



Merit Academy Field Trip Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the safety of students, teachers and chaperones on field trips, thereby allowing teachers to maintain control and to maximize the learning opportunity. This policy also provides guidelines for acceptable behavior for students and chaperones, to address problems that have already occurred, and prevent new ones from occurring.

Local Field Trips

Students in kindergarten through eighth grade are provided with the opportunity to attend local, non-overnight, field trips throughout the year.

Local Field Trip Fees and Permissions

All field trip fees are due on a designated date prior to the field trip as specified in the permission slip. In the event a student has not, by the designated date, remitted payment for fees and permission associated with a field trip, the student will not be allowed to attend the field trip. The student will remain at school and appropriate schoolwork or activities will be assigned.

Transportation

Transportation for trips will be provided by buses whenever possible. Daily route requirements may limit bus availability. Therefore, Merit Academy may make arrangements to hire other available commercial transportation for field trips when timeframes and costs allow. Merit Academy also has the option of using parent drivers to transport students with the permission of the impacted parents, as set forth in Parent Drivers/Chaperones below.

Parent Responsibilities

If, according to Colorado state law, a child requires a car seat to travel in a car, it is the parent's responsibility to provide a car seat for the child for the fieldtrip. Merit Academy reserves the right to not take a child if it is determined that the child requires a car seat and one is not provided.



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Parent Drivers/Chaperones

Requests for parent field trip drivers will be made by homeroom teachers or their designee. The responsibility of driving a group of students includes the requirement that all drivers must follow Merit Academy's guidelines and expectations for parent drivers. If a parent fails to follow these guidelines, they may be prohibited from driving in the future.

Parents will indicate their willingness to drive/chaperone on their child's field trip permission form. Parents will be notified if they have been selected as field trip drivers/chaperones. The homeroom teacher or designee will notify volunteers if they are needed for the trip, and will make every effort to provide notification of a field trip at least one week in advance. The teacher will submit a list of drivers to the office in advance so that the office can verify that the drivers' "Authorization to use Privately Owned Vehicles on School Business" form is accurate, current, and complete. Every attempt will be made to rotate parent drivers so that all parents interested in going on a field trip will be given an opportunity.

Parents not selected to chaperone or drive may not attend the field trip with their child unless they have requested in advance, and received, written permission from the teacher to attend. Merit Academy administration reserves the right to deny any parent permission to drive for and/or attend any trip, at any time, for any reason.

Each homeroom teacher, or their designee, will organize the transportation and determine:

- Which students each parent driver will chaperone;
- All students with emergency/rescue medication or medication scheduled to be administered while on the field trip, must be accompanied by a teacher during transportation and at the destination. All medication must be carried and administered by a Merit Academy employee or licensed nurse.
- Departure time;
- Route that will be taken to the destination;
- Where to assemble upon arrival;



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- Where to assemble before departure from the field trip site;
- What to do if a group returns to school before the teacher.

Parent drivers will be provided with the following information:

- A map and contact information for the destination;
- Emergency contact names and phone numbers including the teacher's cell phone;
- Any additional medical information, or medications, required for a student in that parent's group, including who has the medication and information on what to do in an emergency;
- Information on any allergies for students in the parent's group.

Parent Driver Guidelines

Each chaperone is responsible for abiding by the following guidelines:

- Do not use a cell phone while driving.
- File a current and correct "Authorization to Use Privately-Owned Vehicle on Merit Academy Business" form with the Merit Academy Office, with appropriate proof of insurance. Actually drive the vehicle cited in the information provided to the school.
- Equip the car with the number of seat belts as required by Colorado state law for each child. If a parent is concerned that a child in their car requires a car seat and does not have one, they should bring it to the immediate attention of the teacher. Parents may provide booster seats for children who would be outside of the legal description.
- Provide only G-rated entertainment in the vehicle.
- Do not stop at any location not on the itinerary, unless permission has been granted in advance, in writing, by the teacher.
- Maintain disciplined behavior for all students in the vehicle during the trip.



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Parent Chaperone Guidelines

Each chaperone is responsible for abiding by the following guidelines:

- Siblings may not attend any field trip.
- Do not talk on a cell phone for an extended conversation anytime the chaperone is responsible for students on the trip, except as required for student health, safety, welfare, or to get the students to and from the destination.
- Do not provide snacks to any student.
- Know where the students assigned to your group are at all times.
- Do not leave your group unattended at any time during the field trip.
- Ensure your group maintains behavior standards consistent with Merit Academy expectations.
- Do not give permission to students to do anything that contradicts the written or spoken instructions of the teacher or administrator in charge.

Chaperone to Student Ratio

The Merit Academy adult-to-student ratio is generally 1:10 for third through eighth grade and 1:5 for Kindergarten through second grade. This guideline applies to all local, non-overnight field trips.

Exceptions

In the event that a parent is not selected to drive on a field trip and is not comfortable allowing their student to ride with someone else, that parent may choose to drive the student to and from the field trip. The parent needs to alert the teacher as soon as possible so that all of the pertinent information can be copied and made available. The parent must deliver and pick up their child at



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the designated location at the designated time. If the parent is late for pick-up, the child will be returned to school with another driver or on the bus.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to display respect for others, self-restraint, and good manners on all field trips just as they are in a Merit Academy classroom. Behavior that violates school rules or jeopardizes the safety of others will be documented and reported to the appropriate administrator and consequences will be determined per the Merit Academy Discipline Policy. Disrespectful, insubordinate, or unsafe behavior on a field trip is unacceptable and may result in exclusion from activities in addition to disciplinary action at school. In extreme cases, parents will be contacted and asked to arrange for their child to be picked up immediately.

Electronic Devices

Each student is responsible for abiding by the following guidelines:

1. Cell Phones: Student cell phones are not allowed on local field trips.
2. Digital Cameras: Digital cameras that are only a camera may be allowed at the discretion of the trip leader.
3. All Other Electronic Devices: All other electronic devices (iPads/tablets, Kindles/e-readers, gaming devices) are not allowed on local field trips.

Student Attendance

Merit Academy academic field trips are planned to enhance learning and to provide opportunities and experiences that are not available in the classroom. Students not attending the field trips must attend school for the day where they will be given class work assigned by their teachers and will be supervised by school staff. Should the student not attend school that day, the Attendance Policy will apply.