California Schools JPA℠

SAFETY MATTERS
RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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FIELD TRIP SAFETY PLANNING

OBJECTIVE To be able to plan ahead for safe and enjoyable field trips for staff and students.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING AHEAD

The district and each school site have the responsibility for exercising reasonable care in planning and implementing the field trip experience and enforcing compliance with district policies. There are several steps to consider when planning a trip for faculty and students.

1. Identify any special requirements for participation on the trip — special skills, fitness, and certification — as well as any hazards or dangers on the trip or at the site that might affect the health and safety of the participants.
2. Obtain formal and documented written approval prior for the trip and any activities that may involve some level of risk.
3. Consider special disabilities, medical needs and allergies that may need to be accommodated.
4. Obtain signed parental permission forms.
5. Consider the need for special clothing or equipment that may be needed because of weather or other conditions.
6. Determine transportation needs — reservation of vehicles, drivers, need for site supervision.
7. Plan for meals — who will provide food, location, hours, ability to accommodate group size.
8. Plan for hydration — adequate amount of water for all faculty, chaperones and students.
9. Plan for emergencies — theft, illness, vehicle emergency, weather delays, student misconduct or threats to the safety of others.

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SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

A field trip to the zoo will have different exposures than one to a museum. Participants may encounter sun exposure, mosquitos, proximity to wildlife, and walking on uneven surfaces and stairs at the zoo. If the location is one that has not been visited prior, be sure to ask questions about the weather (hot/ cold temperatures), stairs, length of a guided tour, food that may be provided or offered (allergies), restroom facilities, and proximity to bodies of water.

APPROVAL

Obtain all district and school site approvals well in advance. This allows plenty of time for parents to review the field trip details and turn in signed permission forms.

TRIP EXPECTATIONS

A faculty and staff orientation/training should occur prior to departure. Both verbal and written communication is essential and should include:

- ❑ Trip destination and purpose
- ❑ Travel itinerary and map
- ❑ Information about rest and meal stops
- ❑ Transportation information
- ❑ Appropriate clothing, footwear, hat, and jacket
- ❑ Meals that will be provided or required
- ❑ Sun protection (sunscreen, hats, sunglasses, long-sleeved shirt, pants)
- ❑ Expected weather conditions
- ❑ Allergies or medical attention required (bee stings, nuts, pollen, etc.)
- ❑ Emergency contact information (for staff and participants)
- ❑ List of adult chaperones that will be participating in the field trip
- ❑ Conduct and policies — expectations
- ❑ Appropriate adult to student ratio (i.e., 1:10, or 1:5 if swimming activities are involved.)
- ❑ Emergency planning — contingency plans should an unexpected event occur (accident, earthquake, heavy rains/flooding, etc.)

STUDENT PRE-TRIP ORIENTATION

Student pre-trip orientation should also be conducted prior and include the following:

- ❑ Behavior expectations (on the bus, at the destination, during meals, etc.)
- ❑ Appropriate clothing, footwear, jacket, hat, etc.
- ❑ Itinerary of the trip
- ❑ Activities the students will be participating in
- ❑ Special hazards that have been identified
- ❑ Importance of washing hands after activities (as appropriate)
- ❑ What to do if separated from the group
- ❑ Procedures for walking in high traffic areas
- ❑ Use of the buddy system

RESOURCE

Field Trip Guide Student Travel Guide ⬇

Please contact your CSRM Risk Manager with any questions during the planning phase for field trips. We'd like to work collaboratively to ensure your students have a safe, fun, & educational outing.

This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.