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Subject: SCHOOL TRIPS

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES

This regulation supersedes Chancellor's Regulation A-670 dated ~~March 16, 2005~~ [November 26, 2008](#).

The regulation sets forth the rules and procedures governing school trips for students at all levels of the school system. It provides guidelines for planning and executing field trips for students and outlines the responsibilities of ~~s~~Superintendents, principals and staff. It establishes clearly defined ratios of staff and other adults to students and rules for handling emergency situations.

Changes:

- ~~• This regulation now reflects the current organization of the Department of Education.~~
- ~~• International trips must be approved by the appropriate superintendent.~~
- ~~• This regulation clarifies insurance requirements for school trips.~~
- [The Regulation clarifies who may serve as an adult supervisor for out of the city, overnight, and international trips and trips when students will be engaging in swimming and water based activities. \(pp. 3-4, section II\(D\)\(6\)\)](#)
- [The Regulation imposes new adult to student ratios for trips which involve swimming and/or water based activities. \(p. 4, section II\(D\)\(7\)\)](#)
- [The Regulation requires that prior to approving a trip, the principal/designee must ensure that a lifeguard will be on duty at all times when students are swimming. No swimming may be permitted unless there is a lifeguard on duty. \(p. 2, section II\(A\)\(9\)\)](#)
- [The Regulation requires that schools use the appropriate consent forms attached to the Regulation for all school trips and that any modifications to the forms be approved by the Office of Legal Services. \(p. 2, section II\(C\)\(1\)\)](#)
- [The Regulation clarifies insurance and indemnification requirements. It provides that when a facility asks for proof of insurance or asks the DOE to indemnify the facility for acts committed by DOE employees, students or invitees that occur during the school trip, the principal/designee must contact the Senior Field Counsel assigned to the school and may not sign any document regarding indemnification without the Senior Field Counsel's approval. \(p.6, section IV\(B\)\). The Regulation also provides that all questions regarding insurance and indemnification be referred to the appropriate Senior Field Counsel. \(p.6, section IV\(C\)\)](#)
- [The Regulation clarifies requirements with respect to international trips. The Regulation requires the following with respect to international trips: \(1\) prior to approving a trip, the Superintendent must determine whether there are any travel warnings or advisories for the country/countries the students will be visiting and, if there are such warnings or advisories, the Superintendent must consult with the Deputy Senior Supervising Superintendent prior to approving the trip \(p. 1, section II\(A\)\(2\)\); \(2\) the Superintendent must ensure that every student and staff member has the appropriate documentation for travel to the country/countries being visited and for return to the United States \(p. 1, section II\(A\)\(4\)\); \(3\) the principal must ensure that at least one of the staff members accompanying the students on an international trip carries a phone with international service \(p. 1, section II\(A\)\(5\)\); and \(4\) that in addition to the two staff members required to accompany up to fifteen students, one other adult also must be included on the trip. \(p. 4, section II\(D\)\(6\)\(c\)\)](#)

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- [The Regulation provides that for trips of a celebratory nature, schools must fundraise to meet the costs of the trip. \(p.2, section II\(A\)\(10\)\)](#)
- [The Regulation clarifies the fact that the Regulation does not apply to student exchange and homestay programs. \(p.1, section II\(A\)\(1\)\)](#)
- [The Regulation clarifies the fact that the Chancellor or his designee may waive the Regulation, or any portion thereof, if it is determined to be in the best interest of the school system. \(p.6, section VI\)](#)
- [The Regulation clarifies what are considered high risk activities or activities with inherent risks. \(p.3, section II\(D\)\(4\); p. 5, section IV\)](#)
- [The consent forms and trip plan have been modified.](#)

ABSTRACT

This regulation sets forth the rules, regulations, and procedures governing school trips. It supersedes Chancellor's Regulation A-670 dated ~~March 16, 2005~~ November 26, 2008. A school trip is defined as any authorized field trip off school premises, regardless of the destination or method of transportation used. All building administrators and staff should familiarize themselves with this regulation to ensure that school trips will be productive, enjoyable, and safe experiences for students, parents, and staff.

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. School trips afford students the opportunity to observe, explore, discover, and engage in hands-on experiences. Schools may sponsor trips before, during or after school hours.
- B. All school trips should have an educational or appropriate celebratory focus and be viewed as an extension of the curriculum and the learning environment.
- C. For all school trips, the principal shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate care is taken to ensure the safety of all participants.

II. PLANNING AND LOGISTICS

A. Planning

1. All school trips¹ must be approved in advance by the principal. Trips organized by special programs within the schools (i.e., clubs) are considered school trips and must be authorized in advance by the principal. ~~International trips must also be approved in advance by the appropriate superintendent.~~
2. ~~International trips must also be approved in advance by the appropriate Superintendent. Prior to approving the trip, the Superintendent must determine whether there are any travel warnings or advisories for the country/countries the students will be visiting. (See www.cdc.gov; www.travel.state.gov.) If there are such travel advisories or warnings, the Superintendent must consult with the Deputy Senior Supervising Superintendent prior to making a determination whether to approve the trip.~~
23. A trip plan must be prepared and ~~must be~~ retained in the school files for all trips. The plan must specify all information, including persons in charge, participating classes of students, lodging, activities, and locations to be visited, the names of all adults taking part, details of departure and return, method of transportation and carrier, and insurance coverage (see Attachment No. 1).
4. ~~The principal/designee must ensure that every student and staff member participating in an international trip has the appropriate documentation (e.g., passport) for travel to the country/countries being visited and for return to the United States. This is particularly important for students traveling with non-U.S. passports.~~
5. ~~The principal/designee must ensure that at least one of the staff members accompanying the students on an international trip carries a phone with international service.~~
36. Special Education students must be provided with transportation and accommodations appropriate to their needs.

¹ ~~This Regulation does not cover student exchange or homestay programs. Such programs require the written consent of the Superintendent. Appropriate consent forms and trip documentation must be developed for such programs in consultation with the Superintendent and the Office of Legal Services.~~

47. Medical emergencies and contingencies should be included in planning for a trip. Adult supervisors should travel with first aid kits, telephone numbers for emergency services in the area, and emergency home contact numbers.
58. When planning a trip, staff should inquire whether government or school rates are available for lodging, transportation, etc. Tax exempt status should always be requested, and proof of that exemption should be included in communications with suppliers.
9. Prior to approving a trip in which swimming will be involved, the principal/designee must ensure that a lifeguard will be on duty at all times students are permitted to swim. No swimming may be permitted unless there is a lifeguard on duty.
10. For trips of a celebratory nature, schools must fundraise to meet the costs of the trip.

B. Fees

Fees, such as the cost of admissions and lodging, must not be excessive, ~~and may not be such as to exclude students who would otherwise participate.~~ A student may not be excluded due to an inability to pay the required fee. Where appropriate, schools may assist students in financial need so that they will be able to participate.

C. Parental Notification, Consent Forms and Documentation*

1. Parents must be notified in writing in advance of the planned trip, and a parental consent form is required for each school trip. Schools must use the applicable consent forms annexed as Attachment Nos. 2, 3 and 4. Any changes or modifications to these forms must be approved in advance by the Office of Legal Services.
2. No student under the age of eighteen years of age will be allowed to participate in a school trip unless his or her parent, guardian, or person in parental relation has signed a consent form allowing the student to participate (see Attachments Nos. 2 to 4). A student who is eighteen years of age or older, or an emancipated minor, may give consent her/himself.
23. Consent forms must identify activities with inherent risks (e.g., swimming, horseback riding, ice skating, use of physical fitness equipment) that students will engage in on the trip and must contain specific requests for parent permission to engage in those activities. If medical pre-clearance is required for a student to take part in the trip and/or participate in certain activities, it must be obtained in advance of the trip.
34. Where a student trip is sponsored by a parent/parent-teacher association or by an outside agency which has a relationship to the school and not by the DOE, parents must be advised explicitly of this fact and all documentation related to the trip must so indicate.

D. Supervision

1. The principal must designate a licensed teacher, assistant principal, or other supervisor participating in the trip as the individual with overall responsibility for the trip. For trips related to substance abuse programs, SAPIS workers who are regularly in charge of students may be designated as the individuals with overall responsibility for the trip.
2. ~~Students must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times, and a~~Appropriate, ~~adequate~~ supervision must be provided at every level stage of a school trip. ~~No student may be left unsupervised during any phase of a trip. Where the trip involves~~

* Any letter or consent form sent in connection with this regulation should be written-sent, where feasible, in the parent(s) preferred language or mode of communication. In those cases where it is not possible to obtain a full translation, the letter and/or consent form should be sent-written in English with an attached notice in the parent(s) preferred language or mode of communication stating the following: "The attached letter contains important information about your child. Please have it translated as soon as possible."

~~activities with inherent risks (e.g., swimming, horseback riding, ice skating, use of physical fitness equipment) the principal or designee must ensure that there is adult supervision appropriate to the activity while students engage in the activity. Where activities on the trip make it necessary or appropriate, protective equipment should be provided.~~

~~3. For all trips, staff members accompanying the students must come from the school sponsoring the trip. The principal, in his or her discretion, may approve requests that staff from another school accompany students.~~

~~4. Where a trip involves activities with inherent risks (e.g., swimming, horseback riding, skiing, ice skating, use of physical fitness equipment) the principal/designee must ensure that there is appropriate adult supervision while the student engages in the activity.~~

~~5. Protective equipment must be provided when appropriate to the activity (e.g., helmets for horseback riding).~~

~~3. If a student must leave a school trip prematurely, she/he must be accompanied by a staff person if a parent cannot come for the student.~~

46. Ratio of Staff to Students

~~The principal/designee must ensure is responsible for ensuring~~ that the ratio of staff and adults to students on a school trip is appropriate for the trip, taking into consideration the age of participating students, the method of transportation, ~~and~~ the type of trip and the type of activities in which the students will be engaging. The following sets forth the minimum requirements for adult to student ratios should be used:

a. Routine day trips within New York City:

For elementary and middle school students, at least one (1) staff member and two (2) additional adults are required for up to thirty (30) students. For high school students, at least one (1) staff member and one (1) additional adult are required for up to thirty (30) students. The required staff member must be a teacher or a supervisor. The other adult(s) may be a parent volunteer or a member of the instructional staff (e.g. teacher, dean, guidance counselor, social worker) or a paraprofessional or school aide.

At the elementary level, for each additional ten (10) students, an additional adult is required. At the middle and high school levels, for each additional fifteen (15) students participating, an additional adult is required.

b. One day out-of-the-city or overnight trips:

For elementary, middle and high school students, at least two (2) staff members and one (1) adult are required for up to thirty (30) students. With respect to the two staff members noted above, one must be a teacher or supervisor. The other staff member may be a member of the instructional staff (e.g., teacher, dean, guidance counselor, social worker) or a paraprofessional or school aide. The other (1) adult may be a parent volunteer or a member of the instructional staff (e.g., teacher, dean, guidance counselor, social worker) or a paraprofessional or school aide.

At the elementary level, for each additional ten (10) students, an additional adult is required. At the middle and high school levels, for each additional fifteen (15) students participating, an additional adult is required.

c. ~~Additional adults for the trips above:~~

~~At the elementary level, for each additional ten (10) students participating, an additional adult is required. At the middle and high school level, for each additional fifteen (15) students participating, an additional adult is required.~~

ec. International trips

At least two (2) staff members and one (1) other adult are required for up to fifteen (15) students. ~~It is recommended that at least one (1) parent volunteer also be included on the trip.~~ With respect to the two staff members noted above, one must be a teacher or supervisor. The other staff member may be a member of the instructional staff (e.g., teacher, dean, guidance counselor, social worker) or a paraprofessional or school aide. The other one (1) adult may be a parent volunteer or a member of the instructional staff (e.g., teacher, dean, guidance counselor, social worker) or a paraprofessional or school aide. For each additional ten (10) students participating, an additional adult is required.

ed. Special Education students

For school trips involving Special Education students, the ratio of staff to students should be at least the same as the ratio mandated for their classes.~~5. For all trips it is recommended that the staff members accompanying the students come from the same school sponsoring the trip. On occasion, where appropriate, the principal, in his or her discretion, may approve requests that staff from another school be used.~~

7. Additional Requirements for Swimming and Water Based Activitiesa. Ratio of Staff to Students for Swimming and Water Based Activities

If students will be swimming or will participate in water based activities (e.g., rowing, kayaking) the following ratios must be used:

1. For elementary and middle school students, at least two (2) staff members and two (2) adults are required for up to thirty (30) students.
2. For high school students, at least two (2) staff members and two (2) adults are required for up to thirty (30) students.
3. With respect to the staff member(s) noted above, one must be a teacher or supervisor. The other staff member may be a member of the instructional staff (e.g., teacher, dean, guidance counselor, social worker) or a paraprofessional or school aide.
4. The other two (2) adults noted above may be parent volunteers or members of the instructional staff (e.g., teacher, dean, guidance counselor, social worker) or paraprofessionals or school aides.
5. At the elementary level, for each additional ten (10) students, two adults are required. At the middle and high school levels, for each additional fifteen (15) students, two additional adults are required.

b. Students may only be permitted to swim when a lifeguard is on duty. The lifeguard must be on duty the entire time that students are swimming.

c. Students who participate in water based activities other than swimming such as kayaking, tubing or rowing must wear a lifejacket at all times.

d. For international trips, the principal/designee must ensure that there is adult supervision appropriate to the activities in which the students engage.

8. If a student must leave a school trip prematurely, she/he must be accompanied by a staff person if a parent cannot come for the student.

69. Regardless of the type of trip, it is not permissible for students to meet at or be dismissed from a site other than the school unless the consent form specifically authorizes it. The principal or her/his designee must assume overall responsibility for receiving returning students. In cases where intervening circumstances make it impossible for the students to be dismissed from the agreed upon site, parent(s) must be contacted and advised of the situation and appropriate school staff must remain with the student(s) until such time as the parent(s) arrives. If a parent fails to pick up

a child and repeated attempts to reach a parent or contact person are unsuccessful, the principal or his or her designee must ~~refer to region procedures for handling students left after school, or must~~ contact the nearest police precinct.

710. Siblings of students whose parents are accompanying them on a class trip are not permitted to take part in the trip.

E. Emergency Circumstances

1. Missing Students

- a. If one or more students cannot be accounted for at a trip site, the authorities with jurisdiction over the site must be notified immediately, and a search organized. If, following the search, the student(s) cannot be located, local police must be called immediately. The staff member in charge must make every effort to contact the parents, as well as his/her supervisor.
- b. A staff member must remain at the site until all the students are accounted for. The staff member in charge shall determine whether other students and adults should leave the site. All such decisions shall be made in consultation with the staff member's supervisor. Parents should be kept updated as to the status of the search for their child.

2. Illness/Injury

- a. If a student becomes ill or is injured and is in need of assistance, appropriate health officials should be notified immediately. A determination must be made by health officials regarding the severity of the illness or injury, and if hospitalization is required, an adult must accompany the child. The parents must be notified immediately and advised of the whereabouts of the child (hospital, etc.) and the nature of the illness or injury.
- b. The staff member in charge shall determine whether other students and adults shall leave the site, but a staff member must remain until the ill or injured student is able to leave. All such decisions shall be made in consultation with the staff member's supervisor. Parents must be informed about the child's condition if they are not able to travel to the site.

III. Transportation

A. Schools may use any of the following means of transportation:

1. Public transit systems (e.g., subways, buses);
2. Registered commercial airlines;
3. Intercity buses or transit systems (e.g., Amtrak, Greyhound); and/or
4. Private authorized buses, including school buses, as set forth below:
 - a. Any vehicle utilized to transport students must comply with all federal, state, city, and Department of Education rules and regulations for the transport of students. This shall include, but is not limited to, standards established for vehicles, drivers, insurance, and companies. The Office of Pupil Transportation must be contacted to obtain a list of companies which provide service in compliance with these standards.
 - b. To request a bus for a school trip from the Office of Pupil Transportation, please contact the Field Trip Unit at 718-784-3313. This unit sends information to all schools prior to the start of each school year about the procedures for obtaining buses for trips. Please refer to these procedures when requesting bus service from the Office of Pupil Transportation.
 - c. Students may not be transported to or from the trip site on an unauthorized or private vehicle.

IV. INSURANCE AND INDEMNIFICATION

- A. For school trips in which students engage in high-risk activities (e.g., swimming, ~~water sports~~, horseback riding, ~~skiing, ice skating, use of physical fitness equipment~~), schools should have on file documentation that the facilities which the student will be visiting have a general comprehensive liability insurance policy in an amount not less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence and written assurance from the facility that health, fire and safety standards conform to those required by their locality for the use of persons 4-21 years of age. In the event that such documentation is not received, the principal shall determine whether it is appropriate to proceed with the trip. Emergency medical group insurance must be purchased to cover all participants in international trips. ~~All questions regarding insurance should be referred to the Office of Legal Services.~~
- B. ~~If a facility asks for proof of insurance or asks the DOE to indemnify the facility for acts committed by DOE employees, students or invitees that occur during the school trip, the principal/designee must contact the Senior Field Counsel assigned to the school and may not sign any document regarding indemnification without the Senior Field Counsel's approval.~~
- C. ~~All questions regarding insurance and indemnification should be referred to the appropriate Senior Field Counsel.~~

V. LIABILITY

Pursuant to New York State law, supervisory and teaching staff, and authorized participants in the school volunteer program may be entitled to legal representation and indemnification in connection with claims arising from acts or omissions while the employee/volunteer was acting within the scope of his/her public employment and in the discharge of his/her duties, and was not in violation of any rule or regulation of the Department of Education at the time the alleged act or omission occurred. In the event of a lawsuit naming a Department of Education employee/volunteer, the Department's Office of Legal Services must be contacted at 212-374-6888 to request representation from Corporation Counsel.

VI. WAIVER

This Regulation or any portion thereof may be waived by the Chancellor or his designee if it is determined to be in the best interests of the school system.

VII. INQUIRIES

Inquiries regarding this regulation should be addressed to:

Borough Integrated Service Center/CFN
Network that supports the school. Network
Leader and Superintendent