School Travel Safety Guidelines

PRIMEX³ RISK MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

Taking a field trip can provide wonderful learning opportunities to enrich and extend your curriculum – but field trips are not for the faint of heart! However, with careful planning, adequate supervision and staffing, and carefully controlling risk, adults and children can safely enjoy outings. Listed below are steps to consider when planning for domestic and foreign school travel.



- **Field Trip Guidelines - Basic Steps (domestic travel):**
  - Make a determination whether or not the field trip is a school sponsored event* (has it been approved by your governing board or their designee? The exact determination needs to take into consideration your internal policies and procedures).
    - ✓ If not, make sure that all parties involved have a clear understanding of the fact that the district is not involved and be mindful that you are not so involved in the event that a reasonable person might infer that you are sponsoring the event (i.e. distributing information through school channels, materials printed on school letterhead, staff collecting funds for the trip, etc.)
    - ✓ If yes, make sure that you are conducting your due diligence in order to keep everyone out of harm's way and to protect the district from unneeded exposure to risk (see below).
  - If chaperones are present for the trip, make sure that they have had background checks. Also, try to avoid one-on-one interactions between staff and students and/or chaperones and students. Even more caution should be taken regarding one-on-one situations during trips that involve overnight stays.
  - If any employees and/or chaperones are asked to drive, please make sure that you have checked their driving records and that specific criteria has been established by the district to determine who would not be eligible to drive.
  - All chaperones/volunteers should be asked to sign a volunteer agreement/release form (sample is available upon request; the district's legal counsel should review and approve this form prior to implementation).
  - Train any staff, chaperones, and/or volunteers regarding trip logistics and school district expectations:
    - ✓ Number of students a chaperone is responsible for
    - ✓ How often a chaperone should check on students (depends on age)
    - ✓ Standard of conduct and how to enforce
    - ✓ Trip schedule/itinerary
    - ✓ Students that have special needs, medical restrictions and/or requirements (make sure to obtain the appropriate parental/legal guardian releases specific to medical needs/medications, have needed medications available, know procedures regarding medical emergencies, etc.)



- All parents/legal guardians should sign release forms acknowledging their child's participation in a specific event. The release forms should be specific to the event and list the risks involved in the specific event/activity (the school district's legal counsel should draft this release).
- Clarify expectations with students and what's considered an acceptable standard of conduct. Make sure to enforce the standard of conduct throughout the trip.
- Have an attendance list of all students and verify that all students are present periodically throughout the trip.



Foreign Travel:

In addition to all the items specified above, for **foreign travel** the following items should also be taken into consideration:

- Use a reputable tour operator; make sure all trip details are addressed with the tour operator including clarification on what steps will be taken in case of emergency (medical or otherwise).
- All students participating in the trip should be required to show student accident insurance and/or submit proof of health insurance covering the student in foreign countries. If not available, arrange the purchase of overseas insurance with coordination of care and evacuation benefits (the tour operator will probably be able to assist).
- Prior to selecting a destination for travel, check the US Department of State's list of current travel advisories: ***https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/*** A list of countries can be found by clicking on this link and each country is rated in accordance with their current safety level (i.e. Level 1 Exercise Normal Precautions to Level 4 Do Not Travel). It is best to restrict travel to those countries classified as Level 1. At the same location you will be able to find a color coded map showing the different levels of risk and also sign up for alerts regarding travel advisories.
- In addition, the US Department of State provides Country Specific Information for every country of the world. For each country, you will find location specific information: like the location of the U.S. embassy and any consular offices, whether you need a visa, crime and security information, health and medical conditions, drug penalties, and localized hot spots. This is a good place to start learning about where you are going. County specific information can be found at ***https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html***
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also provides information regarding health concerns, vaccinations for travel, etc., on their website: ***http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/***
- Provide staff, volunteers, and students with a thorough cultural orientation, set ground rules and expectations, and explain what everyone should do in case they need assistance (i.e. Call US consulate, tour operator, etc.).

- Adhere to the itinerary. If any deviations occur, notify the tour operator and don't expose staff, volunteers and students to unneeded risk.

Primex³ Coverage Implications:

* Coverage only applies to school sponsored events. All terms, conditions and exclusions set forth by the coverage documents and declarations apply.

When in doubt, check with your risk management pool regarding availability and/or limitations of coverage.

Coverage Territory: The Primex³ liability coverage applies to Personal Injury, Property Damage, Public Officials Errors and Omissions, Unfair Employment Practices, Employee Benefit Liability, or Educator's Legal Liability occurring anywhere in the world; however, suit must be brought in the United States, its territories, possessions or in Canada, during the Coverage Period shown on the Liability Coverage Declarations.

Covered Persons under the liability coverage:

- Your past or present employee(s) while acting for or on your behalf and within the scope of their duties.
- Volunteers authorized and supervised by you while acting for or on your behalf and within the scope of their duties.

Workers' Compensation responds to employee injuries arising out of and in the course of employment in accordance with all terms specified by RSA 281-A.

There is no coverage for damage to employees, volunteers and students' belongings unless a supplemental coverage is secured through the tour operator.

As always, the above are not offered as blanket coverage statements and all terms, conditions, and exclusions set forth by the coverage documents and declarations apply.

For more information, please contact your Primex³ Risk Management Consultant at 800-698-2364 or email *RiskManagement@nhprimex.org*.

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