

FIELD TRIPS

The School Committee recognizes that firsthand learning experiences provided by field trips are a most effective and worthwhile means of learning. It is the desire of the School Committee to encourage field trips as part of and directly related to the total school program and curriculum.

Field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations. The School Committee will also encourage field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in the schools.

The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. All students must have a signed "Arlington Public Schools Field Trip Parental Permission to Participate and Release from Liability" form.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.

All overnight trips and any day trips or excursions in excess of 150 miles involving Arlington Public School students organized and planned through the schools, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contest, must have the advance approval of the School Committee. Advance approval should be prior to planning, fundraising or collection of fees. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator. ***The School Committee reserves the right to rescind approval should circumstances warrant.***

However, in all cases all students must have a signed "Arlington Public Schools Field Trip Parental Permission to Participate and Release from Liability" form prior to participation in the field trip.

Revised: July 22, 2003

Cross Ref: File JJA, JJA-R, Student Travel

September 2003

To the Parents and Guardians of Students in the Arlington Public School System,

The School Committee has adopted this new, plain English permission and release form, which is to be used for all school-sponsored field trips. We believe this redrafted version addresses concerns raised by parents at various meetings. The form follows a recent decision of the highest court in Massachusetts Sharon v. City of Newton (437 Mass 99; 2002).

The School Committee believes that field trips are a key enrichment in the education of Arlington students, and encourages you to permit your child(ren) to participate in them.

We have prepared a Frequently-Asked-Questions sheet that addresses the most common concerns asked by parents and guardians.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FIELD TRIPS

1. Who decides what field trips are taken?

The principal reviews and approves all field trips. The School Committee must approve all overnight trips and any day trips or excursions in excess of 150 miles involving Arlington Public School students organized and planned through the schools, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests.

2. Since the field trips are school-sponsored, why is there a fee or cost for my child to attend?

There are no special school funds for field trips. The cost of the trip, such as admission fees, bus transportation and insurance, are calculated and then divided among the participants. The schools do not make a profit from these trips. You are asked to pay a fee so that the school can cover its costs.

3. Can a field trip be cancelled or postponed?

Yes, a trip can be cancelled or postponed if an insufficient number of children participate, if there is a problem at the place of the field trip (e.g., the Science Museum is closed because of a water leak), or if the trip can only take place in good weather.

4. Is going on a field trip mandatory?

No, you are not required to send your child on a field trip; participation is voluntary. The School Committee strongly recommends that students participate in these trips because they provide additional education that will benefit the students.

5. What would my child do if I decide not to send him/her on the trip?

Your child is required to spend the day at school, doing regular assignments. Your child will be supervised by teachers at school.

6. Will this trip affect my child's after school arrangements?

Field trips generally do not extend beyond the normal school day, and your child more than likely will be able to go to his/her usual after school activities. In rare instances when we know the schedule is affected, you will be given specific advance notice.

7. My child takes prescription medication/has special needs; who will administer this medication/address the special needs during the trip?

These situations should be addressed specifically with your child's teacher and, if necessary, school principal.

Field Trip: _____
School: _____
Teacher: _____
Date: _____

PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE AND RELEASE FROM LIABILITY

Your child's teacher has volunteered to organize a school-sponsored field trip. Participation in this field trip is voluntary, but you must give permission before your child can go. If you do not give permission, your child will remain at school for the regular day and continue academic work there. This field trip is not essential, and your child's grade will not be affected by participation in this trip. This trip is offered as enrichment.

Your child's teacher may provide additional details such as clothing requirements, lunch provisions and other details in an accompanying correspondence to you. Please read this information carefully. Your child will be supervised by teachers and/or parent chaperones. It is possible that your child may face more risks by participating in this field trip than if your child stayed at school. We cannot enumerate every risk, but we believe that you are generally familiar with this activity and your child, and are in the best position to decide whether your child should participate. The School Department and Principal have approved this field trip, but we cannot and do not guarantee that there will be no injuries or damages as a result of this field trip.

This is a legal document and you are free to obtain a lawyer's advice before signing it. You may not, however, change the language of this form, and any additions or deletions you make to this permission and release have no effect.

By signing this form, you agree that your child may participate in the field trip. By signing this form, you also agree to release the Town of Arlington, Town officials, Town employees and all parental program and activity volunteers or chaperones from any and all damages, death and/or injuries of any kind you and your child might suffer as a result of participating in this field trip, except for those that result from gross negligence or wanton and willful misconduct. This agreement to release does not apply to any independent contractor.

Signed:

Parent/Guardian of: _____

Teacher/Grade: _____

Complete Reverse Side

