

SCHOOL-SPONSORED FIELD TRIPS

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School Committee recognizes that it is desirable and valuable, on occasion, to supplement and extend classroom activities with voluntary and optional domestic and international academic and extracurricular field trips to broaden perspectives and educational experiences of students. The HW Regional School Committee encourages activities that augment classroom instruction and promote healthy social development.

A. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purpose of this policy:

1. **Academic field trips** include all off-campus trips that are organized as part of the class curriculum. There must be pre-and post- trip instructional activities and/or assessment. Participation for all members of the class is expected. Provisions for comparable instructional experiences during the school day must be made for student not on the academic field trip.
2. **Extracurricular field trips** are those off-campus trips that are organized by a school sponsored club, group, or athletic team. Participation is optional and voluntary. The School Committee is mindful, however, of the financial burden such travel may place on some families and the potential for disparate educational opportunities for students. Away games or matches that are part of the athletic program are considered extra-curricular field trips under this definition.
3. When an **academic field trip** or an **extra-curricular field trip** is planned to occur between midnight and 6 a.m. or to require a student to stay overnight away from home, the procedures for planning and approving overnight trips apply. It is understood that overnight trips may include travel within Massachusetts, in other states, and internationally.

B. GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR APPROVAL – Domestic and International

Only field trips meeting the following conditions are permitted. The sponsoring faculty member shall ensure that

1. Trips are appropriate for the age group involved in the activity.

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2. Trips are reasonable in terms of time, distance and cost.
3. Trips are not scheduled during the last full week (plus any partial week) of school of the school year. In general, extracurricular international/domestic field trips should occur during non-school time.
4. Trips are not scheduled during the MCAS examination periods for students taking the MCAS exams. If unique and special circumstances present an academic opportunity, the principal and superintendent will consider and evaluate each request with care.
5. Trips are planned with careful consideration of student safety which includes, without limitation, an appropriate number of adult chaperones as specified in Section D of this policy and all chaperones have approved Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks on file with the Superintendent.
6. While there must be adequate supervision, the Principal must also minimize the number of teachers missing classes due to chaperoning.
7. Provisions for medical emergencies, including attending medical personnel, if necessary.
8. When school bus transportation is required, the school district's regular transportation contractor is to be utilized, if available. If the school district's regular transportation carrier is not available, only contractors licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) or the Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers may be used. Carriers with an FMCSA or Department of Defense safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" cannot be used. FMCSA carrier ratings are available online at <http://www.safer.fmcsa.gov> or by calling 703.280.4001 and providing the carrier's D.O.T. identification number. Department of Defense carrier rating is available online at <http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>.
9. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced above in paragraph (6) of this section.
10. No student is denied the opportunity to participate in an academic field trip because of the inability to pay.
11. Costs associated with an optional/voluntary extracurricular field trip will be the responsibility of the individual student/family. Where appropriate, there may be fund raising to help defray costs. All fundraising must be done in compliance and accordance

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with HWRSD and individual school policies.

12. Should an emergency situation occur, the sponsoring faculty member is responsible for notifying the Principal by telephone as soon as possible.
13. Helmets are required for bicycle and ski/snowboard trips.
14. Trip cancellation insurance must be made available for all multiple day out-of-state trips and international travel.

C. AUTHORITY TO APPROVE/DISAPPROVE – Domestic and International

1. All school-sponsored day field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal.
2. All school-sponsored day out-of-state field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal, superintendent, and school committee.
3. All school-sponsored overnight field trips (in- or out-of-state) must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal, superintendent, and school committee.
4. All school-sponsored international field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and the approval of the principal, superintendent, and school committee.
5. Pursuant to MGL, Chapter 71, Section 47, the School Committee is responsible for approving out-of-state and/or overnight academic and extracurricular field trips. However, in the event that approval is required for an academic or athletic contest, competition or tournament before a regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, said approval authority is delegated to the Superintendent of Schools.
6. Where practical, the HW School Committee requires that final approval be sought no less than thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled trip dates.
7. The approval process shall be completed prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip.
8. The School Committee reserves the right (a) to cancel trips up to departure and (b) to recall trips in progress, if they believe there are national and/or international conditions

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that pose potential danger to students or any other reason deemed appropriate by the School Committee.

9. The Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/situations which might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

D. APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION – Domestic and International

Approval for all trips must be received prior to making any financial contractual arrangements. All field trips must be approved in writing by the appropriate authority as specified in this policy. The initial documentation to request a field trip must include:

1. Proposed dates and itinerary.
2. Description of the process that will be used to determine student eligibility.
3. Estimated number of students expected and percentage of eligible students participating.
4. Cost per student (if applicable).
5. Mode of transportation and schedule.
6. Ratio of chaperones/teachers to students
(Recommended ratio – HS 1:10; MS 1:10 min.; Elementary 1:10 min.; International 1:6)
7. Description of arrangements for meals and lodging (if applicable). Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.
8. Description of security features for transportation and accommodations.
9. Means of financing.
10. Draft copy of any contract and refund policies associated with the trip.
11. Draft copy of the letters to be sent to parents and guardians referencing the specifics of the trip including all of the above and any rules specific to the trip which are in addition to the HWRSD student conduct policies, student handbook rules or regulations, and the MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations. For international

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field trips, the sponsoring faculty member will provide parents a copy of the State Department travel advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.

12. In the case of academic field trips, there must be a description of the educational alternative and mapping of that alternative for students not attending the trip, if applicable.
13. Satisfactory Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check of all chaperones is required and must be on file in the Superintendent's Office.
14. International trips must include a printout of the State Department Travel Advisory and Homeland Security Alert Status for all countries to be visited.

- Additional information may be requested from the appropriate authority prior to making a decision.

- Should external circumstances change after the initial trip approval detailed modifications to the relevant approval documentation (see above) will be required.

E. FUNDRAISING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

1. Fundraising events and activities may be planned to offset the costs for academic and extracurricular field trips. Any such fundraising shall take place in accordance with the HWRSD and individual school policies on fundraising.
2. Where an individual fee is charge for an academic field trip which is part of the approved curriculum, the principal may provide a partial or full scholarship to a student if, due to financial hardship, such scholarship is necessary to allow a student's participation. However, no student is guaranteed a partial or full scholarship for the purpose of attending an optional and/or voluntary extracurricular field trip.

F. DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS AND FIELD TRIPS – Domestic and International

1. All Hamilton-Wenham Policies on Student Behavior, Student Handbook rules and regulations, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, and trip rules as specified in Section C.13 regarding student conduct will apply and be in effect at all times for academic and extracurricular field trips.
2. If a student violates any Hamilton-Wenham student conduct policies, student handbook

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rules or regulations, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, trip rules as specified in Section D-11, or otherwise misbehaves while on a field trip, the student will be immediately suspended from the field trip and sent back to school or home, as appropriate, by the faculty sponsor at the parent's/guardian's expense. In addition to being sent home, the individual will be subject to the consequences for the action/infracton upon his/her return to school as defined by the aforementioned student conduct policies, student handbook rules and regulations, and MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations.

3. Hamilton-Wenham Policies on Student Behavior, Student Handbook rules and regulations, MA Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules and regulations, and trip rules as specified in Section D-11 regarding student conduct will be given to chaperones. Chaperones shall agree to implement and enforce them; failure to do so will result in not being able to chaperone future school sponsored trips.

G. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS on FIELD TRIPS – Domestic and International

In accordance with the HWRSD Policy on Administration of Medications (H 8010), the administration of medications while on a day field trip is discouraged if medically feasible. However, in the event that it is medically necessary for a student to be administered medication while on a field trip the procedures promulgated in the Policy on Administration of Medications will apply. Parents/legal guardians will receive a copy of the HWRSD Policy H 8010 – Administration of Medications in advance of the field trip as part of the trip materials. Student (if appropriate) and parents/guardians must sign an Emergency Treatment and Medications Consent.

H. TRANSPORTATION, LODGING, AND SCHEDULING - Domestic and International

1. The use of private vans and automobile for trips planned to include late night or overnight (midnight and 6:00 a.m.) student travel is not permitted. Such trips will use commercial vans or motor coaches and employ professional licensed drivers.
2. When school bus transportation is required, the school district's regular transportation contractor is to be utilized, if available. If the school district's regular transportation carrier is not available, only contractors licensed for passenger transportation by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) or the Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers may be used. Carriers with an FMCSA or Department of Defense safety rating of "conditional" or "unsatisfactory" cannot be used. FMCSA carrier ratings are available online at <http://www.safer.fmcsa.gov> or by calling 703.280.4001 and providing the carrier's D.O.T. identification number. Department of Defense carrier rating is available online at <http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>.

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3. Any contract with a private carrier must prohibit the use of subcontractors unless approved by the Superintendent or designee. The Superintendent or designee shall not approve use of any subcontractor unless the subcontractor meets the criteria referenced above in paragraph (6) of this section.
4. Overnight accommodations at all hotels, motels, or other lodging, with established rules and regulations to ensure student well-being should be made in advance with student safety and security in mind. Accommodations will include enough rooms so that no chaperones are rooming with students.
5. Whenever possible, the trip schedulers should avoid planning student travel between the hours of midnight and 6 a.m., due to the increased risk of vehicular accidents during this time period.
6. Trip itineraries must leave enough time for drivers to rest in conformity with federal hour-of-service requirements and common sense. If a planned trip exceeds ten (10) consecutive hours of driving, a second driver must be utilized or the driver must be off duty for eight (8) consecutive hours before driving again.

I. PERMISSION, CONSENT and RELEASE FORMS – Domestic and International

Any student going on a school sponsored field trip must submit a properly completed and signed "Permission to Participate, Emergency Treatment and Medications Consent and Release Form" prior to engaging students in fundraising activities or other preparations for the trip. This form must be signed by the student (if appropriate) and the student's parent or legal guardian prior to a student taking part in any school sponsored field trip.

For athletic teams or other extracurricular school groups that routinely travel as part of their activities, the student (if appropriate) and the student's parents/guardians may submit one consent/release form to cover all events for the season.

The permission, consent, and release forms will include a section in which the student (if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians will be required to affirm and record that they have read the "Permission to Participate, Trip Emergency and Medications Consent and Release Form" and they understand the contents of the forms. The release form will include any and all claims related to or arising out of the field trip as well as those claims related to or arising out of cancellation of the trip by the School Committee as described in Section I-1. Since student safety is a primary consideration, the ultimate responsibility is a family choice. By signing the permission, consent and release forms, the student (if

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appropriate) and parents/legal guardians affirm that he/she/they have decided to allow the child to participate in the school-sponsored academic or extracurricular field trip with full knowledge that

1. The School Committee reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the HWRSD had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The HW School Committee will take the following criteria into consideration when making its decision: (a) U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory; (b) Homeland Security Advisory (alert status); and/or (c) Declaration of War or armed conflict. Additionally, the critical judgment of the School Committee, with input from the Superintendent, Principal, and Faculty Sponsor, will be taken into consideration.
2. In such event, that a trip must be cancelled, school officials will make a reasonable effort to obtain a refund of monies paid by students and parents. However, such refunds are not guaranteed. The student and parents understand that he/she/they may lose any and/or all of the funds he/she/they have expended for the voluntary trip.
3. The Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/conditions/situations which might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.
4. The School Committee, and its officers, agents, and employees shall be forever held harmless for remuneration of any and/or all costs associated with this voluntary trip.

J. INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

The District will sponsor international field trips. All school-sponsored international field trips must receive prior recommendation of the department chairperson (high school only) and approval by the principal, superintendent, and school committee in accordance with the specifics (A-JI set forth in this policy).

The School Committee reserves the right to cancel a trip up to the departure date or to recall a trip in progress if national and/or international conditions so warrant or if security and safety concerns over which the HWRSD had no control render it appropriate to cancel the trip. The HW School Committee will take the following criteria into consideration: (a) U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory; (b) Homeland Security Advisory (alert status); (c) Declaration of War or armed conflict. Additionally, the critical judgment of the School Committee, with input from the Superintendent, Principal, and

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Faculty Sponsor, will be taken into consideration.

The Superintendent will alert the School Committee to final deadlines regarding required commitment of funds if there are national/international events/situations which might make the School Committee cancel or recall a trip due to safety concerns or other reasons.

Student if appropriate) and parents/legal guardians will be required to affirm that they have read the Consent and Release Form and understand that the School Committee reserves the right to cancel or recall a school-sponsored field trip. The student and parent/guardian will sign to acknowledge and affirm that he/she may lose any and/or all of the funds expended for the trip.

K. NON-SCHOOL SPONSORED TRIPS

Teachers and other school staff sometimes privately conduct educational tours or trips involving the participation of Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District students. The HW School Committee neither sanctions nor prohibits such activities, nor assumes any responsibility for them. Teachers and other school staff are prohibited from soliciting students for privately run trips through the school district.

In information regarding non-school sponsored field trips teachers and other school staff are expected to clearly state that such trips are not school-sponsored and that the HW School Committee and the Hamilton –Wenham Regional School District do not sanction the trip or assume any responsibility.

The School Committee will only review for approval school-sanctioned trips which include a field trip request and required documentation as defined by Section D, Items 1-13. The School Committee will not review or approve trips that are privately organized and run without school sanctioning.

Legal References:

Massachusetts Department of Education Regulations 603 CMR 27.00
Massachusetts Department of Education Time on Learning Regulations
Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71§ 37M and N
Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71§38R

Additional Resources:

US Department of State Advisory
<http://travel.state.gov>

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Homeland Security Advisory

<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic>

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) Carrier Ratings

<http://www.fmcsa.gov>

United Motorcoach Association – Student Motor coach Travel Safety Guide

<http://www.uma.org/consumerhelp/studentguide.asp>

Department of Defense's approved list of motor carriers

<http://www.mtmc.army.mil/content/504/approvedlist.pdf>

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