



FIELD TRIP POLICY

This policy was approved by the Mountain Phoenix Governing Council on October 26, 2016.

Purpose

Field trips provide learning opportunities in authentic contexts, and are an integral part of the curriculum at Mountain Phoenix. Each grade has a pattern of annual field trips that are shared with families initially at Back To School Night in September. While most field trips are day trips that occur during regular school hours, there are some that leave early in the morning, and/or return to school later in the afternoon. In addition, overnight field trips occur in grades 3-8, and the timeline of these events are also shared at Back To School Night so families can plan accordingly.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the safety of students, teachers and chaperones on field trips, thereby allowing teachers 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 preschool 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, provided permission associated with a field trip, the student will not be allowed to attend the field trip. The student will remain at the School and appropriate school work or activities will be assigned. In the event that the student is ill and can not attend, fees are non-refundable.

Notwithstanding the above, Mountain Phoenix desires all students to have the opportunity to participate. Parents may speak to the Director of Operations for assistance regarding payment of fees.

Transportation

Mountain Phoenix primarily utilizes Parent-Drivers/Chaperones but may make arrangements to use district school buses, hire other available commercial buses or rental vans when timeframes and costs allow. Parents may be reimbursed for fuel or mileage on overnight trips but not for day trips. Parents and Parent-Drivers have the following role and responsibilities.

Parent Responsibilities

If according to Colorado 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 field trip. The School reserves the right to not take a child if it is determined that the child requires a car seat and one was not provided.

Parent Drivers/Chaperones

Requests for parent field trip drivers will be made by class teachers or their designee. The responsibility of driving a group of students includes the requirement that all drivers must follow Mountain Phoenix'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 class teacher or designee will notify volunteers if they are needed for the trip, and will make every effort to provide notification of selection as a driver for a field trip at least one week in advance. The teacher will verify that the drivers' have completed an "Affirmations Concerning Motor Vehicle Record", have current driver's license and insurance on file with the school, and have signed a MPCS Classroom Volunteer Agreement form in the Development Office.

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 to do so over the course of the school year, subject to teacher's reasonable discretion.

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. Mountain Phoenix administration reserves the right to deny any parent permission to drive for and/or attend any trip, at any time, for any reason.

Each class teacher will organize the transportation and determine:

- Which students each parent driver will chaperone;
- Departure time;
- Route that will be taken to the destination;
- Where to assemble upon arrival;
- 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 "Affirmation Concerning Motor Vehicle Record" into the main office with current driver's license and appropriate proof of insurance and have filled out the MPCS Classroom Volunteer Agreement Form in the Development Office. 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 Law for each child and assure that seatbelts are worn by all passengers in the vehicle. 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.
- Regarding in-vehicle entertainment, defer to the class's/teacher's discretion.
- 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.

Parent Chaperone Guidelines

Each chaperone is responsible for abiding by the following guidelines:

- Siblings may not attend any field trip, unless they request in advance, and receive written writing of permission to attend from the teacher.
- Cell phone use should be limited to student health, safety, welfare, or to get the students to and from the destination.
- Do not provide snacks to any student, unless permission has been granted in advance by the teacher.
- Know where the students assigned to your group are at all times.
- 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 adult-to-student ratio is generally 1:10 for 1st-8th grade for walking trips and 1:6 for overnight car trips. For ECE, the ratio is 1:10 for Fruitdale Park and 1:6 for any other walking or car 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 the designated location at the designated time. If the parent is late for pick-up from the field trip location, the child will be returned to school with another driver or on a 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 Mountain Phoenix classroom. Behavior that violates MPCS rules or jeopardizes the safety of others will be documented and reported to the appropriate School Director; consequences will be determined per the Student 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.

Student Attendance

Mountain Phoenix 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 MPCS staff. Should the student not attend school that day, the Attendance Policy will apply.

Overnight Field Trips

As part of the educational program at Mountain Phoenix, students in Grades 3–8 are offered the optional opportunity to attend overnight field trips. Parents are responsible for obtaining all the information in advance of the trip and evaluating along with input from the teacher if their child is mature enough to attend.

Overnight Field Trip Paperwork and Payments

Parents of an eligible student planning to attend an overnight field trip must complete an Overnight Field Trip Packet and all other required paperwork no later than the deadline communicated by the trip leader. If paperwork are not completed by the communicated deadline, the student may be excluded from the trip. Due to the school having to pay in advance, fees may not be refundable.

Eligibility

While overnight field trips offer developmentally appropriate social, emotional, and academic educational opportunities, overnight field trips are a privilege, not a right. Safety and learning of all students on the trip is the priority of the staff at all times. Students that become ineligible at any time before the trip may not be eligible to attend, subject to administrative and teacher discretion. Eligibility is determined at the sole discretion of the Mountain Phoenix administration and teacher, taking the following factors into consideration.

Academic Eligibility

Any child not in good standing will not be able to attend based on teacher's discretion.

Behavior Expectations

A student will be ineligible to attend overnight field trips for a minimum of three months, maximum of six months, if the student has served three or more days of an out-of-school suspension during the current year at any time prior to the trip. In addition, if there are serious behavior or safety concerns, included but not limited to: failure to follow directions; inability to stay close to a chaperone; or a tendency to wander; demonstrated at any off-campus, school-campus event. If a student on an overnight field trip displays behavior that is insubordinate, interferes with the learning of other students, or jeopardizes the safety of students or staff, then the student will be removed from the activities and may be declared ineligible to attend future overnight field trips. In extreme cases, parents may be asked to arrange for the student's immediate transportation home.

Behavior History: A student may be ineligible to attend overnight field trips if there is a history of serious behavior or safety concerns, including but not limited to: failure to follow directions; inability to stay close to a chaperone; or a tendency to wander; demonstrated at any off-campus, school-campus event on a prior field trip.

Mandatory Parent Meetings

If parents do not attend mandatory informational meeting(s) prior to the trip, the student may be excluded from the trip.

Overnight Field Trip Chaperones

Requests for parent overnight field trip drivers/chaperones will be made by class teachers or their designee. The responsibility of chaperoning an overnight field trip includes the requirement that all chaperones must follow Mountain Phoenix's guidelines and fill out all necessary paperwork. If a parent fails to follow these guidelines, they may be prohibited from chaperoning in the future.

Overnight Chaperone Guidelines

Each chaperone is responsible for abiding by the following guidelines:

- The volunteer chaperone will be required to, at all times while working with students and/or the school, be under the supervision of the class teacher.
- At no time shall the volunteer chaperone, while chaperoning the school sanctioned activity, engage in consumption of alcoholic beverages, possess weapons or illegal drugs, perform any other illegal act, or act in a manner that could jeopardize student safety.
- The volunteer chaperone must possess and provide a valid driver's license, provide proof of insurance, sign the MPCS Classroom Volunteer Agreement Form, and fill out the "Background Screening Information Sheet" and pass **before** the trip.
- Siblings may not attend any overnight 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, unless permission has been granted in advance by the teacher.
- Know where the students assigned to your group are at all times.

- Do not give permission to students to do anything that contradicts the written or spoken instructions of the teacher or administrator in charge.
- Maintain disciplined behavior for all students in the designated group during the trip.

Overnight Sleeping Arrangement Guidelines

To ensure physical safety and personal security, class teachers are responsible for determining and communicating sleeping arrangements to students and volunteer chaperones according to the following guidelines:

- At no time shall the volunteer chaperone or class teacher sleep in the same room/tent as a student other than their own child unless it is a common area (gymnasium, etc).
- At no time shall girls sleep in the same room/tent as boys.
- Class teachers shall consider behavioral and personal history, to the best of their knowledge, in determining safe arrangements and student combinations in sleeping arrangements.

Overnight Field Trip Medication Management

All student medication **must be disclosed by the deadline** for the first deposit for that trip. The only exception is a new prescription, which **must be disclosed within one week of receiving the medication**. All medication forms must be complete and signed by a doctor. All medication must be administered by a designated staff member.

Contacting Parents

Parents will be contacted in the following situations:

Calling Home: Students may have the opportunity to call home during the trip, within teacher's discretion.

Injury/Illness: Parents will be notified in the following cases of injury/illness, provided the injury/illness is reported by the student to the chaperones:

- Injury requiring medical attention;
- Fever higher than 100 degrees;
- Diarrhea; and/or
- Vomiting.

If this level of notification is not possible on a specific trip, parents will be notified before signing up for the trip. In the case a child needs to leave due to the above, parents must arrange transportation home from the field trip.

Discipline: If a discipline issue arises, parents and administrator will be contacted and consequences determined and served upon return. If, at any time, a student's behavior is impacting the safety of him/herself or others or impacting the overall trip experience for the other students, parents will be contacted and the student will be sent home at the parent's expense.

Electronic Devices

Each student is responsible for abiding by the following guidelines, which may be adjusted based on teacher's discretion:

Cell Phones: Student cell phones may be allowed for the purpose of calling home, if determined to be appropriate by the teacher. Cell phones will be collected and carried by chaperones. Students may have access to their phones during predetermined times to call home. Cell phones will be turned off and in the custody of the chaperones at all other times. Students may have access to a chaperone's phone, if deemed appropriate by the teacher.

Digital Cameras: Digital cameras that are only a camera may be allowed, within teacher discretion. Disposable cameras (digital or otherwise) are also a good option.

All Other Electronic Devices: All other electronic devices (iPods/mp3 players, iPads/tablets, Kindles/e-readers, gaming devices) are not allowed on overnight field trips. This ensures students are truly immersed in the experience and will get the most out of their trip.

Snacks

Snacks containing high sugar (such as candy) or beverages containing caffeine or high sugar are not allowed to be packed or purchased while on the trip may be confiscated at the discretion of the chaperones or teacher.

POLICY HISTORY

Original: proposed by GC on April 1, 2015.

Original: adopted by the GC on May 13, 2015.

Revision: October, 26, 2016. Updated the ratio section to the following per request from DE: The adult-to-student ratio is generally 1:10 for 1st-8th grade for walking trips and 1:6 for overnight car trips. For ECE, the ratio is 1:10 for Fruitdale Park and 1:6 for any other walking or car trips. Request for DO: Strike that students are not allowed to attend if fees are not paid. That is incorrect. We can not deny access to field trips.