

**Field Trips**  
**and**  
**Extracurricular Activities**  
**Guidelines and Procedures**

**St. Lucie**  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

***AN "A" RATED  
DESTINATION DISTRICT***



**February 24, 2026**  
**Revised**

# FIELD TRIPS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic field trips are defined as a school sponsored excursion from the campus and an extension of a classroom activity to serve as a laboratory experience. The field trip, and activities engaged in during the field trip, should be an extension of classroom instruction. Trips may be scheduled during normal class hours or for periods outside of class, such as weekends. Academic field trips should relate directly to the content of the course or subject. Field trips should expand children's knowledge through hands on, minds on teaching and learning experiences. Clear and specific objectives must be submitted by the person requesting the trip. Care should be taken to limit the duplication of field trips and minimize the loss of regular instructional time.

Academic field trips should include ALL students. No student shall be excluded because of inability to pay. No student shall be excluded without permission from the principal and advance notification to parents. No student shall be excluded because of program placement or disability.

Extracurricular trips are defined as trips which are school sponsored or connected, but which do not necessarily fit the definition of an instructional field trip. Recreational, enrichment, incentive field trips, and other trips not directly related to instruction should be scheduled during non-instructional time. **Authorization will not be granted for trip requests to theme parks on school days during instructional time.**

\*Special Note: Fund raising for field trips which require financing should not be undertaken until the request has been approved at all levels. Emergencies do arise; however, careful planning should alleviate the need to begin fundraising before a trip is approved.

**ALL FIELD TRIPS (except for Athletics) MUST be submitted via Travel Tracker four to six weeks in advance to ensure use of School Board Buses. Failure to do so within the time frame listed may result in a shortage of driver availability. This window of submission also allows for the requests to receive higher levels of approval (Executive Director, Superintendent, School Board) if needed.**

Walking field trips require use of the approved permission slip.

Budgets for athletics, band, and cheerleaders were transferred from the transportation department to specific project budgets at each school beginning in the 2006-07 school year. To enhance budgetary control and site-based management, the budgets have been kept apart using the following project numbers: 2014 = athletic field trips, and 2015 = band/cheerleaders. Cost Strips must be included on all requests, including athletics, band, cheerleaders, parades and festivals transportation. Assistance may be available for festival and parade transport through the Superintendent's Community Service Fund. Approval for use of this fund must be granted through the Director of Transportation's offices. (Please contact these offices in advance to determine availability of funds). We urge all teams/schools with close proximity venues to schedule buses together in order to cut costs.

## APPROVAL OF FIELD TRIPS

Sponsors for educational field trips or student travel to approved school activities should first discuss the proposed trip and/or activity with the Principal and obtain approval to proceed with plans for the field trip.

A "Teacher/Sponsor Field Trip Request Form" should be completed for all field trips and submitted to the Principal or designee for approval (schools are no longer required to send the packet to the District. After the request has been approved by principal or designee, it should be entered into the Travel Tracker online system). Local field trips must be approved by the Principal and Executive Director of Schools. Out of district field trips must be approved by the Principal and Executive Director of Schools. Overnight field trips for secondary students must be approved by the principal, Executive Director of Schools and the Superintendent. Overnight field trips for elementary students must be approved by the Principal, Executive Director of Schools, Superintendent, and the School Board. Out of state field trips must be approved by the principal, Executive Director of Schools, Superintendent and the School Board.

### PARENT PERMISSION AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Permission for a student to participate in an educational field trip, or travel as a member of a school class or group to approved off-campus activities, must be obtained from the student's parent or guardian.

Three forms are approved as parent permission forms and should be used accordingly. Copies of all forms may be obtained from the print shop.

1. "Parental Permission Form" (approved by the School Board 6/29/04) - To be used by all classes or groups except band, choral groups, and athletic teams, for each trip or activity.
2. "Medical Release Form for Out-of-County or Overnight Travel" - To be used by groups other than athletics. Each student must complete one form which remains in effect the entire school year unless canceled in writing by the parent or guardian.
3. "Parent and Player Agreement" - To be used by members of athletic teams. Each student must complete one form which remains in effect the entire school year unless canceled in writing by the parent or guardian.

In addition to either the "Parental Permission Form" or "Medical Release Form for Out-of-County or Overnight Travel," any trip, or extracurricular activity, involving experiential education or adventure-based activity where the student will participate voluntarily in any physical activity that includes the risk of exposure to hazards that could result in serious injury or death, the form **"FULL AND COMPLETE WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY"** should be obtained from the student's parent or guardian.

The following are some examples of trips and activities that require the form **"FULL AND COMPLETE WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY."** For assistance in determining use of this form, contact Risk Management. This list is intended to be illustrative, not exhaustive:

- |                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> sea camp | <input type="radio"/> physical activity | <input type="radio"/> hands-on environmental   |
| <input type="radio"/> water    | <input type="radio"/> physical exercise | <input type="radio"/> clubs involving physical |
| <input type="radio"/> obstacle | <input type="radio"/> rope course       |  |

# SCHOOL BUS FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES

## Guidelines for Use of School Board Buses

The use of School Board buses for field trips is extremely limited. Approved trips must:

1. Be taken between the hours of 9:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. Monday through Friday.
2. Be within the Treasure Coast area (St. Lucie, Martin, Indian River, Palm Beach, Brevard and Okeechobee Counties).
3. Be academic. Specific objectives that correlate with the common core standards / Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS), match the grade level's scope and sequence, and are integrated with a program of instructional study must be approved by the Principal or designee and submitted to the appropriate Executive Director of Schools via the Travel Tracker online system.

Trips that meet these guidelines will be approved on a first come, first served bus availability. Requests to use School Board buses for trips to theme parks will NOT be approved.

**\*Special Note:** During the 2019-2020 school year, principals are requested to work with staff to develop a list of appropriate field trips for each grade level. The agreed upon list should eliminate duplication of field trips across grade levels, minimize the loss of regular instructional time, and minimize costs for students.

## Request Procedures

Bus Trip Requests must be made on the Travel Tracker system. In order to gain access to Travel Tracker, please see your schools designated Field Trip Coordinator or Administration Staff. For all athletics, please see your AD.

If you need assistance, you may e-mail Jennifer Sears ([jennifer.sears@stlucieschools.org](mailto:jennifer.sears@stlucieschools.org)) or Nerissa Matthews ([nerissa.matthews@stlucieschools.org](mailto:nerissa.matthews@stlucieschools.org)) for the link.

### Please note the following:

- A cost strip is required for ALL trips at the time of input. Requests will not be processed without a cost strip. Requests to charge field trips to any cost strip other than the school's general 10100 account must be approved by Accounting. Requests without cost strips or required information for outside agency billing will default to the school's general fund 10100 account.
- After a request is inputted, an e-mail will be sent to the designated "approver" for your school. The approver must sign on to the system under their e-mail and click the radio button to approve the trip.
- Once the trip is approved by the appropriate Executive Director, the request is electronically transmitted to the Transportation Department for bus and driver

assignment. At this point, the system will not allow a requester or approver to make changes after the trip has been fully approved. You must contact Transportation field trip staff via e-mail or phone for any changes that need to be made.

- Any additional or helpful information for the driver or Transportation staff should be placed in the Comments section at the top of the Travel Request.
- If a lift-equipped bus is required on any field trip, this **MUST** be noted on the Trip Request form. You must indicate the number of wheelchairs that will be transported, car seats, harnesses, and any other special equipment in the Vehicles Needed section.
- While the Travel Tracker system may ask you the number of buses needed, Transportation staff will ultimately determine the number of buses required based on your answers to the questions in reference to numbers of students and adults, as well as any equipment needs.

Accurate information on the departure time and the number of passengers is required. Reporting time at the school may be requested up to 30 minutes prior to departure to allow for loading equipment, uniforms, and students, and should be indicated in the Comments section. Do not overestimate the number of passengers. The number of passengers should include students and coach/sponsor, and chaperones. At the time of loading, a list of all passengers should be given to the driver(s). Any changes to student counts need to be submitted to us at least 48 hours prior to date of trip.

#### Cancellations/No Shows

Trip cancellations and/or rescheduled trips should be made at least 24 hours in advance. **The trip should be cancelled or rescheduled using the Travel Tracker system.** If the trip is cancelled/rescheduled within 12 hours of the scheduled trip, the school requesting the trip will be charged the full cost of the trip. This charge is to cover payment to the driver as required by union contract. Exceptions may be made for weather, or other reasons outside the school's control.

#### Lack of Available Buses

All field trip requests are expected to have **all levels of approval at least 14 days in advance** to ensure scheduling. Should there be too many requests for field trips on a given day; the requests will be filled in the order in which they are received. The requesting sponsor will be notified as early as possible that an alternate form of transportation must be arranged. Transportation staff will attempt to combine trips when possible to allow all students to participate if buses and/or drivers are not available.

#### Time of Trips

Field trips may be scheduled for a 9:45 a.m. departure and a 12:45 p.m. return. No transportation will be available outside of these times. If you schedule field trips outside of these times, you will need to secure transportation through one of the approved charter companies from the Purchasing department. Because regular drivers are scheduled for daily PM routes, they are on a tight time-schedule for returning to school. All students must be loaded and ready to return in order to arrive back at their campus no later than 12:45 p.m. The driver will supply the sponsor with a boarding time for the return. This time must be adhered to in order to assure returning to the school on schedule.

## Driver Instructions for Waiting

Drivers will be instructed to wait no more than 15 minutes at the school after the scheduled departure time. If the students are not boarding by this time, the driver will notify Dispatch and return to the Transportation Compound. A no-show/non-cancellation will be charged the full cost of the trip.

## Tolls, Parking, Maps and Directions

It is the trip sponsor's responsibility to provide directions to the driver for reaching the destination prior to departure. Please be sure you know where you are going **BEFORE** you leave town so that you can obtain directions. It is the sponsor's responsibility to cover all parking costs and tolls. Drivers are **NOT** responsible for parking costs or tolls. If a teacher/chaperone requests the driver to take a toll route, the teacher/chaperone ***must*** have SunPass, EZ Pass or cash, or the driver will take a non-toll route. Non-toll routes may require more time and mileage, so please check in advance as we may need to adjust time of departure. Unattended toll booths require SunPass or EZ Pass, and drivers may not run tolls.

## Breakdowns

Every effort is made by our fleet maintenance department to ensure that all buses are roadworthy and ready to be taken out of town at any time.

In the event of a breakdown or needed repairs while on the road, the bus driver will call the Field Trip and Activities personnel who will contact the appropriate mechanic. If you are out-of-district, a list of local district mechanics who are on duty to handle road emergencies will be called. Every effort will be made to minimize the time you are inconvenienced. Emergencies should be directed to Jennifer Sears at (772) 216-6420. When buses break down, please remind parents that they may not transport children other than their own. Mandates regarding the Jessica Lunsford Act and prior parental consent prevent us from authorizing parents to transport students when buses break down.

## Gas Cards

The Director's secretary has a sign-out procedure for drivers to obtain fuel credit cards. The cards must be obtained by the driver at least one day prior to the trip. The cards may not be used for any purchase other than fuel for district-owned buses. The cards must be returned to the secretary with signed charge slips indicating mileage, bus number, date and driver name for proper accounting.

## School Bus Field Trip Rates

The rate for school bus transportation is as follows:

- \$1.50 per mile round trip from the closest bus compound using Google Maps:
  - North Compound – 601 S. 29<sup>th</sup> St., Fort Pierce 34947
  - South Compound – 325 NW Commerce Park Dr., Port St. Lucie 34986
- \$35.00 per hour for driver time. Allow approximately one extra hour to your estimated trip time for pre-trip safety inspection,

fueling the bus, driver time from their last drop location or compound to and from your school, and sweep time.

- If a bus aide is required to accompany a special needs student (wheelchair or other qualifying condition), then the aide will be billed to the school at a rate of \$15.00 per hour.
- Estimated total charges can be obtained on the trip request, or by e-mailing the field trip coordinator.
- For out-of-county trips, drivers will submit an Out of District Travel Expense Report (FIN0023) within one week of the completion of the trip
- for meal reimbursement that will be charged to the school. Transportation employees are eligible for meal allowances per Union agreement, and according to SLCPS Policy 7.52. To avoid being billed for meals, a meal must be offered to the driver/aide and indicated in the appropriate location on the field trip ticket. The meal may be the same as packed for others on the trip, or a purchased one, at the school's discretion. The employee may decline the offer if they so choose but will forfeit the allowance as long as the offer is documented on the trip ticket. If a driver is not offered a meal, but is eligible under the Policy, the trip ticket must indicate NO that a meal was not offered in the appropriate place at the bottom and be signed by the teacher/chaperone.
- Transportation must be notified by school staff immediately of any changes to personnel with respect to entering and approving trip requests and paying invoices.

Schools will be billed by monthly invoices. After five days, during which schools may dispute billings, the invoices are sent to the Finance Department for processing deductions from applicable school accounts. Hard checks are no longer to be sent to the Transportation Department; instead checks should be deposited into the appropriate school account listed as the cost strip on the trip request.

### Overnight Field Trips

All field trip requests requiring overnight stays must include a complete itinerary of activities and directions to the location. Advance arrangements to cover the cost of hotel/motel rooms, toll costs, and meals on a field trip requiring an overnight stay shall be made by the sponsor for the bus driver. Driver gender may not be requested due to union contract.

### Field Trip Lunches

Field trip lunches may be ordered in advance for any student or adult from the school cafeteria. Students and adults will be charged their regular lunch price for field trip lunches. Lunches will be packed in coolers and available for pick up on the day of the field trip. Field trip lunches should be requested using the Field Trip Lunch Request Form (FOS0015) and returned to the school cafeteria manager at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip. The Field Trip Request Form is available online and can also be secured from the Cafeteria Manager. Space for coolers for lunches should be taken into consideration when passenger counts are entered.

## Food and Drink on the Bus

There are occasions when students and sponsors will want to stop for food while on out of town trips. Due to the safety hazards and insect problems which have resulted from this practice, students are encouraged not to eat or drink on the bus. Exceptions can be made by the sponsor for long trips. If excessive damage or dirt and trash from spilled food and

drink occur, the school will be charged a fee for the clean-up service. The school principal will be contacted and the matter resolved. A fee may be required where appropriate.

## Sponsors

One or more sponsors are required on all field trips. Sponsors are required to ride on the bus and assist with passenger management to and from the event. Each field trip sponsor is required by School Board Policy to carry documentation of emergency contact information. The sponsor is to notify the school (principal) and the parent in the event a student is injured. Teachers/sponsors going on field trips must be trained to give medications if they have a student with med orders (EpiPens, diabetic care, etc.). Policies and procedures for medication administration on field trips should comply with policies and procedures for medication administration on school campuses. The Health Department nurse will assist in this training provided she is given adequate notice (not the morning of the field trip). The sponsor should remain with students until all have been released to a parent or guardian.

## Unscheduled Stops

Unscheduled stops (except in emergencies) are not allowed. The return to the school will be the final stop. Students are not to be delivered to their home, but taken back to the school. Special considerations will be made and subject to a fee.

## School Bus Capacities

Transportation staff will determine the number of buses needed based on your responses to questions on the trip request. Here are the guidelines used to provide a safe, comfortable ride for everyone. Three students per seat for elementary grades Pre-K to 3, two students per seat for grades 4 – 12, and one adult per seat. Below is an estimate of passengers allowed per bus. Please deduct three students for each adult rider.

### Bus capacity on In-County trips

For large capacity buses – approximately 77 passengers for elementary grades Pre-K to 3, and 65 passengers for middle- and high-school.

For standard capacity buses – approximately 65 passengers for elementary grades Pre-K to 3, and 44 passengers for middle- and high-school.

Bus capacity on Out-of-County trips – 52 total passengers for large capacity buses, and 44 total passengers for standard buses.

## Federal Motor Carrier (Charter Bus) Procedures

Charter buses may be necessary when school buses or drivers are not available. Schools may request the use of charter buses for out-of-town trips. Schools will be responsible for

obtaining and paying for charter bus rentals.

### Private Vehicles

The use of private vehicles for educational field trips or transportation for school-sponsored groups is discouraged. However, prior to using a private vehicle to transport students, should it become necessary, the principal shall:

1. Verify that the driver of the vehicle is an adult and has a valid Florida driver's license.
2. Require the owner to show evidence of insurance in force on the vehicle prior to and during the time it is used to transport students. Minimum limits of \$100,000 per person, \$300,000 per accident for bodily injury, and \$50,000 property damage.
3. Verify and keep on file the owner's insurance information on the form "Statement of Insurance on Private Vehicles."

Private vehicles which may not be used by schools to transport students to school-sponsored events are pleasure vans, mini vans registered as vans, and four-wheel drive vehicles. Fifteen passenger vans may not be used.

**Note:** When the transportation of students is necessary or practical in a motor vehicle owned or operated by a school board other than a school bus, such transportation must be provided in designated seating positions in a passenger car not to exceed 8 students or in a multipurpose passenger vehicle designed to transport 10 or fewer persons which meets all applicable federal motor vehicle safety standards. Multipurpose passenger vehicles classified as utility vehicles with a wheelbase of 110 inches or less which are required by federal motor vehicle standards to display a rollover warning label may not be used.

When students are transported in motor vehicles, the occupant crash protection system provided by the vehicle manufacturer must be used unless the student's physical condition prohibits such use. FS 2000-313 Section 2 (1) (d)

### Transportation Telephone List

Field Trip Office Hours 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Dispatch Hours: 4:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Transportation Department Main Number:  
(772) 204-RIDE (7433)

Jennifer Sears, Field Trip and Activities Manager Office:

(772) 344-4497 Cell: (772) 216-6420

email: [jennifer.sears@stlucieschools.org](mailto:jennifer.sears@stlucieschools.org)

or

Nerissa Matthews, Field Trip

Secretary: (772) 340-7186

Email: [nerissa.matthews@stlucieschools.org](mailto:nerissa.matthews@stlucieschools.org)

Field Trip Office Fax: (772) 340-7125

After 6:00 p.m. and on Weekends,  
Field Trip Manager (or person on duty) Cell Phone: (772) 216-6420  
Breakdowns: Fleet Manager Mark Cochenour @ (772)-216-0126  
If no answer, you may call Coordinator Jimmy Hardison @ (772)-370-0787 or Director Jacunti Ephfrom @ (772) 200-6539

## **CHAPERONES**

All educational field trips and other school sponsored student travel must be adequately supervised and chaperoned by a faculty member. A certified faculty member will be designated as sponsor, and other staff members or parents designated as chaperones (as defined by School Board Policy 4.44) and approved by the principal. The number of chaperones will be based on the number of students participating and the specific needs of the trip.

For trips that extend outside the regular school hours, the supervising teacher is responsible for students until they are released to parents.

## **ITINERARY**

An itinerary of the trip activities must be filed in the principal's office by the sponsor or sponsoring organization. Two (2) school contact persons, not making the trip, must be identified for parents, with each contact person's phone number in order to respond to calls or questions concerning the trip. Parents must be provided the name and telephone numbers of the two contact persons. A list of students not attending the field trip and their physical locations on campus (if applicable) must be left with the principal or his/her designee.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

All arrangements for accommodations while on an educational field trip or school-sponsored student travel must be reviewed and approved by the principal/designee before travel begins. The Florida High School Activities Association hotel/motel reports are to be submitted by the sponsor at the conclusion of the trip as it applies.

## **COST OF THE TRIP**

Provision must be made for all students who are unable to pay. Consideration of ability to pay must be given in order that field trips do not become a financial burden on parents.

It is recommended that teachers take advantage of local opportunities for field trips. Souvenir shopping is strongly discouraged. District and school procedures must be followed for collecting money and drafting checks.

## INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE

An educational field trip is an extension of the classroom and regular classroom instruction.

Specific instructional objective(s) should be included in planning the activity since approval is based largely on the educational benefit to the students participating in the field trip. Consideration must also be given to students keeping up with instruction in other classes and making up work missed as a result of participation in the field trip.

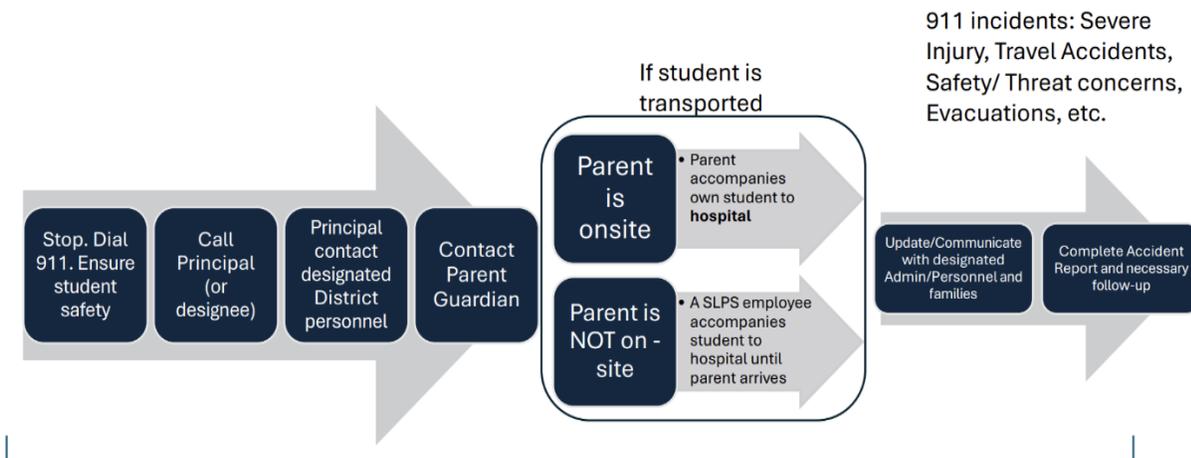
Where possible, trips should be scheduled without loss of school time; i.e., student holidays, weekends, spring vacation, or during the summer vacation. In the event a trip would require students to be absent from school for more than a day, the trip must be approved by the principal or designee, the Executive Director of Schools, and the Superintendent.

Overnight field trips for elementary students are strongly discouraged; however, all overnight field trips by elementary school students must be approved by the School Board. Before school approval is granted, the following should be considered:

1. Costs of an overnight trip are greater as additional meals and sleeping accommodations become necessary.
2. Supervision responsibility of chaperones increases greatly when the field trip extends beyond the school day.

## Severe Incident Response Protocol

### Severe Incident Response Protocol (for coaches/ sponsors)



Prioritize safety for all students, including those involved in the emergency. Do not speak to the press about injuries—medical details may violate FERPA.

## FORM LIST

TEACHER(S) / SPONSOR(S) FIELD TRIP REQUEST FORM

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/OPE0004.pdf>

PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM (English Spanish Creole)

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/OPE0002A.pdf>

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/OPE0002B.pdf>

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/OPE0002C.pdf>

STATEMENT OF INSURANCE ON PRIVATE VEHICLES

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/SEC0032.pdf>

MEDICAL RELEASE FORM FOR OUT-OF-COUNTY OR OVERNIGHT TRAVEL FOR BAND,  
CHEERLEADING AND OTHER NON-ATHLETIC EVENTS (English Spanish Creole)

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/SEC0023A.pdf>

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/SEC0023B.pdf>

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/SEC0023C.pdf>

FULL AND COMPLETE WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY (English Spanish Creole)

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/RMD0004A.pdf>

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/RMD0004B.pdf>

<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/forms/RMD0004C.pdf>