

International Travel Guidelines

International trips present opportunities for learning that are outside familiar environments. These trips are expected to be organized only when a valuable educational opportunity is available to students. Instructor preparations and expectations are significant and student attendance is a privilege. International travel is limited to high school students.

Trip Proposal

The instructor organizing the trip must present a proposal to the Board through the superintendent for initial authorization. The proposal for initial authorization must include the following:

1. Recommendation

A recommendation by the high school principal and the superintendent regarding authorization of the trip should be included in the proposal. If any recommendation is not favorable to the trip, the reasons should be clearly stated.

2. Dates of Trip

Note the approximate date on which students would leave and return to Ashland. International trip proposals should be submitted at least one year in advance and preferably earlier. For student competitions, when options to participate in events occur with short notice, instructors should provide as much notice as possible.

3. Outline of Benefits to Students

Describe the cultural, educational, athletic or other competitive benefits gained by this trip.

4. Finance Plan

No district funds may be used for international travel; therefore, an important part of the plan for the trip is the trip budget and fund raising plan. Identify how much money is required in total and the estimated cost per student attending. Student/parent financial commitments should be outlined and mandatory payment dates scheduled. Provide a plan for financial aid for those families who cannot provide the necessary funds for their children. Designate the appropriate student body fund account for the high school office to record and hold funds until the date needed. Teachers and coaches do not generally receive extra duty pay for these trips. The trip is considered a value. All expenses may be covered for the teacher or coach to participate as a part of the fund raising plan.

5. Student Qualification Plan

Include information about how a student might qualify to participate on the trip. For instance, include a written essay, parent commitment form, a minimum grade point average, etc. For athletic, debate or other group competition or activity trips, some form of individual student qualification is still recommended. Requiring a student to qualify for the trip ensures that the student finds value in the trip and will work to make the trip successful. Teachers are encouraged to review trip lists with administrators or other support staff to identify possible high-risk students to ensure their success. A teacher or coach may choose not to take a student on a trip if he or she has concerns about the student's behavior that cannot be resolved after working with the family.

Once initial authorization has been received from the Board, a more detailed proposal must be submitted, which must also be approved. This proposal must include the following information:

1. Safety/Insurance/Communication Plan

- a. Outline the steps that will be taken to ensure student safety during travel, overnight and during the daytime events. For example, make sure that the trip is not to a country identified as unsafe due to hostilities on the U.S. Department of State list of Travel Warnings.
- b. Develop a plan of action and procedures in the event of a medical or political emergency.
- c. Attach to the proposal copies of liability waiver forms and optional, additional insurance options: travel, trip cancellation, medical evacuation, etc., available through group travel or private agencies and available for parents to purchase prior to the trip.
- d. Outline plans for instructing students on rules of conduct, safety in public places, group check in procedures, etc., prior to the trip.
- e. Provide plans for addressing student health issues related to medical alerts, seizures, asthma, diabetes, allergies or special education requirements. Address how special student(?) needs will be communicated to the assigned chaperones.
- f. Cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses of all instructors, chaperones, local contacts and students must be developed and a copy provided to all parties and parents. Included will be emergency numbers and a contact at the district. Also included will be contact information for all accommodations and major stops.
- g. Consider purchasing group T-shirts for easy student identification in crowded locations.

2. Transportation Plan

- a. For air travel, include information about the airline to be used, layover times, plans for transit to major airports (if not flying out of Medford), backup plans in case of delay or missed flights.
- b. If a bus travel is planned, check with the district office regarding current state requirements.

3. Lodging Plan

- a. Identify whether students would be staying at hotels (preferably in safe locations with interior hallways), with families in a home stay situation, or if large group sleeping accommodations, such as a gymnasium or church, will be used.
- b. If students will be staying with local families at their destination, these arrangements should be made in coordination with a trusted contact at the trip destination.

- c. Identify plan for making student room assignments (strategize for positive behavior, place “high risk” students in adult rooms), number of students per room, adult chaperone placement and duties, hall and room check plan.
 - d. Identify whether the planned hotel has the option of blocking inappropriate television channels.
 - e. Identify plans for curfew and lights out times.
4. Chaperone Plan
- a. Outline the proposed student-chaperone ratio, plans for chaperone training, expectations of chaperones (i.e., bed checks, escorting students who misbehave, foreign language skills, medical skills, etc.).
 - b. Discuss if and when students will be allowed “chaperone-free” time and how the safety of students will be managed during these times.
 - c. Assigning a group of students to each chaperone.
 - d. Chaperones are required to review rules with their group to ensure that everyone knows the rules.
5. Behavior Contract

Attach to the proposal a copy of the Student Behavior Contract and Parent Consent Forms that are required prior to the trip.

This proposal must be submitted to the district office one week prior to the regular business meeting of the Board in order for the Board to sufficiently review materials prior to discussing the proposal at the regular, monthly meeting.

Potentially High-Risk Students

The administrator and the teacher will develop a plan for potentially high-risk students (i.e., medical, behavior, 18 years old, graduates, etc.). The plan may include an “expectations” and “consequences” contract between the student, parents and staff. Upon review, it may be determined that some students should not attend the trip.

Transportation and Travel Arrangements

Since international trips will likely use air travel, it is advisable to use a recommended travel company specializing in student group travel. The benefits include translation services, coordination of lodging and ground transportation, and a variety of available travel insurance options.

Volunteer Chaperone Guidelines

1. Chaperones are invited to enjoy the trip and assist with supervision. Chaperones are not paid or reimbursed for their expenses relating to their costs while on the trip. For very expensive trips, the group may agree to apply some fundraised funds toward chaperone travel or lodging expenses.
2. No alcohol is allowed for chaperones or students.

3. Chaperone should have a cell phone and each student should have that number.
4. Effective supervision starts at the beginning of the trip and ends when the trip is over and parents have picked up their child.
5. Supervision is active. Adult chaperones should focus on students and be proactive about stopping inappropriate behavior before it begins. For example, the adults should not have to react to a problem but, instead, see the potential for a problem and stop it before the problem occurs.
6. To supervise students well, adults should spread out among students. The adults should not “clump” together away from students or be unaware of student behavior.
7. Immediately report serious infractions (i.e., smoking, drugs or alcohol, stealing, harassment, etc.) to a staff member.
8. Interact with students and share your expertise. Get to know as many student names as possible and use student names when addressing student behavior.
9. Help implement the monitoring strategy chosen by the instructor.
10. If a student is noncompliant, notify the instructor. Do not try to force students to comply.

Discipline Standards and Procedures

Staff will develop and communicate clear expectations before the trip to students and parents. Students and parents will sign a participation agreement stating that they have read, understood and will abide by expectations and accept possible consequences. Disciplinary action is at the discretion of the staff member(s) in charge. The decision will be based on the trip expectations, school rules and the severity of the behavior.

1. It is absolutely necessary that school-sponsored events are free from illegal activity.
2. Board policies JFCH - Alcohol and JFCI - Substance/Drug Abuse and its accompanying administrative regulations are in effect. Students who unlawfully possess, use, sell or supply drugs or alcohol at school-sponsored events will be subject to that policy.
3. Instructors and administrators are expected to show care and concern for our students. This includes actively supervising student behavior and responding to inappropriate or illegal activities.
4. “Reasonableness” is the guiding legal standard. What would a reasonable person do given the circumstances and policies that guide us?
5. The Board directs administrators and instructors to conduct prudent investigations when violations of school rules are suspected.

If possible, the investigation will be carried out by administrative staff. Parents should be notified as soon as is practical. When instructors find themselves without administrative support, they should follow these guidelines:

1. Identify the parties involved (both suspects and witnesses) and separate each individual as soon as possible. Have each student write out a detailed statement of what occurred.
2. Review each written statement and interview students to clarify any conflicting information. Have an adult, a third party observer, observe the interviews whenever possible. Take notes during the interview. Have students add any relevant information gleaned from the interview to their written statement. Have students sign and date the written statement indicating its truthfulness and accuracy.
3. Determine if you have sufficient cause that a violation of school rules has occurred.
4. Make every attempt to contact a school administrator and outline the concerns and suspicions. Follow the directions and instructions of the administrator for proceeding with the investigation.
5. After consultation with an administrator, the instructor may need to conduct a search if possession of illegal substances is suspected. These searches may be of the student's belongings (e.g., backpacks, suitcases, etc.) or the student's person. If a search of a student's person is required, law enforcement personnel may be utilized. Appropriate searches for illegal substances should be guided by Board policy JFG - Student Searches and are based on:
 - a. Individualized suspicion;
 - b. The level of danger presented by the object of the search;
 - c. The size of the object;
 - d. The nearness of the search to the student's body.
6. After completing the investigation, the instructor will consult with an administrator and decide to do one or more of the following:
 - a. End the trip and return to school;
 - b. Send individual students home, following Guidelines for Sending a Student Home Early from a Trip, below;
 - c. Continue with the trip while limiting the participation of suspected students;
 - d. Continue with the trip with no modifications.
7. As soon as is reasonably possible, parents should be notified by either instructors or administrators, regardless of the outcome of the investigation.
8. As soon as reasonably possible, the instructor should record in writing an incident summary and the steps taken to resolve the incident.
9. Upon returning to school, the instructor should conference with the appropriate administrator, review the course of action that was followed and turn over any written statements or other evidence that the instructor may have collected. Administrators will consult with the instructor, review the instructor's recommendations and decide upon the next steps in the discipline process.

When considering student testimony, administrators may use the following to guide their assessment of credibility (the student's school record, the age of the student and the relationship of the student to the investigation will all be considered in assessing credibility):

The investigating administrator will summarize the findings of the investigation, and meet with the reporting teacher to review findings.

IF the evidence is conclusive and shows a violation that should lead to discipline, move through the discipline process with the student.

IF the evidence shows a violation of school expectations, lesser consequences will be implemented, such as:

1. Exclusion from a school event;
2. Detention;
3. Conference with parents;
4. Behavior contract;
5. Drug and alcohol assessment with parental consent.

IF the evidence is not conclusive and it is difficult to surmise if inappropriate behavior occurred, then take no disciplinary action.

The investigating administrator and reporting teacher will meet with students and families involved, explain the results of the investigation, and inform the family of the course of action that was decided upon. If expulsion procedures are initiated, Board policy JGE - Expulsion will be followed. This policy guarantees a student's right to a hearing and outlines the procedure that will be followed for an expulsion hearing. It also outlines the appeal process.

Guidelines For Sending A Student Home Early From a Trip

If a student is to be sent home, an administrator will be consulted and parents will be contacted by a staff member. The staff member and parent(s) will develop a plan to get the student home at their own expense. If a nonstop ticket to the desired destination is not obtainable, it may be necessary for a chaperone to accompany the student home at the parent's expense or it may be necessary for a parent to come to the student.

A staff member must accompany the student to the airport or train depot and see that the proper ticket is purchased, itinerary and time schedules are confirmed and to see that the student has departed. The staff member will immediately notify parents and administrators of departure and arrival times and itinerary. An administrator will call to confirm that the student arrived home safely.

Non-School-Sponsored Trips

Teachers who wish to organize nonschool sponsored trips may do so through accredited travel groups. Teachers should not advertise the opportunity using class time, school e-mail lists or other school communication methods. If teachers use classrooms during off hours for a meeting related to the trip, they must complete a use of facility form and pay any relevant fees. Teachers should not use district copiers or other district supplies to communicate with students about the trip.

International Travel Check List

Supervision

- Determined how much supervision is needed based on the size of the group, the nature of the group, the location of the trip and the purpose of the trip.
- Meet with chaperones and reviewed their responsibilities, trip rules and consequences.
- Meet with students and reviewed trip rules and consequences.
- Notify parents of the trip rules and consequences.
- Develop a plan for potentially high-risk students (i.e., medical, behavior, 18 years old, graduate, etc.). An “expectations and consequences” contract has been written, if appropriate.
- Inform chaperones of those students.

Note: Training from a certified trainer is required before dispensing medicine.

Lodging

- Determine when students must be in their rooms and what time lights are turned off.
- Inform students, chaperones and parents.
- The hotel, if being used, has interior hallways and is in a safe area.
- Arrangements with hotel management are made to blocking inappropriate TV channels.
- Meet with students and chaperones to review appropriate hotel behavior.
- Students and adults are assigned to rooms in a way that promotes positive behavior.
- Establish a monitoring strategy (i.e., an adult in each room, adults in adjoining rooms, random room checks, hallway monitors, etc.) that is appropriate for the group and trip.

Other

- Emergency phone list/parent phone tree is made and distributed appropriately.
- First aid pack is assembled, including the Medicine and Medicine Administration Log (Note: training from a certified trainer is required before dispensing medicine).
- Itinerary and emergency list given to office manager.
- School personnel affected by trip (i.e. principal, teachers) have been notified about who is attending the field trip.
- Medical release forms are collected. (*From whom and where are they kept?*)
- All students have been offered additional insurance options and/or signed waiver forms.
- Signed student behavior contracts have been collected for each student. (*Where are they kept?*)