



Superintendent's  
Circular

School Year 2019-2020

NUMBER:  
CAO-22

DATE:  
November 7, 2019

## GENERAL GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR ALL FIELD TRIPS

This Superintendent's Circular provides instructions for implementing policies relating to BPS Sponsored field trips passed by the Boston School Committee on November 6, 2019.

This circular **MUST be read in its entirety** by Program Leaders (chaperones) **Principals/Headmasters (and/or the District Department sponsoring the trip) are responsible for ensuring that all field trip policies, and procedures as outlined in this circular, and all of the field trip Circulars are adhered to.**

**NEW:** 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. Any trip involving BPS students and employees that meets any one of these criteria is a BPS sponsored trip. 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: **1) Day Field Trip, 2) Overnight Field Trip, and 3) 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.

**After reading this circular, refer to the circular appropriate for your type of trip for further details:**

1. **“Day Field Trips,”** Superintendent Circular No. CAO-23
2. **“Overnight Field Trips,”** Superintendent Circular No. CAO-24
3. **“International Field Trips,”** Superintendent Circular No. CAO-25
4. **NEW: “Homestay Policy,”** Superintendent Circular No. CAO-26
5. **NEW: “Water Activities”** Superintendent Circular No. CAO-27

### **Purpose of Field Trips**

All BPS sponsored field trips must serve the purpose of either providing 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 aims to deepen their engagement with school and learning. Sites for field trips

should be carefully selected to enrich student learning, and exposure to new people, places, and activities. Discuss with students 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 have 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.)

- A. **Instructional Field Trip:** Enhances a specific curriculum unit or serves a broader educational purpose.
- B. **Cultural Field Trip:** Students are engaged 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, or help students work collaboratively, or assist in the development of leadership and decision making skills.
- C. **Service Learning Field Trip:** Students learn the value of helping others in their own community and beyond. These trips show students how empowering service to others is while developing students' leadership skills.
- D. **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.

## **General Guidelines for All Types of Field Trips**

- **Principals/Headmasters** 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 establishes 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/Headmaster or District Department sponsoring the trip prior to the distribution of any informational materials on the proposed trip to students and their parents/guardians, 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/Headmaster or District Department sponsoring the trip.
- The Principal/Headmaster 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/Headmaster on potential chaperones and student recruitment. Every effort should be made for students to have access to the trip 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/Headmaster should be based on the individuals' thorough knowledge of, and rapport with the majority of the student participants.

## **Student Accessibility & Participation**

- Students not enrolled in the Boston Public Schools may not participate.
- **NEW:** The Program Leader and Principal/Headmaster shall work together to establish essential participation criteria for the trip, that informs students and parents of all of the activities and risks associated with each itinerary activity, and trip location, to determine what accommodations or modifications may need to be made for the student to successfully and safely participation in all, or portions of the trip.
- A student's ability to pay may not be a criterion for field trip participation. Trips must be advertised to all students (within the school, particular grade, class, or program associated with the trip) regardless of their financial situation.
- Students with English Learner status, 504 Plans and/or IEPs cannot be denied access to field trips due to their status, or disability. 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-8 for information about medical dispensation on field trips. Participating students' IEP or 504 Plan shall be available to any staff coordinating and/or participating in the field trip.
- If any student has a serious medical, or mental health condition, please be sure that his/her 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.
- **NEW:** 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 LGBTQ 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.
- **NEW:** The Program Leader and Principal/Headmaster shall work with transgender and gender-non conforming students to provide accommodations (including rooming) that affirm the student's gender identity while also ensuring safety. Program Leaders should work with students and families to make sure all travel documents (airline ticket, passport) reflect their legal names as listed on government issued identification, while all unofficial documents and materials may reflect the student's preferred name.
- Participation in field trips may be denied to any student who has demonstrated disregard for the policies and rules of BPS or the school, 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.
- **NEW:** 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. Following an investigation, if the Program Leader, in consult with the Principal/Headmaster 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 make arrangements 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.

- **NEW:** In the event that 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 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. (Age requirements may be subject to specific airline/train/bus guidelines). Any costs assumed in this regard will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- Provisions must be made in advance for any student not attending the trip and staying at school. If applicable, provide alternative arrangements, and/or comparable activities for students not attending the trip or unable to participate in a portion of your trip.
- If a student's family elects for their child not to attend a field trip for any reason he/she may not be penalized through their grade or otherwise.
- 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 Criteria**

- The Program Leader (lead chaperone) must be a BPS employee. Other authorized chaperones may include parents and volunteers who are required to 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 eCORI form online at: [bit.ly/bpscori](http://bit.ly/bpscori). Contact the BPS Office of Human Capital (OHC) for CORI check and confirmation support. Principals/Headmasters 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.
- 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.
- No consumption of alcohol/drugs.
- Chaperones who are parents/guardians of BPS students on the trip, must provide the same level of care and attention to ALL of the 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. **NEW:** In this case, the BPS employee is responsible for incurring all costs associated with their child's participation.

- Non-BPS employees who chaperone on a field trip are not covered for liability by the Boston Public Schools.
- **NEW:** All BPS and Non-BPS chaperones are required to sign the Chaperone Agreement Form.
- **NEW:** Tour guides, or 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.
- **NEW:** 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
  - Overnight Field Trips: 10:1 (minimum of two chaperones)
  - International Field Trips: 7:1(minimum of two chaperones)
  - **Note: There should not be more chaperones than students, unless mandated by an educational plan, or other circumstances approved by the Principal/Headmaster 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.**

## **Permission Forms**

- Permission for field trips must be in written form only. Without a signed permission slip, the student may not attend the field trip. 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 Principal/Headmasters' permission.
- "Blanket" authorization (i.e. parental/guardian approval through the use of a single form for multiple trips to be taken during the school year) should never be allowed. 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. The following languages are available: Cape Verdean Creole, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
- Only Parent/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 activity(s) on the itinerary. Additional 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, if applicable Fire Prevention and Safety forms, 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.

### **Approval Process & Timeline for Field Trips**

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:

- **DAY FIELD TRIP:** Any domestic trip off school grounds that is no more than one day in duration.
  - “Day Field Trip” forms are submitted to the Principal/Headmaster **AT LEAST 4 weeks in advance** (or at the Principal/Headmaster’s discretion) and **approved by the Principal/Headmaster;**
  - All forms, including signed CAO-23 checklist form, are filed at the school.
- **OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP:** Any domestic trip off school grounds that involves students’ participation overnight.
  - “Overnight Field Trip” forms are submitted to the Principal/Headmaster **AT LEAST 12 weeks in advance** and **approved by the Principal/Headmaster;**
  - All forms, including the signed CAO-24 checklist form, are filed at the school;
  - **Overnight Field Trip Request Form**, the list of student names, emergency contact name and number, grade, D.O.B, the list of chaperone names and his/her 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 4 weeks** in advance. Scan and email the Overnight Field Trip Request Form and information to the appropriate Principal Leader as well as to the Department of Global Education. Please follow up with to ensure documentation has been received.
- **INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIP:** Any trip off school grounds that involves travel to a location outside of the United States. **\*\*NEW:** Travel to “U.S.Territories,” including Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and Northern Mariana Islands is considered international travel. Travel to these territories are subject to forms in the CAO-25 International Field Trip guidelines and application completion.Consult with the Department of Global Education for required forms for these destinations.
  - “International Field Trip” forms are submitted to the Principal/Headmaster **AT LEAST 12 weeks** in advance and **approved by the Principal/Headmaster;**
  - All forms, including the signed CAO-25 checklist, filed at the school;
  - Copies of original International Field Trip Request form, Signed Cover Letter from Principal/Headmaster, International Trip Narrative, Itinerary and Emergency Action Plan are submitted to the Department of Global Education **\*\*NEW: AT LEAST 12 weeks in advance and approved by the Department of Global Education, the appropriate Instructional Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, and the Superintendent;**

- Copies of all forms listed above are also filed at the district. **Please send district forms to the Department of Global Education.**
- **Where possible, International Field trips should be scheduled during non-school time (i.e. school vacation, and summer time).**
- 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.**

## **Transportation for Field Trips**

- School buses or BPS approved transportation vendors’ vehicles **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, **\*\*NEW:** 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 risk being legally liable if students are injured while riding in their automobiles.**
- Please refer to TRN-3 for information and regulations regarding field trip transportation.

## **Safety Guidelines**

**As part of trip planning and itinerary development, ensure 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 or not an activity is appropriate in terms of safety or educational content for a school-sponsored trip, please consult with your Principal/Headmaster and the Department of Global Education.**

- Review [Superintendent’s Circular on Medical Emergency Management, FSE-5](#) and [Incident Data-Reporting and Release, SAF-4](#) for important safety protocols.
- **\*\*NEW:** 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 pairs, AND always know how to reach an adult chaperone.
  - **For Day & 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.**
  - **For Overnight or International Trips, the Department of Global Education 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, lead chaperones will receive emergency contact information.**

- All chaperones must carry with them at all times during the trip a copy of the Emergency Action Plan (EAP) (which can be found under the “Day,” “Overnight” and “International” Circulars) that outlines procedures for calling 911 in the US or the foreign equivalent while abroad and emergency protocols.
- Consult with, and when necessary, receive training and obtain written comments from the School Nurse and Guidance Counselor regarding students participating in field trips. **For day field trips, please see the Nurse and Guidance Counselor at least three weeks in advance of the trip. For overnight and international trips, please see the Nurse and Guidance Counselor at least eight weeks in advance of the trip.** Please see appropriate trip type circular for more information regarding support from school nurses, and Guidance Counselors.
- 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.
- The district reserves the right to require additional training and/or certifications such as CPR/AED, First Aid, and Program (Chaperone) Leader Training depending on the type, location, and purpose of the trip. Review the specific circular for your trip type for certification requirements.
- Set expectations with students regarding social media use during any field trip. This is especially critical during an emergency.
- **\*\*\*NEW** The district provides medical insurance coverage for international, and domestic BPS sponsored trips (domestic being 100 driven miles away from home or place of study or employment) for BPS students and BPS staff participants. Trip cancellation and interruption coverage are not provided by the district, and 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.
- The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel any field trip up to, and including the day of departure to manage risk.
- After the trip, follow-up and communicate with the student and Parent/Guardian, as well as the Principal/ Headmaster, 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), follow the **BPS Homestay Guidelines CAO-26**. Please contact the Department of Global Education immediately for guidelines. All BPS families (anyone in household 18 or over) who host national or international guests must be CORI/SORI cleared by the BPS Office of Human Capital.

### **Visiting Students**

- Hosting of non-BPS students shall require advanced approval (**12 weeks**) by the Principal/Headmaster and Director of Global Education. BPS host schools must **review the BPS Homestay Guidelines CAO-26, and complete the Homestay Verification Form, and submit to the Director of Global Education prior to hosting a non-BPS student or student groups.**



For **Visiting Students**, note immunization requirements for all students- even 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**

- If your trip involves **ON or IN** the water activities, 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:

<b>Name :</b>	Kayla Dorsey-Twumasi
<b>Title:</b>	Director of Global Education
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	2300 Washington St., Roxbury, MA. 02119
<b>Phone:</b>	(617) 712-9755
<b>E-mail:</b>	kdorseytwumasi2@bostonpublicschools.org

Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent