Circular CAO-24
- International field trips — Superintendent Circular CAO-25
- Water activities — Superintendent Circular CAO-27

PURPOSE OF FIELD TRIPS

All BPS sponsored field trips must serve the purpose of providing either instruction or enrichment. Instructional trips support the instructional program and should be directly linked to the curriculum and standards of that grade level or subject area.

Enrichment trips contribute to students' academic, cultural, or social development, and aim to deepen their engagement with school and learning. Sites for field trips should be carefully selected to enrich student learning and exposure to the community, new people, places, and activities. Discuss with students and families the trip's purpose, learning goals, and behavior expectations in advance, and engage students in activities before, during, and after the trip. It is important to note the serious obligations that BPS staff members undertake to ensure that all field trips are not only educationally sound, but also manage risk.

FIELD TRIP CATEGORIES

A trip often meets more than one category.

- **Instructional field trip:** Enhances a specific curriculum unit or serves a broader educational purpose.
- **Cultural field trip:** Engages students in cultural awareness or understanding experiences to learn more about their own cultural identity, or that of others.
- **Community building field trip:** May reinforce relationships in an existing group of students, prepare students for a significant transition into a new structure or community, help students work collaboratively, or assist in the development of leadership and decision-making skills.
- **Service learning field trip:** Students learn the value of helping others in their own community and beyond, while simultaneously learning from the host community. These trips show students how empowering service to others is while developing students' leadership skills.

- **Personal growth and development:** Students are exposed to new group or individual activities whereby they learn new skills and new ideas, develop identity, build self-esteem, grow strengths, and build camaraderie.

FIELD TRIP TYPES AND TIMELINES FOR APPROVAL

It is necessary that the proper procedures are followed, and that copies of all checklists, permission and medical forms are kept on file in the school office and, when appropriate, filed with the district. If the deadlines and details below are not met, a field trip application may be rejected. Please note that trip planning timelines (i.e., “twelve weeks (or more) prior to the field trip”, etc.) in each circular chronicle *the minimal amount of time* for planning. *More time for pre-trip planning is strongly recommended for all types of field trips.*

- **Day Field Trip (CAO-23):** Any domestic trip off school grounds that is no more than one day in duration.
 - Day Field Trip forms are submitted to the principal/head of school at least 4 weeks in advance (or at the principal/head of school's discretion) and approved by the principals/heads of school.
 - Walking field trips are day field trips that require walking within a one-mile radius of the school (i.e., local garden, park, field, etc.). The Parent/Guardian Authorization and Acknowledgement of Risks for Walking Trips form will apply for all walking field trips during the current school year and will need to be updated each school year, or as student/family information changes. The school is still required to inform families in advance of each walking field trip

and obtain principal/head of school approval.

- o All forms, including the signed CAO-23 checklist form, are filed at the school.
- o The principal/head of school or designee is the emergency contact for day field trips.
- **Overnight Field Trip (CAO-24):** Any domestic trip off school grounds that involves students' participation overnight. Travel to U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands are considered domestic, but are covered under international travel insurance. Travel to these territories is subject to some forms, requirements, and protocols in the CAO-25 International Field Trip guidelines. Consult with the Department of Global Education for required forms for these destinations.
 - o Overnight Field Trip forms are submitted to the principal/head of school *at least* 12 weeks in advance and approved by the principals/head of school.
 - o All forms, including the signed CAO-24 checklist form, are filed at the school.
 - o Overnight Field Trip Request forms, the list of student names, emergency contact name and number, grade, D.O.B, the list of chaperone names and their role in the school community, the itinerary, and if applicable, train and flight information are sent to the district to notify the district of trip plans *at least* 6 weeks in advance. Scan and email the Overnight Field Trip Request form and information to the appropriate operational leader as well as to the

Department of Global Education and follow up with both to confirm receipt.

- o The principal/head of school or designee is the emergency contact for overnight field trips.
- **International Field Trip (CAO-25):** Any trip off school grounds that involves travel to a location outside of the United States.
 - o International field trips should be planned *at least a year* in advance, to maximize affordability and fundraising efforts, and when possible, scheduled during non-school time (i.e., school vacations and summer).
 - o As soon as a trip opportunity becomes known, or there is interest in an international travel program, teachers must inform their principal/head of school and contact the Department of Global Education for support and guidance with the CAO-25 application, and planning process. *No arrangements, payments, or deposits should be made without consultation with the Department of Global Education and formal application approval from the superintendent.*
 - o After consulting with the Department of Global Education and head of school, CAO-25 applications shall be submitted no less than 9-12 months before departure. The application requires approval by the Department of Global Education, which will then seek approval from the appropriate district leaders before obtaining final approval from the superintendent. Again, no arrangements should be

made or payments or deposits placed without consultation with the Department of Global Education and formal application approval from the superintendent.

- o The principal/head of school or appointee and the director of Global Education or district designee are the emergency contacts for international travel programs.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL TYPES OF FIELD TRIPS

- Principals/head of school or the district department sponsoring the trip have the primary responsibility to ensure that all procedures pertaining to field trips are followed by their school and establish clear and transparent internal protocols for field trip requests and approvals at the school level.
- All field trip ideas must be preliminarily approved in writing by the principal/head of school or district department sponsoring the trip prior to the distribution of any informational materials on the proposed trip to students and their parents/guardians, and prior to fundraising efforts or other detailed preparations. Staff are not allowed to sign contracts on behalf of the Boston Public Schools.
- The program leader (the BPS employee and chaperone organizing and leading the trip) and supporting chaperones must be approved by the principal/head of school, or district department sponsoring the trip.
- The principal/head of school and program leader must review and complete the appropriate type of field trip circular and checklist throughout the planning process.

- Program leaders must consult with the principal/head of school on potential chaperones and student recruitment. Every effort should be made for students to have access to the field experience, and for chaperones to be representative of the student group and include males and females. The selection and approval of chaperones by the principal/head of school should be based on the individuals' thorough knowledge of, and rapport with most of the student participants. Choose a chaperone team purposefully and wisely, considering strengths. Every adult on the trip must be a chaperone and have a clear role.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

- Students not enrolled in the Boston Public Schools may not participate.
- **Essential participation criteria:** The program leader and principal/head of school shall work together to establish essential participation criteria for the trip. The criteria should inform students and parents of all activities and risks associated with each itinerary activity and trip location to determine what accommodations or modifications may be needed for the student to participate successfully and safely in all or portions of the trip.
- **Student recruitment:** Field trips must be advertised to all students (within the whole school, particular grade, class/subject, club, or program associated with the trip), regardless of their financial situation. Schools shall make every reasonable effort to make instructional field trips affordable for all students. A student's ability to pay may not be a criterion for field trip participation. If students are charged individual fees for participation in a domestic

instructional field trip that is directly linked to the curriculum and standards, the school or district should make every effort to provide scholarships where need is expressed.

- **Student accessibility:** Students with English Learner status, 504 plans, and/or IEPs cannot be denied access to field trips due to their status or ability. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that all accommodations normally provided to a student as indicated in their educational plans are made available during a field trip, including medication. See Superintendent's Circular SHS-08 for information about medical dispensation on field trips.
- **School nurse and guidance counselor consultation:** Before approval of a field trip, the lead chaperone must consult with the school leader to determine if and what type of medical assistance is needed for participating students. To ensure accessibility, this step is crucial, and must take place before the field trip is secured. For additional questions, please consult the Health Services Department. Additionally, to thoroughly support a student's participation in a field trip, *at least* six weeks before departure (much longer for international and overnight field trip programs), consult with, and when necessary, receive training from the school nurse regarding any students who have medical needs. Also consult with the school counselor regarding mental and behavioral health needs. If any student has a serious medical or mental health condition, be sure that their doctor is aware of the essential participation criteria and location of the trip and writes a letter indicating that the child may safely attend and participate in trip activities. Keep this document on file with other key permissions slips

and medical forms.

- **Inclusivity:** Program leaders must consider their student demographics when selecting field trip locations, sites, and activities. Specifically determine the impact the locations, sites, and activities may have on diverse populations such as students of color, EL students, students who identify with the LGBTQIA+ community, students with disabilities, those who may be in the minority during your field trip experience, and those students who belong to groups that have experienced marginalization in the location being visited. Program leaders must work to prepare students for sensitive experiences and ensure that the program is safe and inclusive for all students. Consult the Department of Global Education for resources if needed.
- **Inclusive accommodations:** In collaboration with the student and their family, the program leader and principal/head of school shall work with transgender and gender-nonconforming students to provide accommodations (including rooming) that affirm the student's gender identity while also ensuring safety for the student and group. Program leaders should work with students and families to make sure all travel documents (airline ticket, passport, etc.) reflect their legal names as listed on government issued identification, while all unofficial documents and materials may reflect the student's preferred name. Please view [additional rooming guidelines](#) from the Office of Equity.
- **Student conduct:** The BPS Code of Conduct applies on all field trips. BPS students and parents are required to sign a BPS Student Traveler & Family Agreement form regarding

student conduct while participating in a BPS sponsored field trip. Participation in field trips may be denied to any student who has demonstrated disregard for the policies and rules of BPS or the school, immediately prior to or while on the field trip. Parents/guardians and students must be made aware of this policy in advance and communicated with throughout any processes involving their child not participating in a field trip. Following an investigation, if the program leader, in consult with the principal/head of school and central office staff, determines that a student's conduct while on an overnight trip poses a risk to themselves or the safety of the group, or is no longer manageable by BPS staff in the field, the district reserves the right to request and arrange for that student to return home.

The district also reserves the right to request that families assume responsibility for all, or a portion of the costs associated with their child's return. Students may be subject to further disciplinary action and will be provided the opportunity to have a formal hearing at the school level upon return. The school must document the parent/guardian's consent of this policy prior to the trip.

- **Student dismissal from field program:** If a student is to be dismissed from an overnight field trip, the student's parent/guardian must be notified in advance and should agree to meet the student at the airport or other agreed upon transportation destination. If the parent/guardian is not reachable, the student's principal or appropriate school-based point of contact must be notified and agree to meet the student at the airport or other agreed upon destination. Students under the age of 16 must be accompanied on their flight by a chaperone. Students over the age of 16 may fly

unaccompanied, though a chaperone must accompany the student to the airport to ensure the student checks in for their flight. **NOTE:** Age requirements are subject to specific airline/train/bus guidelines.

- **Provisions for students not attending the trip:** If applicable, alternative arrangements and/or comparable activities for students not attending the trip, or unable to participate in a portion of your trip, must be provided. If a student's family elects for their child not to attend a field trip for any reason, the student may not be penalized through their grade or otherwise.
- **Attendance:** Attendance forms should indicate when a student is physically absent from the school building on a field trip but participating in a school-sponsored program being conducted off school grounds. (**Note:** It is important to know and document where students are at all times.)

CHAPERONE REQUIREMENTS

- **Chaperone Recruitment:** Program leaders must consult with the principal/head of school on potential chaperones and student recruitment. The program leader (lead chaperone) must be a BPS employee. Other authorized chaperones may include parents and guardians who are 21 years of age or older. Any parent on the trip must operate in the role of chaperone. All chaperones must be approved by the head of school/principal. Every effort should be made for students to have access to the field trip experience, for chaperones to be representative of the student group, and for chaperones to include males and females. The selection and approval of chaperones by the principal/head of school should be based on the individuals' thorough knowledge of

and rapport with most of the student participants. Choose a chaperone team purposefully and wisely, considering strengths. Every adult on the trip must be a chaperone and have a clear role.

- **Non-BPS Chaperones:** Other authorized chaperones may include parents and volunteers who must be 21 years of age or older. All non-BPS employee chaperones must submit a yearly CORI/SORI authorization form to the Office of Human Capital. Complete the [online eCORI form](#). Contact the BPS Office of Human Capital (OHC) for CORI check and confirmation support. The principal/head of school and the lead chaperone are responsible for submitting authorization forms to OHC and must not allow chaperones to take part in activities until they have been CORI/SORI cleared. Non-BPS employees who chaperone on a field trip are not covered for liability by the Boston Public Schools. The program leader must be sure that all chaperones, including non-BPS chaperones, are familiar with the BPS Code of Conduct and other district and school-based rules. Non-BPS employee chaperones (parents/guardians) are required to show proof of COVID vaccination, or a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of the field trip.
- **BPS Parent Chaperones:** Chaperones who are parents/guardians of BPS students on the trip must provide the same level of care and attention to ALL student participants. If a BPS chaperone's child who does not attend the participating school must attend the program, the child must be a BPS student and in the same grade or age range as participating students. In this case, the BPS parent chaperone is responsible for incurring all costs associated with their child's participation.

All chaperones must complete the Chaperone Agreement form.

- **Chaperone Ratios:** The student-to-chaperone maximum ratios must be:
 - Day field trips: minimum of two chaperones
 - Grades K-5, 10:1
 - Grades 6 and up, 10:1
 - Domestic Overnight field trips: 10:1 (minimum of two chaperones)
 - International field trips: 7:1 (minimum of two chaperones) * Includes Puerto Rico

NOTE: There should not be more chaperones than students, unless mandated by an educational plan or other circumstances approved by the principal/head of school and Department of Global Education. For students with disabilities, the ratio of staff to students must be at least the same as the ratio mandated in their IEPs for their classes.

- NEW: Tour guides and employees of third-party vendors contracted to help operate the trip are not considered *chaperones* and do not factor into the student to chaperone ratio.

PERMISSION FORMS

- The student may not attend the field trip without a signed permission slip. Permission for field trips must be in written form only. Program leaders are responsible for seeing that permission slips are filled out completely and signed by the legal parent(s)/guardian(s).

- Permission slips are legal documents and may not be altered. Permission slips must be used for any excursion that is school sponsored, including those scheduled after school and on weekends.
- No staff member may solicit students for any privately arranged field trip or excursion without the permission of the principal/head of school.
- “Blanket” authorization (i.e., parental/guardian approval using a single form for multiple trips to be taken during the school year) should never be allowed (except for the Walking Trips and Water Activities form if they are in the same location). A separate parent/guardian permission slip must be obtained and filed for each field trip.
- Parental/guardian permission slips must be sent home in English and in the language of the home.
- Only parents/guardians are authorized to sign permission forms. For questions regarding legal guardianship, refer to the SIS site or the local Welcome Center.
- Check that students and their parents/guardians have signed the BPS Media Appearances release section of the Parent/Student Agreement document so that the trip may be showcased upon your return. (This document can be found in the *Guide to the Boston Public Schools for Families and Students*.)
- Review each student's Emergency Information Card (Form 460 or electronic equivalent) to ensure/cross-check accuracy of all field trip permissions and forms.
- Program leaders must be specific when completing the

school portion of the Parental Authorization for Field Trip form. Parents/guardians must be given sufficient information to understand the nature and scope of the activities on the itinerary. Additional customized waivers may be developed for specific trips/itineraries.

RECORD KEEPING FOR ALL TYPES OF TRIPS

- Retain completed field trip request forms, original permission slips, medical forms, fire prevention and safety forms (if applicable), and all other signed documents for field trips in the school office. Legally, these records must be kept for the current fiscal year plus three additional years after all field trips have occurred.

TRANSPORTATION FOR FIELD TRIPS

- School buses or BPS approved transportation vendors' vehicles (per BPS Transportation Department) MUST be used to transport students to and from field trips or athletic events regardless of how the trip is paid for. Privately owned vehicles, vehicles from non-approved vendors are not permitted.

Ride sharing transportation services, such as Uber and Lyft, or leased vans are not to be utilized to transport students to and from field trips or athletic events, except in the case of a *bona fide* emergency.

- Students are prohibited from driving vehicles, operating, or being a passenger on any motorbike during a field trip.
- Staff are not permitted to transport students. Staff who utilize their own vehicles, or leased vehicles, risk being legally liable if students are injured while riding in their automobiles.
- Please refer to Superintendent's Circular TRN-03 for information and regulations regarding field trip transportation.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

As part of trip planning and itinerary development, ensuring the major aspects of health, safety, and security have been addressed with appropriate due diligence. Program leaders should be able to articulate in an informed manner what decisions were made, why they were made, and the sources that informed their decision making. If you are unsure as to whether an activity is appropriate in terms of safety or educational content for a school-sponsored trip, please consult with your principal/head of

school and the Department of Global Education.

- Review [Superintendent's Circular FSE-05, Medical Emergency Management](#), and [SAF-04 Incident Data-Reporting and Release](#) for important safety protocols.
- Do not leave students alone. Students should be accompanied by chaperones unless part of a scheduled activity in which parents have been informed of and approved in writing in advance, and age appropriate. However, if unaccompanied as part of a scheduled and structured activity, students should at least be in groups of three, AND always know how to reach an adult chaperone.
- **Day and water field trips:** The Department of Safety Services (617-635-8000) must be notified in the event of a serious medical or other emergency and should be used as a resource for questions regarding safety on day field trips, including water activity day trips.
- **Domestic overnight trips:** The principal/head of school is the emergency contact and must be notified in the event of a serious medical or other emergency. Prior to departure, the Department of Global Education should be used as a resource for questions regarding safety on trips, and for support with insurance and claims. Prior to departure, program leaders will receive emergency contact information.
- **International trips:** The principal/head of school or designee, followed by the Department of Global Education or district appointee, are the emergency contacts for international trips. DGE must be notified in the event of a serious medical or other emergency and should be used as a resource for

questions regarding safety on trips. Prior to departure, program leaders will receive emergency contact information.

- **Emergency Action Plan:** At all times during the trip, all chaperones must carry with them a copy of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that outlines procedures for calling 911 in the US or the foreign equivalent while abroad, as well as emergency protocols. The EAP can be found in the day, overnight, and international circulars.
- **Personal Health:** For overnight and international trips, students and staff must have had a recent doctor's visit, physical exam, and any required vaccinations prior to departure. See CAO-24 and CAO-25 for details on healthy travel requirements.
- **Training:** The district reserves the right to require additional training and/or certifications such as CPR/AED, first aid, and program (chaperone) leader risk management training depending on the type, location, and purpose of the trip. Review the specific circular for your trip type for certification requirements.
- **Phone/Social Media Usage:** Set expectations with students regarding phone and social media usage during any field trip. This is especially critical during an emergency.
- **Insurance:** The district provides medical insurance coverage for BPS-sponsored international and domestic trips for BPS students and BPS staff participants. [Domestic is defined as 100 driven miles away from home or place of study or employment.] Trip cancellation and interruption coverage are not provided by the district. Program leaders must

inform families (and funders) of this fact, and that they have the option to voluntarily purchase these additional coverages on their own. For Level 2 CDC or State Department Warning international destinations, trip cancellation and interruption coverages are strongly recommended.

- **Cancellation:** The superintendent reserves the right to cancel any field trip up to and including the day of departure to manage risk. Upon advance review of itineraries, BPS reserves the right to deny schools permission to participate in the field trip activities on their itinerary where the risks of the activity outweigh the intended learning outcomes of the program.
- **Post Field Trip:** After the trip, follow up and communicate with the student and parent/guardian, as well as the principal/head of school, Department of Safety Services, or the Department of Global Education if there are any student safety concerns (health or otherwise) during the trip that require further attention.

HOMESTAYS IN BOSTON, NATIONALLY, AND ABROAD

- For host family stays (both incoming and outgoing), review CAO-26 Guidelines for Homestays & International Student Visitors for more information. Please contact the Department of Global Education immediately for guidelines. All BPS families (anyone in households 18 or over) who host national or international guests must be CORI cleared by the BPS Office of Human Capital.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISITORS (CAO-26)

- International/ students can register with BPS if they will be a

full-time student at a BPS school, except the exam schools, for one year. Students must be in their freshman, sophomore, or junior year. Please be advised that BPS does not get involved with the J1 visa process. Review CAO-26 Guidelines for Homestays & International Student Visitors for more information. Please contact the Department of Global Education immediately for guidelines.

- For visiting students, note immunization requirements for those visiting us from abroad. Work with the program leader (lead chaperone) from visiting schools to ensure all health regulations are met. See attached letter for directives from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/immunization/immunization-requirements-exchange-and-visiting-students.pdf>

WATER ACTIVITIES (CAO-27)

- If your trip involves activities in, or on the water, you must contact the Department of Global Education immediately to submit a mandatory Water Activity Request form and to ensure that the site location for the water activity has up-to-date insurance, liability, and certification documentation on file with the district. Refer to CAO-27 for specific guidelines for water activities.

For more information, questions, and support about this circular, please contact:

Owner:	Chief of Teaching and Learning
Title:	Director of Global Education
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Phone:	315-601-0292

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Mary Skipper, Superintendent