FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER STUDENT TRAVEL

The School Committee recognizes the educational value of school-sponsored trips as a means of extending the curriculum and supporting student participation in academic, artistic, and athletic activities, performances and competitions. In addition, some school-sponsored trips may provide social experiences and contribute to the development of a positive school culture.

This policy provides guidance for the various kinds of trips that may be sponsored by the Madawaska School Department.

Field Trips

“Field trip” means a trip that takes place during the school day and is organized and conducted by one or more Madawaska School Department employees as a means of accomplishing particular curriculum objectives. All students within the class or grade, or curriculum related subgroup within a class, will be eligible to participate.

All field trips must be approved in advance by the building principal.

Teachers and principals will be expected to consider the following factors in planning and approval of field trips:

A. Objectives of the proposed trip and the anticipated learning outcomes;

B. Specific learning activities to be experienced during the trip;

C. Suitability of the activity and distance traveled to the age of students;

D. Mode and availability of transportation, with school bus transportation arranged so as not to disrupt school bus schedules;

E. Arrangements for meals (if applicable);

F. Availability of funding for all necessary expenses through the school budget or other appropriate sources.
In addition, the School Committee requires that:

Parents/guardians must give written permission for field trip participation and are responsible to notify the school (in written or electronic form) if they do not want their student(s) to participate in an activity.

**Exception:** Written consent is not required for events/activities within Madawaska or between MES and MMHS, however; parents must be informed of their student(s) leaving their assigned school. Instead, parents must be given at least 48-hour notice prior to their student(s) leaving school property for any reason other than in emergency management situation. Notification can be provided to parents using Power School, text, phone, calls, e-mails or by other mechanisms used by the school to send out mass alerts, being mindful to contact only those parents/guardians of students involved in that activity.

**Competition Trips**

“Competition trip” means any trip related to an academic, artistic, athletic, or other student competition or performance that involves individual students or teams. Any competition trip that is outside of those scheduled for the year must be approved in advance by the Superintendent. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding through the school budget or other sources.

**Other School-Sponsored Trips**

Other school-sponsored trips are those that are organized and conducted by one or more employee(s) of the Madawaska School Department as a supplement to the curriculum, as a class social activity, or as an activity planned by a student club or organization. Such trips may include overnight, long-distance in-state or out-of-state travel, or foreign travel. To be school-sponsored, the trip must relate directly to the curriculum or to activities for which the student club is organized and field trip requirements above apply to these trips.

Participation in such trips is entirely voluntary. There shall be no extra credit awarded for participation and no loss of credit for not taking a trip.

Participation may be limited to students taking courses related to the purpose of the trip or to students who are affiliated with the student club or organization planning the trip.

The School Committee Board must approve, in advance, any trips involving out of state travel and all overnight and foreign trips. Approval may be contingent upon availability of funding from the school budget and other sources, including student
fundraising. Staff or administrators seeking approval for school-sponsored trips must complete proper forms/paperwork.

Students participating in field trips and other school-sponsored trips must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with School Committee policies and school rules. Students who violate School Committee policies or school rules will be subject to disciplinary consequences.

Non-School-Sponsored Travel

Travel organized by the Madawaska School Department employees, parents or others that is not an extension of the instructional program or school-sponsored activities and has not been approved as a school-sponsored trip in compliance with this policy will be considered a non-school-sponsored trip.

All responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips lies with the individual(s) or group(s) organizing them. The School Committee accepts no responsibility for non-school-sponsored trips, and organizers should be aware that such trips or excursions are not covered by the school unit’s liability insurance.

To minimize the impact of these trips on the instructional program and operation of the schools, the School Committee strongly encourages organizers/sponsors to schedule non-school-sponsored trips during weekends and/or vacation periods. Staff members planning or participating in non-school-sponsored travel must notify the building principal of such plans. Student absences due to participation in non-school sponsored travel will be considered unexcused absences.

Instructional time may not be used to promote the trip or distribute materials. Individuals or groups who wish to use the schools for the purpose of publicizing trips or recruiting participants and parents/chaperones may do so in accordance with the School Committee’s facilities use policy. Individuals or groups wishing to distribute promotional materials may do so only in accordance with School Committee Board policy. Non-school-sponsored trips must not be represented as school functions or as related to, or an extension of, the District’s school unit’s instructional, co-curricular or extracurricular programs.

It is the responsibility of any staff engaging in such trips or activities to notify the parents of prospective and participating students that this is not a school activity, but an independent voluntary trip organized or lead by that teacher or staff member. To minimize any risk of misunderstanding, the following statement must be made in any informational meetings or materials promoting the trip:
“This trip is not approved or sponsored by the School Committee or the Madawaska School Department. It has not been reviewed, approved or endorsed by authorized the Madawaska School Department administrators and it is not covered by any of the Madawaska School Department’s insurance policies.

Cross Reference:    EEAG - Use of Private Vehicles or School Buses
                    KHB – Advertising in the Schools
                    JEA – Compulsory Attendance
                    JEAA – Student Attendance

Adopted: May 21, 2018 School Committee Meeting