

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.