

2.3 FIELD TRIP AND CHAPERONE POLICY

Scholars Academy believes that field trips provide a valuable educational experience for students. Off-campus trips allow for invaluable opportunities for experiential learning, increased student knowledge, and deeper understanding of a subject, while also adding realism to the topic of study. Without the help of volunteer chaperones, field trips would not be possible, so we thank all of our chaperones for their time in support of these activities.

In order to help ensure that off-campus trips result in a safe and rewarding experience for all participants, the following policy must be complied with to ensure the safety and well-being of all. This policy is intended to provide significant guidance for the creation of procedures governing the approval and oversight of off-campus trips but in no way is it to be considered all-inclusive. Good judgment is expected of all teachers, staff members and chaperones when planning and participating in field trips, athletic competitions, academic competitions and other school-sponsored off-campus activities.

The following criteria must be met with respect to all educational field trips and, to the extent applicable, athletic competitions, academic competitions and other school-sponsored off-campus activities:

- Instructional staff should only recommend educational field trips where the majority of the activity is related to educational programs and curriculum. The Executive Director shall not approve any educational field trip that does not contain educational value to students.
- All educational field trips must be requested in writing in accordance with procedures established by the Executive Director (or designee), with deference given to planning in a manner as to give parents appropriate advance notice depending on the nature and cost of the related activity.
- The Board of Directors recommends the following minimum chaperone ratios for educational field trips: K-2, one chaperone per six students; and 3rd-8th, one chaperone per ten students. Ultimately, the ratio is at the discretion of the Executive Director based on the recommendations of the coordinating staff member and the requirements of the field trip venue.
- The Executive Director (or designee) shall develop and adopt a “Chaperone Code of Conduct,” which shall be made available to the school community and acknowledged by each chaperone. The Chaperone Code of Conduct may be revised from time to time at the discretion of the Executive Director and shall include guidance to chaperones regarding expected responsibilities and behaviors. The Chaperone Code of Conduct should also contain the following statement: “For the protection of both the student and the chaperone, chaperones should not place themselves in situations in which they are alone with a student.”
- Any parent interested in serving as a chaperone for a field trip must adhere to the Chaperone Code of Conduct and submit to a criminal background check at least every two years. Failure to submit to a criminal background check will automatically disqualify a person as a chaperone on all field trips until such time as one is performed. The cost of the background check shall be the responsibility of the potential chaperone. Information obtained through a criminal background check may be discussed by administrative personnel, as well as appropriate legal counsel. Should the criminal background check lead to the disqualification of a parent/volunteer as a chaperone (as determined by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis), the Executive Director will speak directly with said parent/volunteer privately to inform him or her of the issue. For the avoidance of doubt, decisions of the Executive Director are final.

- To the extent that more qualified parents volunteer to be chaperones than are needed, the coordinating staff member and administration will consider whether any parents of children with severe and documented allergies or other documented health or behavior issues have volunteered and may elect to give priority to such parent volunteers. For co-ed groups, the administration and the coordinating staff member may also give priority to ensure that there is at least one male and one female chaperone. To the extent additional chaperones are needed, volunteers will be selected by an informal lottery process (in manner acceptable to the coordinating staff member and administration), keeping in mind that only one parent per family will be permitted the opportunity to be a chaperone. Those chaperones not chosen to go will be placed on a waiting list in the event that a chosen chaperone finds out later that he or she is unable to attend the field trip. Certain circumstances may result in a modification of these guidelines, as determine in the sole discretion of the Executive Director (or designee).
- For overnight trips that require students to stay in a “cabin” or hotel setting, female chaperones will stay with female students and male chaperones will stay with male students. For the avoidance of doubt, if a male is chosen to chaperone an overnight field trip and he has a female child, he will not be staying in a room with his female child. If a female is chosen to chaperone an overnight field trip and she has a male child, she will not be staying in a room with her male child. Male chaperones with male children may be able to stay in a room with their child and female chaperones with female children may be able to stay in a room with their child. If a chaperone is not in a room with his or her child, he or she will be expected to sleep on a cot in the hotel room, if necessary. If a chaperone is in a room with his or her child, he or she will be able to share a bed.
- Coordinating staff members must provide all chaperones with clear instructions in advance of trips to explain the basic schedule of the trip, the activities planned for the trip, expectations for supervising students and emergency procedures and to allow time for questions related to the trip and/or Chaperone Code of Conduct. The sponsoring staff member should provide chaperones guidance on what they should do in an emergency, including, without limitation, a medical emergency, natural emergency, lost child, or serious breach of rule. The coordinating staff member must also provide all chaperones with his/her phone number in the event questions come up during the trip, as well as the cell phone numbers of other chaperones.
- Trips sponsored by Scholars Academy should not be scheduled to personal residences. No trip will include destinations to the homes of Scholars Academy employees, parents or students. For the avoidance of doubt, this provision does not preclude the organization of activities by parents that are not sponsored by Scholars Academy.
- Objectionable material is not permitted on any trip sponsored by Scholars Academy. In determining whether material is objectionable, the staff member or Executive Director (or designee) should refer to the Media Policy and any related procedures.
- The safety of our students, employees and families must be considered during periods of heightened awareness. Therefore, any overnight trip must be cancelled if the National Homeland Security Threat Advisory code is imminent at the time of departure and/or if any severe weather alerts are in effect. If a trip is in progress, and the alert status goes to imminent, the sponsoring staff member and all chaperones should immediately return to the school, or other safe location, with the students.
- No student(s) should be excluded from participation in any compulsory field trip due to economic limitations. Requests for financial consideration should be submitted to the Executive Director (or

designee), who will work with families to discuss options based on their status. Similar consideration may, in the discretion of the Executive Director, be given to parents who are unable to participate as chaperones because of the cost of the background check.

- Sponsoring staff members are required to have available, at all times, medications for students with life-threatening conditions. If a student requires an Epipen or other medication related to potentially life-threatening conditions, the sponsoring staff member must ensure that, in addition to the required medications, an additional chaperone trained with the Epipen (or other such medication) accompanies the student at all times.
- When possible and/or practical, children will be transported by Scholars Academy-owned buses, public transportation or chartered bus service or, in the case of academic and athletic competitions, by transportation independently arranged by parents. Chaperones should only be asked to drive students on field trips as a last resort and only when the distance from the Scholars Academy is less than a two-hour drive. To the extent a chaperone is required to transport any student in their vehicle, such chaperone will provide Scholars Academy with a copy of the chaperone's driver's license and evidence of effective insurance, to be maintained on file in the school office. The Executive Director (or designee) shall develop appropriate procedures ensuring that the chaperone has emergency "consent to treat" packets regarding any child that they are transporting. To the extent a chaperone is requested to follow a bus transporting students, for the avoidance of doubt, that chaperone should not transport any student other than their own child.

The Executive Director (or designee) will develop appropriate procedures related to the administration of this policy. The Executive Director (or designee) will develop and publish a Chaperone Code of Conduct, which shall be published to the Scholars Academy community through the newsletter upon adoption, with the Chaperone Code of Conduct to be posted on the website and made available in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Adopted: March 21, 2016