

## 2340 FIELD TRIPS

### SCHOOL-SPONSORED FIELD TRIPS

#### A. BACKGROUND

The Hopewell Valley Regional School District recognizes that it is desirable and valuable, on occasion, to supplement and extend classroom activities with voluntary and optional domestic and international academic and extracurricular field trips to broaden perspectives and educational experiences of students. Field trips and team bonding days are an integral part of a student's learning process. Well-planned field trips, if curriculum related, can serve as an effective means by which to reinforce class content, providing students with a meaningful experience.

In sum, field trips should be:

- Connected to content curriculum
- Integrated across team or grade curriculum
- Requested a marking period in advance in order to provide enough time for administrative review, school and parent/community notification, and transportation arrangements
- Clearly articulated to parents

The HVRSD Board of Education further recognizes that these activities may come at a financial cost to parents and/or school district. As a result, the benefits of these activities versus the economic cost should be weighed. Every effort should be made to limit the costs incurred by parents both annually and during a child's time in a particular school or level. Additionally, participation in a class or on a grade-level activity should not be contingent on the student's participation in a field trip (i.e. the student is prohibited from taking a class if he/she is unable to go on a trip tied to the class).

Field trips do not include athletic events and regularly scheduled student trips to participate in structured life experiences, senior option, and /or work experience, etc.

#### B. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy:

1. Academic field trips include all off-campus trips that are organized as part of the class curriculum. There must be pre-and post- trip instructional activities and/or assessment. Participation for all members of the class is expected but not required.



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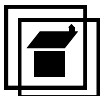
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Provisions for comparable instructional experiences during the school day must be made for student not on the academic field trip.

2. Extracurricular field trips are those off-campus trips that are organized by a school sponsored club, group, or athletic team. Participation is optional and voluntary. The HVRSD Board of Education is mindful, however, of the financial burden such travel may place on some families and the potential for disparate educational opportunities for students. Away games or matches that are part of the athletic program are considered extra-curricular field trips under this definition.
  
3. When an academic field trip or an extra-curricular field trip is planned to occur between midnight and 6 a.m. or to require a student to stay overnight away from home, the procedures for planning and approving overnight trips apply. It is understood that overnight trips may include travel within New Jersey, in other states, and internationally.

### C. GENERAL GUIDELINES

Well planned field trips are valuable educational experience; however, they can have a significant impact on everyone involved in the individual student's schedule. Academic teams, world language programs, elective and cycle classes are all affected by student absences due to field trips. Care should be used when planning and scheduling field trips. A number of factors should be weighed including curricular and/or social benefits, time out of school, time of year and cost.



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### Elementary Level (K-5)

On the elementary level, field trips are a useful tool to extend a student's education beyond the school walls and provide practical, real-world experiences to our students. All field trips should be tied to curriculum and have a pre and post trip component. The following guidelines shall be observed for students in grades kindergarten through five:

- Each grade level will have the opportunity to develop and take two field trips per year.
- Special area trips will be limited to one trip each year per grade level.
- A culminating activity in 5<sup>th</sup> grade is in addition to the guidelines above.

Requests to exceed the limits outlined above must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

### Middle School Level (6-8)

Field trips and team bonding days are consistent with middle school philosophy in that they provide opportunity for students to build meaningful relationships with each other and with significant adults. To this end, team bonding days, otherwise known as "team days," should be structured to focus on our school's character themes, a community service project or interactive "getting to know you" activities. Feature length films are not to be shown as a part of a team day because the passive nature of film viewing does not honor the principles associated with the days. The exact number of team bonding days that teams take per year is open to the discretion of team teachers or team leaders, but it is recommended that students experience no more than four (4) in one academic year. This does not include a culminating experience or activity at the conclusion of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Therefore, the following is recommended:

- Each academic team will have the opportunity to develop and take up to two field trips per year.
- Whenever possible, core team field trips will be scheduled by grade level on the same day.
- Each World Language program will have no more than one field trip each year.
- Elective programs (Performing Arts, etc.) will have no more than one field trip per year.
- Due to the nature of exploratory and elective classes, it is suggested that field trips not be a part of these classes.



Requests to exceed the limits outlined above must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

### High School Level (9-12)

While field trips are an important and worthwhile extension of the classroom, it is important to acknowledge that the vast majority of our students on the high school level participate in extra and co-curricular activities that also require time out of class. In addition, the economic burden on families is significant due to the fact that many trips on the high school level are general more costly than on any other level and may involve overnight travel.

- Each subject area department will have the opportunity to develop and take two field trips per year.

### Music and Academic Tours and Competitions

Music and Academic tours and competitions provide unique opportunities for students to compete and perform before a wide array of audiences and judges. When these performances occur outside of New Jersey or the United States, students benefit from learning about topics unique to the geographical and political areas where they are touring or competing and also benefit from rich cross cultural experiences. In addition, tours and competitions assist in developing cultural awareness, appreciation and interdisciplinary curricular connections. Finally, touring and competitions provide opportunity for building “esprit de corps” while simultaneously placing our students in the role of ambassadors of their respective school and our community. These opportunities provide experiences unique to public school students and are part of the richness of the music program in Hopewell Valley.

### Other Considerations

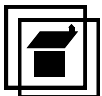
1. Some programs (i.e. robotics and marching bands) have a tradition of entering competitions that can require overnight approval, although covered under this policy, specific guidelines may be covered under the guidelines developed for co and extra-curricular activities.
2. Of primary concern in proposing these recommendations is to honor a long tradition of providing students with meaningful experiences without compromising their academic program or ability to participate because of escalating costs.
3. Tours and competitions are approved and appreciated because of the educational value they provide to students. As such, they must not be viewed as opportunities to attract students to enroll in one of the music programs.



## D. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL

Domestic and International only field trips meeting the following conditions are permitted. The sponsoring faculty member shall ensure that

1. Trips are appropriate for the age group involved in the activity.
2. Trips are reasonable in terms of time, distance and cost.
3. Trips are not scheduled during the first or last full week (plus any partial week) of school of the school year. In general, extracurricular international/domestic field trips should occur during non-school time.
4. Trips are not scheduled during the CHS examination periods for students taking the CHS exams. If unique and special circumstances present an academic opportunity, the principal and superintendent will consider and evaluate each request with care.
5. Trips are planned with careful consideration of student safety which includes, without limitation, an appropriate number of adult chaperones as specified in this regulation and all chaperones have approved Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks on file with the Superintendent.
6. While there must be adequate supervision, the Principal must also minimize the number of teachers missing classes due to chaperoning.
7. Provisions for medical emergencies, including attending medical personnel, if necessary.
8. When school bus transportation is required, the school district's regular transportation contractor is to be utilized, if available. If the school district's regular transportation carrier is not available, only contractors licensed for passenger transportation may be used. Coach type buses may only be used for distances great than 50 miles and with Superintendent approval.
9. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced above in paragraph (6) of this section.



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10. No student is denied the opportunity to participate in an academic field trip because of the inability to pay.
11. Costs associated with an optional/voluntary extracurricular field trip will be the responsibility of the individual student/family. Where appropriate, there may be fund raising to help defray costs. All fundraising must be done in compliance and accordance with HVRSD and individual school policies.
12. Should an emergency situation occur, the sponsoring faculty member is responsible for notifying the Principal by telephone as soon as possible.
13. Helmets are required for bicycle and ski/snowboard trips.
14. Trip cancellation insurance must be made available for all multiple day out-of-state trips and international travel.

### D. AUTHORITY TO APPROVE/DISAPPROVE

#### Domestic and International

1. All school-sponsored day and overnight field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only), the approval of the principal, the superintendent and Board of Education.
2. The HVRSD Board of Education is responsible for approving out-of-state and/or overnight academic and extracurricular field trips. However, in the event that approval is required for an academic or athletic contest, competition or tournament before a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, said approval authority is delegated to the Superintendent of Schools.
3. Where practical, the HVRSD Board of Education requires that final approval be sought no less than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled trip dates.
4. The approval process shall be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
5. The School Committee reserves the right (a) to cancel trips up to departure and (b) to recall trips in progress, if they believe there are national and/or



international conditions that pose potential danger to students or any other reason deemed appropriate by the School Committee.

6. The Superintendent will alert the Board of Education to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/situations which might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

## E. APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

Domestic and International Approval for all trips must be received prior to making any financial contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in this policy. The initial documentation to request a field trip must include:

1. Proposed dates and itinerary.
2. Description of the process that will be used to determine student eligibility.
4. Estimated number of students expected and percentage of eligible students participating.
4. Cost per student (if applicable).
5. Mode of transportation and schedule.
6. Ratio of chaperones/teachers to students (Recommended ratio – HS 1:10; MS 1:10 min.; Elementary 1:10 min.; International 1:6)
7. Description of arrangements for meals and lodging (if applicable). Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.
8. Description of security features for transportation and accommodations.
9. Means of financing.
10. Draft copy of any contract and refund policies associated with the trip.



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11. Draft copy of the letters to be sent to parents and guardians referencing the specifics of the trip including all of the above and any rules specific to the trip which are in addition to the HVRSD student conduct policies, student handbook rules or regulations, and the NJ State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) rules and regulations. For international field trips, the sponsoring faculty member will provide parents a copy of the State Department travel advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.
12. In the case of academic field trips, there must be a description of the educational alternative and mapping of that alternative for students not attending the trip, if applicable.
13. Satisfactory Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check of all chaperones is required and must be on file in the Superintendent's Office.
14. International trips must include a printout of the State Department Travel Advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.
15. Additional information may be requested from the appropriate authority prior to making a decision.

### F. FUNDRAISING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

1. Fundraising events and activities may be planned to offset the costs for academic and extracurricular field trips. Any such fundraising shall take place in accordance with the HVRSD and individual school policies on fundraising.
2. Where an individual fee is charge for an academic field trip which is part of the approved curriculum, the principal may provide a partial or full scholarship to a student if, due to financial hardship, such scholarship is necessary to allow a student's participation. However, no student is guaranteed a partial or full scholarship for the purpose of attending an optional and/or voluntary extracurricular field trip.

### G. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS AND FIELD TRIPS

Domestic and International



1. All Hopewell Valley Regional School District Policies on Student Behavior, Student Handbook rules and regulations, NJ State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) rules and regulations, and trip rules as regarding student conduct will apply and be in effect at all times for academic and extracurricular field trips.
2. If a student violates any Hopewell Valley Regional School District student conduct policies, student handbook rules or regulations, NJ State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) rules and regulations, trip rules, or otherwise misbehaves while on a field trip, the student will be immediately suspended from the field trip and sent back to school or home, as appropriate, by the faculty sponsor at the parent's/guardian's expense. In addition to being sent home, the individual will be subject to the consequences for the action/infracton upon his/her return to school as defined by the aforementioned student conduct policies, student handbook rules and regulations, and NJ State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) rules and regulations.

## H. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS on FIELD TRIPS

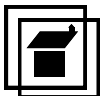
### Domestic and International

In accordance with the HVRSD Policy on Administration of Medications (P 5330), the administration of medications while on a day field trip is discouraged if medically feasible. However, in the event that it is medically necessary for a student to be administered medication while on a field trip the procedures promulgated in the Policy on Administration of Medications will apply. Parents/legal guardians will receive a copy of the HVRSD Policy R 5330 – Administration of Medications in advance of the field trip as part of the trip materials. Student (if appropriate) and parents/guardians must sign an Emergency Treatment and Medications Consent.

## I. TRANSPORTATION, LODGING, AND SCHEDULING

### Domestic and International

1. The use of private vans and automobile for trips planned to include late night or overnight (midnight and 6:00 a.m.) student travel is not permitted. Such trips will use commercial vans or motor coaches and employ professional licensed drivers.



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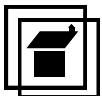
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2. When school bus transportation is required, the school district's regular transportation contractor is to be utilized, if available. If the school district's regular transportation carrier is not available, only contractors licensed for passenger transportation may be used. The use of Coach type buses may only be used for distances greater than 50 miles and with the permission of the Superintendent.
3. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced above.
4. Overnight accommodations at all hotels, motels, or other lodging, with established rules and regulations to ensure student wellbeing should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.
5. 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.
6. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. If a planned trip exceeds ten (10) consecutive hours of driving, a second driver must be utilized or the driver must be off duty for eight (8) consecutive hours before driving again.

### J. PERMISSION, CONSENT and RELEASE FORMS

#### Domestic and International

Any student going on a school sponsored field trip must submit a properly completed and signed "Permission to Participate, Emergency Treatment and Medications Consent and Release Form" prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip. This form must be signed by the student (if appropriate) and the student's parent or legal guardian prior to a student taking part in any school sponsored field trip.



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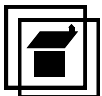
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For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups that routinely travel as part of their activities, the student (if appropriate) and the student's parents/guardians may submit one consent/release form to cover all events for the season.

The permission, consent, and release forms will include a section in which the student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians will be required to affirm and record that they have read the "Permission to Participate, Trip Emergency and Medications Consent and Release Form" and they understand the contents of the forms. The release form will include any and all claims related to or arising out of the field trip as well as those claims related to or arising out of cancellation of the trip by the HVRSD Board of Education. Since student safety is a primary consideration, the ultimate responsibility is a family choice. By signing the permission, consent and release forms, the student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians affirm that he/she/they have decided to allow the child to participate in the school-sponsored academic or extracurricular field trip with full knowledge that

1. The Board of Education reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the HVRSD had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The HVRSD Board of Education will take the following criteria into consideration when making its decision:
  - (a) U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory;
  - (b) Homeland Security Advisory (alert status); and/or
  - (c) Declaration of War or armed conflict. Additionally, the critical judgment of the School Committee, with input from the Superintendent, Principal, and Faculty Sponsor, will be taken into consideration.
2. In such event, that a trip must be cancelled, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed. The student and parents understand that he/she/they may lose any and/or all of the funds he/she/they have expended for the voluntary trip.
3. The Superintendent will alert the Board of Education to final deadlines regarding require commitment of funds if there are national/international events/conditions/situations which might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.



4. The Board of Education, and its officers, agents, and employees shall be forever held harmless for remuneration of any and/or all costs associated with this voluntary trip.

## K. INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

The District will sponsor international field trips. All school-sponsored international field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and approval by the principal, superintendent, and the HVRSD Board of Education. The Board of Education reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the HVRSD had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The HVRSD Board of Education will take the following criteria into consideration:

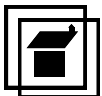
- (a) U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory;
- (b) Homeland Security Advisory (alert status);
- (c) Declaration of War or armed conflict. Additionally, the critical judgment of the Board of Education, with input from the Superintendent, Principal, and Faculty Sponsor, will be taken into consideration.

The Superintendent will alert the Board of Education to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/situations which might make the Board of Education cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

Student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians will be required to affirm that they have read the Consent and Release Form and understand that the Board of Education reserves the right to cancel or recall a school-sponsored field trip. The student and parent/guardian will sign to acknowledge and affirm that he/she may lose any and/or all of the funds expended for the trip.

## L. NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS

Teachers and other school staff sometimes privately conduct educational tours or trips involving the participation of Hopewell Valley Regional School District students. The HVRSD Board of Education neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school district.



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In information regarding non-school sponsored field trips teachers and other school staff are expected to clearly state that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the HVRSD Board of Education and the Hopewell Valley Regional School District do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

*New:* Reviewed by the Educational Program Committee: 8/15/11, First Reading: 9/19/11, Second Reading and Adoption: 10/11/11

