

## **Field Trip Policy for the Boston Public Schools**

Access to quality and safe experiential learning experiences for all students in the Boston Public Schools is integral to the mission of the district. The Boston Public Schools will at all times maintain Superintendent's Circular CAO-22 governing the general safety and access to field trips throughout, and within each school community across the Boston Public Schools. **Superintendent's Circulars CAO-23, 24, 25 and CAO-26, CAO-27** will be maintained, and provide specific comprehensive guidelines for **Day, Overnight, International Field Trips, Homestays, and Water Activities** respectively.

**BPS-Sponsored Field Trip:** 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. 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.

**Equity:** Field trips must be advertised to all students (within the whole school, particular grade, class/subject, **club** or program associated with the trip) regardless of their financial situation. Schools shall make every reasonable effort to make instructional field trips affordable for all students. **If students are charged individual fees for participation in a domestic instructional field trip that is directly linked to the curriculum and standards, the district should make every effort to provide scholarships where need is expressed. For international field trips, in addition to learning outcomes and safety, schools shall also prioritize affordability, and are recommended to plan at least a year in advance in an effort to fundraise, and accommodate various family budgets.**

**Access:** Students not enrolled in the Boston Public Schools may not participate in BPS field trips. The Program Leader and Principal/Headmaster shall work together to establish essential participation criteria for the trip that informs students and parents of the trip location, each itinerary activity, and its associated risks to determine what accommodations or modifications are necessary for students to successfully, and safely participate in all, or portions of the trip. English Learners, students with 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. **To thoroughly support a student's participation in a field trip, at least six weeks before departure, consult with, and when necessary, receive training from the School Nurse regarding any students who have medical needs; and the School Counselor regarding mental and behavioral health needs.**

**Inclusion:** Sponsoring BPS schools must consider their student demographics when selecting field trip locations, sites, and activities, and determine the impact the locations, sites, and activities may have on diverse populations, such as students of color, English Learners, immigrant students, students who identify with the LGBTQ community, students with disabilities, those who may be in the minority during the field trip experience, and those students who belong to groups that have experienced marginalization in the location being visited. Schools

must work to prepare students for sensitive experiences, and ensure that the program is safe and inclusive for all students. Schools 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.

**Scheduling:** Whenever possible, overnight and international trips should be scheduled to minimize a loss of instructional time, and scheduled well in advance to allow enough time for fundraising efforts.

**Risk Management:** BPS will maintain travel insurance coverage for domestic (beyond a certain mileage) and international trips, that at minimum accounts for medical and liability coverage for students and staff. BPS will maintain records of trip incidents. Annually, BPS will assess the quality of service, emergency responsiveness, and effectiveness of the insurance provider to determine if a change in providers is needed. BPS will remain current in risk management standards and practices for student travel, and offer training to BPS staff leading students abroad. BPS will maintain an Emergency Response Communication Plan, and Safety Protocols for handling emergencies in the field, and annually conduct reviews of its risk management systems for effectiveness and relevance. BPS will review, and assess, all proposed international itinerary activities and locations for potential risks, and develop customized waivers for each international program. Upon advanced review of itineraries, BPS reserves the right to deny schools to participate in activities where the risks of the activity outweighs the intended learning outcomes of the field trip program.

**Conduct:** The BPS Code of Conduct applies on all field trips. Students and chaperones are required to sign a conduct agreement prior to participation. 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.

**Student Supervision:** Students shall be accompanied by a sufficient number of chaperones, taking into account the trip scheduling and logistics. There is a district minimum of two chaperones for all field trips. All chaperones, including parents and volunteers, must have a CORI check.

**Trip Approval:** Day and Overnight Field Trips require the advance approval of the Principal/Headmaster only. Water Activities must be approved by the Department of Education in advance. International Field Trips require the advance approval of the Principal/Headmaster; Department of Global Education; Instructional Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, and the Superintendent. School Committee approval is not required.

**Reporting:** BPS will promote and communicate the importance of experiential learning outside of the school environment, and all aspects of this policy to school leaders, staff, and families. Monthly, BPS will provide the School Committee with a list of international trips approved over the prior month. BPS will make an annual report to the School Committee detailing their activities for the year to include: a) efforts to ensure equitable school and student access to international field trips; b) a review of major travel initiatives and international trips; c) any incidents that call for changes to district policy; and d) international trips taken, schools involved, and associated demographic data (including grades, ethnicity, race, and funding sources).