

FINANCE

Risk Management

Field Trips--Planning and Conducting

This regulation supersedes Regulation 5790.2

I. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for planning and conducting field trips in support of the instructional program and student activities. For additional information, see Risk Management fact sheet #76 Field Trip Guidelines, located at the following web site: <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/fs/budget/riskmanagement/factsheets/index.htm>. This link is available only through computers on the FCPS network.

II. SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

This regulation has been revised in its entirety for clarification of the field trip process.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. Routine Field Trips:

1. Do not involve safety or liability risks at levels beyond those expected or experienced in the classroom (zoo, museum, or planetarium).
2. Do not involve overnight travel or water-related activities.

B. Unusual Field Trips:

1. Involve liability exposure to student safety or to Fairfax County Public Schools.
2. Involve overnight or international travel.
3. Involve water-related activities (hotel swimming pool, educational boat excursions, amusement parks, etc.).

A complete list of prohibited activities can be found at the following web site: <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/fs/budget/riskmanagement/prohibited.htm>. This link is available only through computers on the FCPS network.

C. Instructional Program Field Trips:

1. Are planned outings away from the school involving one or more students under the supervision of a teacher or other school official to enrich and extend the classroom instructional program.

2. Do not require student participation. If a student chooses not to participate, the school shall provide an appropriate educational alternative.
3. May be considered routine or unusual.

D. Student Activity Field Trips:

1. Are planned outings away from the school involving one or more students under the supervision of a teacher or other school official in support of academic or athletic teams, performing groups, or other student activities.
2. Expect student participation. While not strictly required by FCPS, student participation is expected (and may be required) by the teacher, coach, or sponsor of the activity.
3. May be considered routine or unusual.

IV. PLANNING

Careful planning and follow-up to each field trip shall be carried out by teachers in cooperation with their principals. Additional information regarding planning field trips can be found on the Risk Management fact sheet #76 Field Trip Guidelines, at the following web site: <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/fs/budget/riskmanagement/factsheets/index.htm>. This link is available only through computers within the FCPS network.

V. SPONSORSHIP

- A. Field trips shall not be approved for sponsorship by FCPS if:
1. They require travel time that would be too long for the age of the students involved.
 2. They require inordinate expense.
 3. They require excessive or inappropriate absence from school.
 4. They are judged to be too hazardous, dangerous, or risky.
- B. For field trips organized by an employee (but **not** FCPS-sponsored) the employee shall:
1. Notify parents in advance that FCPS is not the sponsor of the trip by providing form FS-151, Notice Regarding Proposed Trip Involving Students.
 2. Adhere to appropriate community use directives (see the current versions of Regulations 8420 and 8424) if using FCPS facilities.
 3. Not be advertised as FCPS-sponsored or organized during FCPS contract or instructional time.

4. Not name FCPS on any related contract or use school letterhead (including FCPS permission forms and e-mails) to advertise or convey any information about the trip.

VI. APPROVAL

The principal is responsible for the approval of all field trips and for the safety of students while in school and on field trips.

All contracts pertaining to field trips must be reviewed by the Office of Risk Management. Contracts exceeding \$5,000 must comply with procurement regulations. Travel agencies and other travel-related vendors may not use school facilities to present their products prior to selection of an agency for the trip, except as provided in the current version of Regulation 8420 (Community Use).

A. Routine Field Trips

1. Requests for approval shall be made using form FS-140, Request for Approval of Routine Field Trip.
2. Review by Risk Management is not required.

B. Unusual Field Trips—Continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and United States possessions

1. Request for approval shall be made using form FS-141, Request for Approval of Unusual Field Trip.
2. Upon approval by the principal, the request shall be submitted for review and comment to Risk Management at least four weeks in advance of the planned trip except for Virginia High School League-sponsored state-level culminating activities.

C. Unusual Field Trips—International

1. Request for approval shall be made using form FS-141, Request for Approval of Unusual Field Trip.
2. International field trips require approval by the principal, the cluster assistant superintendent, and the deputy superintendent.
3. Upon approval by the principal and the cluster assistant superintendent, the request shall be submitted for review and comment to Risk Management at least three months in advance of the planned trip. Risk Management will forward the request to the deputy superintendent for final approval.
4. Threat levels as determined by the federal government in the country being visited must be evaluated and monitored prior to the students' departure. At a minimum, principals must check the various threat level informational web sites contained in Risk Management fact sheet # 73 titled International Travel Guidelines, which can be located at the following web site:

<http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/fs/budget/riskmanagement/factsheets/index.htm>. This link is available only through computers within the FCPS network.

5. Field trips to countries on the State Department's "travel warnings" list will not be permitted. Threat levels must be checked before and during the field trip. If the threat level increases, the deputy superintendent should be notified, and a decision will be reached to notify parents, change the itinerary, or cancel the trip.

D. Parental Permission

Form FS-152, Parental Authorization and Acknowledgement of Risk for Field Trip, and emergency care cards must be completed by parents for all unusual field trips. A detailed itinerary must be attached to the parental authorization form identifying all locations, time frames, and activities of the trip. These records shall be retained by the school until the end of the following school year. Translations of parental authorization forms are available at the following web site: <http://fcpsnet.fcps.k12.va.us/ssse/translations/fcpsforms.htm>. This link is available only through computers within the FCPS network.

VII. CANCELLATION

- A. If school is canceled due to inclement weather or for other reasons involving student safety or security, then instructional field trips also are canceled.
- B. If school is delayed due to inclement weather or for other safety or security reasons, the principal will determine whether or not to proceed with the field trip.
- C. A principal may request permission from the deputy superintendent to allow unusual field trips, such as trips out of the area, when school has been canceled. However, it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure student safety by monitoring travel conditions prior to requesting an exception.

VIII. SUPERVISION

A. Chaperons

The principal shall determine the number of chaperons needed for the field trip. At least one teacher, other FCPS staff member, or designated school official shall attend every FCPS-sponsored student field trip. Chaperons are prohibited from taking siblings of students or other children on FCPS-sponsored field trips.

B. Administration of Medication

School staff members must be trained to administer medications and must accompany a field trip to help students who require medication and/or health procedures. Volunteers and chaperons are prohibited from administering medications. For additional information regarding administration of medications, refer to the current version of Regulation 2102, page 9, at <http://www.fcps.edu/Directives/R2102.pdf>.

IX. TRANSPORTATION

- A. Leased, commercial, Fairfax County, Fairfax County Public Schools, or parent-driven vehicles may be used on approved field trips by licensed drivers, with principal approval.

1. Leased Vehicle

When leasing a vehicle, certain liability insurance coverage should be purchased and verified in the lease. All potential drivers must be named on the lease.

2. Commercial Bus

A list of approved commercial bus carriers is maintained by Risk Management. The approved carriers meet insurance and criminal certification requirements and may be found at the following web site:

<http://www.fcps.edu/fs/budget/riskmanagement/commercialcarriers.htm>. This link is available only through computers within the FCPS network.

3. School Bus

- a. The request shall be made using the online Field Trip Application available at: http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/fts/tran/field_trip_app.htm. This link is available only through computer within the FCPS network.
- b. Principal-approved requests for school buses shall be submitted at least three weeks in advance of the planned trip.

4. VHSL State-Level Culminating Activities

Student activity directors shall be responsible for arranging the most cost-effective method of transportation, with the assistance of student activities and athletic specialists. Student activity directors also shall be responsible for arranging appropriate meals and lodging.

- B. All drivers must complete form FS-142, Field Trip Drivers License and Vehicle Insurance Information, when using a vehicle other than one driven by a professional driver employed for that purpose (for example, school bus or commercial carrier).
- C. Vans with a capacity greater than nine passengers (including driver) are prohibited from transporting students. For larger groups, either multiple vehicles or school buses must be used. This requirement is in accordance with federal and state directives.
- D. Only authorized passengers shall be permitted to ride a bus on field trips. Authorized passengers are limited to students, teachers, chaperons, coaches, or other school personnel with assigned responsibilities and shall be approved in advance by the school principal. Requests for an exception shall be made to Risk Management and the Office of Transportation Services. The number of authorized

passengers transported shall not exceed the vehicle capacity. (Children of a school bus driver are authorized to ride if space is available.)

Refer to Risk Management fact sheet #76 Field Trip Guidelines located at <http://fcpsnet.fcps.edu/fs/budget/riskmanagement/factsheets/index.htm> for additional information regarding transportation for field trips. This link is available only through computers within the FCPS network.

X. LODGING AND LUGGAGE SEARCHES

- A. Lodging and luggage may be searched at any time during the trip to ensure participant safety.
- B. For luggage searches, students and parents shall be informed in writing prior to the trip that a luggage search will be conducted. Parents must complete and return to school officials, prior to departure, form FS-143, Field Trip Luggage Search. No student shall be permitted to participate in the planned field trip unless the form is completed and returned. The form shall certify the following:
 - 1. The student's luggage may be searched by school officials (or designees).
 - 2. The student's luggage does not contain illegal substances or prohibited items.

Legal reference: Code of Virginia, Sections 22.1-176, 22.1-182, 22.1-183, 22.1-190

See also the current versions of:

- Regulation 2236, Foreign Exchange and Overseas Study-Travel Programs
- Regulation 5810, School Activity Funds Management
- Regulation 7102, Pupil Transportation Manual
- Notice 7110, Charge for Use of School Buses
- Regulation 7413, Procurement of Goods and Services by Individual Schools Using Nonpublic Funds
- Regulation 8420, Community Use of School Facilities
- Regulation 8424, Booster Club and PTA-Managed Fee-Based Classes, Clinics, and Youth Summer Camps in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) Facilities
- Regulation 2102, First Aid, Emergency Treatment, and Administration of Medication for Students
- Risk Management fact sheet #76 Field Trip Guidelines