

Best Practices for Overnight Student Activities

Determine the Educational Benefit

1. Relationship to curriculum
2. Association to a specific course,
3. Related to interscholastic sports or performing arts,
4. Originating from a school-sponsored club
5. Appropriate for the age group

Chaperones/Supervision

1. Ensure adequate and proper supervision is available. All chaperones and supervisors are to be at least 21 years of age or older
2. Coed overnight activities require male and female chaperones and supervisors
3. At least one (1) school district employee must be a supervisor
4. All supervisors and chaperones are to be from within the district or immediate family members of the students involved.
5. All chaperones/supervisors are to complete a "Volunteer Information Form" prior to the activity
6. All chaperones/supervisors are to complete the Armatus ® Online Training prior to the activity
7. The recommended ratio is one (1) adult per 10 students maximum.
 - a. It is important to have enough chaperones and supervisors to share overnight shifts of one or two hours
 - b. No fewer than five (5) individuals, minimum two (2) adults and three (3) students go on any overnight activity
8. Male and female chaperones and supervisors are to sleep in separate rooms, unless married or domestic partners.
9. Adults and students are to sleep in separate rooms, unless the adult is a parent of the student.
 - a. No other students are allowed to join parent/student sleeping arrangements

Required Forms and Student Information

1. Field Trip/Excursion Authorization and Medical Treatment Authorization with attached itinerary

- a. Secures permission and emergency contact information
2. Obtain signed code of conduct agreements from student/parent/guardian prior to departure.
3. Secure medical release forms and medical insurance information
4. Establish medication administration protocol

Transportation

1. Chaperones and assigned students are to travel in the same vehicle.
2. "In Flight" operations of aircraft are totally and absolutely excluded from all coverages under the VCSSEFA liability Coverage Program and the VCSSEFA Coverage Memorandum.
 - a. "In Flight" means the period from the time an aircraft or airborne craft moves forward in taking off or in attempting to take off until it has completed its landing.
3. Refer to "Minimum Guidelines for Ocean Field Trips Involving Watercraft."
4. Refer to "Best Practices for Student Activity Transportation."

Accommodations

1. Hotels are the preferred accommodations
 - a. Arrange for all student rooms to be on the same corridor
 - b. Arrange for chaperone rooms to be adjacent to assigned student rooms
2. Male and female students are to sleep in separate rooms.
3. Accommodations are to be located in a safe area of the destination.
4. Accommodations are to be clean and secure.

Free time

1. Develop a defined itinerary. Minimize free time.
2. Chaperones are to accompany assigned students at all times other than in the hotel room(s) and in restrooms.
3. Chaperones are to choose age-appropriate dining, entertainment, and shopping establishments.
4. A certified lifeguard is to be present for all "free time" pool and other water activities

Curfew

1. Establish reasonable curfew times

2. Conduct room/bed checks
 - a. In-room checks are to be made by two chaperones, at least one of which should be the same gender as the students in the room
 - b. Non-intrusive example: Masking tape on the door and door jamb will indicate a door that has been opened
 - c. Students that must leave their room are to report immediately to a supervisor or chaperone
3. Plan for and discuss post-curfew emergencies, evacuation, and head count procedures

Discipline

1. Hold a planning meeting with parents and volunteers prior to the activity
2. Define rules and enforcement for student behavior while on the activity
 - a. Distribute code of conduct identifying acceptable and non-acceptable activities
 - b. Explain ramifications
3. Prohibited practices include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Drugs, alcohol, and/or smoking
 - b. Free time violations
 - c. Curfew violations
 - d. Room violations
 - e. Hazing, bullying, and/or harassment of all types

Out of Country Travel

1. Consider non-direct sponsorships
 - a. Notify parents that the district is not involved in the activity
 - b. Sample Language
 - i. "This activity is not endorsed by or affiliated with _____
School District"
2. Select a qualified travel consultant
 - a. Confirm registration and adherence to "Seller of Travel" law
 - b. Secure contractual hold harmless and indemnification agreements
 - c. Obtain liability and fidelity (bond) insurance
3. Consider additional insurance
 - a. Travel accident/illness insurance
 - i. Students, chaperones and supervisors

- b. Travel insurance for kidnapping and criminal defense
 - c. Insurance for emergency trip cancellation
 - d. To avoid trouble, it is prudent to purchase Mexican automobile insurance when members of a school district cross the border.
4. Check State Department warnings for foreign travel and disease control
 5. Identify major medical facilities available at the destination(s).
 6. Passports are required for travel outside the United States, including Mexico and Canada.
 - a. Photocopies of the information page of passports of all participants are to be kept on file at the school or district.