MODEL POLICY #26

PLANNING PARENTAL NOTIFICATION FOR SCHOOL TRIPS

Why Adopt This Policy?

School boards should consider adopting a policy outlining procedures for planning field trips and off-campus activities, including requirements for adequate communication with parents. This policy ensures that parents receive timely and comprehensive information about field trips, including safety measures, trip details, and expectations. Specifically, for overnight trips, parents should be informed about sleeping arrangements and how accommodations will be organized based on biological sex.

Policy

Field trips and other off-campus activities, including extended trips, have the potential to further student learning, offer new experiences, and connect students to their communities. This policy is established to ensure clear and comprehensive communication between the school district and parents regarding school trips. The policy aims to provide parents with relevant information about the trip, safety measures, and expectations, fostering trust and transparency in the educational experiences offered by the school.

Definitions:

1. **Field trips** are trips are part of the school curriculum and support the educational program and extend classroom knowledge through firsthand observation and experiences.
2. **Off-campus activities** include optional, school approved student trips (such as an optional trip for music students to view a musical production) and extra-curricular activities (such as through school services clubs and sports competitions).
3. **Extended trips** are those which extend overnight.

Planning and Parental Notice Requirements:

1. **Field trips, off-campus activities and extended trips shall be planned and scheduled to provide students with educational experiences which are related to the instructional goals of classroom programming.**
2. **Field trips, off-campus activities, and extended trips must be pre-approved by the building principal. To obtain approval, a staff member involved in the field trip, off-campus activity or extended trip must submit an application for approval which shall include:**

a. Information about the classes of students attending, number of students expected to attend, and names of district employees planning to attend as supervisors (including information about employees certified in CPR and first aid and any other verification as may be required by state law, i.e. for the administration of medication);

b. The name and address where the trip will be held;

c. A description of the instructional purpose of the trip;

d. A complete, detailed itinerary for the trip;

e. A budget for the trip and whether any fundraising is required;

f. Proposed eating arrangements;

g. If the district will provide transportation, the method of transportation to be used and details of the transportation plan, established in accordance with state law and school policy; and

h. If the trip involves an overnight stay, provide details for sleeping accommodations for the students and supervisors (including chaperones), such that room assignments are based on biological sex.

- For all extended trips, parents shall be notified at least two weeks in advance if an exception is being made to the requirement that sleeping arrangements be arranged by biological sex. See details below.

3. Upon request for approval for a school trip, the building principal shall:

a. Review the request and ensure that all required information has been provided;

b. Determine the appropriateness of activities for the students' age(s) and skill(s);

c. Ensure school district insurance coverage extends to the field trip location and activities; and

d. Sign or authorize district personnel to sign any applicable contracts or agreements.

4. Parental notice of all field trips, off-campus activities, and extended trips shall be provided at least two weeks in advance and shall include:

a. The name and address where the trip will be held;

b. The description of the instructional purpose of the trip;

c. A complete, detailed itinerary for the trip;

d. Potential hazards or safety risks involved with the trip;

e. Cost associated with the trip;

f. Name(s) and contact information for the district employee(s) who will be supervising the trip;

g. Information about qualifications and responsibilities for parents interested in attending as chaperones or accompanying district staff members; and

h. The method of transportation to be used and details of the transportation plan, established in accordance with state law and school policy. Parents must be informed if the district will not be providing transportation (i.e. for optional off-campus activities).

i. For all extended trips, parents shall be notified at least two weeks in advance if an exception is being made to the requirement that sleeping arrangements be arranged by biological sex.

- Parents shall be notified if sleeping arrangements will include a district employee or other supervisor of one biological sex supervising students of the opposite biological sex.

- Parents shall be notified if sleeping arrangements will include a student of one biological sex sleeping in the same room as students of the opposite biological sex.

5. **No child shall be allowed to participate in any field trip, off-campus activity or extended trip without prior written permission from a parent.**
6. **Prior to any field trip, off-campus activity or extended trip, parents may submit questions orally or in writing. Upon determination by the building principal, school board, or superintendent, the field trip organizer shall hold an informational meeting for parents.**
7. **If a field trip, off-campus activity or extended trip will contain programming or content involving a controversial issue, including anything that is the subject of intense public argument, disagreement or disapproval, then the programming and content must:**
   a. Be set forth in the application submitted to the principal and disclosed in the notice to parents;
   b. Be related to the instructional goals of course programming;
   c. Be age-appropriate;
   d. Not indoctrinate or persuade students to a particular point of view;
   e. Encourage analytical thinking and open-mindedness; and f. Not create a hostile educational environment. See legal analysis.

If a student does not participate in a field trip, it will not affect their grade or student evaluation.

For purposes of this policy, the term "parent" includes a legal guardian or other person who is legally responsible for the welfare of the child (such as grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives).

Rights under this policy transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or emancipated under state law.

Legal Analysis — National

Federal law establishes a baseline for pupil rights. 20 U.S.C. § 1232h. This policy expands on those rights and empowers parents to continue to direct the upbringing of their children, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution recognizes the "inherent right" of parents to "direct the upbringing and education of children under their control." *See Pierce v. Society of Sisters*, 268 U.S. 510, 534–35 (1925). *See also* 20 U.S.C. § 1232g (Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act); 20 U.S.C. § 1232h (Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment).

In allowing the discussion of controversial issues during school trips, school administrators should keep in mind that in *Bryant v. Indep. Sch. Dist. No. I-38 of Garvin Cnty., OK*, 334 F.3d 928 (10th Cir. 2003) the court held that deliberate indifference by school administrators to known incidents of racial harassment can constitute intentional discrimination under Title VI and thereby grounds for a private suit. Thus, it is important to ensure that instruction complies with the five requirements herein.

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