

## NOVATO CHARTER SCHOOL

### FIELD TRIP POLICY

#### I. PURPOSE

Provide guidelines for planning and conducting school Excursions and Field Trips to maximize student, teacher and chaperone safety and instructional benefit.

#### II. AUTHORITY

A. Novato Unified School District Board Policy number 6153 – “Field Trips and Excursions”,

B. California code of Regulations, Education Code Sections 35330-35332, and 32040-32044

C. All Novato Charter School policies

D. California Vehicle Code

#### III. BACKGROUND

Field Trips are an integral part of the Novato Charter School curriculum. The policy guidelines and procedures stated henceforth are to maximize safety and instructional benefit to NCS students.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

##### A. Excursion

Excursion is a short walking trip that occurs during the course of a single school day.

##### B. Field Trip

1. Day Field Trips are longer in distance or time than an Excursion, but do not have an overnight component.

2. Over-night Field Trips are field trips that have an overnight component.

##### C. Chaperone

A parent, guardian, or other Director approved adult who accompanies the Excursion or Field Trip in order to provide supervisory support to the students under the direction of the class teacher.

#### **D. Water Activities**

Water activities are any activities other than swimming that involve student's interaction with or in a body of water.

#### **E. Swimming**

Swimming is the act of treading or propelling oneself along in water by natural means.

### **V. POLICY**

#### **A. General**

1. All Field Trips must be planned considering:
  - a. Instructional objectives: Appropriate instruction precedes, continues during, and follows each trip.
  - b. Student safety

#### **B. Participation**

1. Siblings are not permitted on Field Trips unless they are a student in a participating class or are a director-approved chaperone.
2. No student shall be denied the opportunity to take part in an Excursion or Field Trip because of inability to pay for admission fees, meals, lodging, or any other costs.

#### **C. Authorization**

1. The Director has authority to approve or disapprove all Excursions and Field Trips, their activities, and participants. The Novato Charter Board must approve all Overnight Field Trips and all Field Trips that are 100 miles or more in distance one way from the school.
2. A teacher planning an Excursion or Field Trip shall make a request to the Director for approval by submitting a Field Trip Request Form (Attachment A).
  - a. Any request for field trips that require Board approval must be submitted to the Board six (6) weeks prior to the designated departure date.
  - b. Any request for field trips that require Board approval and that will be scheduled to depart within the first six (6) weeks of the commencement of a new school year must be submitted to the Board by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous school year.
3. If an Excursion or Field Trip is not approved, the NCS Director shall state the reasons in writing on the Field Trip Request Form.
4. Written approval of parent or guardian is required for participation of students in all Excursions and Field Trips. A general parental approval form for Excursions

may be submitted on an annual basis. (NUSD Parent Permission For Student Participation In Off-Campus School Sponsored Events Form – NUSD # 600348E(S))

**D. Teachers**

Teachers are accountable to the Director for ensuring that all school policies and all applicable State and local laws are adhered to and enforced on Excursions and Field Trips and that Chaperone behavior is consistent with school campus behavior. Should teachers require assistance from the Director, they shall contact the Director or a designee during the Field Trip.

**E. Chaperones**

1. Chaperones not a parent or guardian shall be 25 years of age or older.
2. Chaperones are accountable to the class teacher and Director for their behavior. Behavior that is acceptable on the actual school campus is what is expected of Chaperones on all Excursions and Field Trips.
3. Before all Excursions and Field Trips, teachers shall provide all Chaperones that will accompany the students with clear information regarding their responsibilities, including standard and trip specific safety precautions, how to keep groups together, and what to do if an emergency occurs.
4. The Director shall approve all Chaperones for Excursions and Field Trips and has discretion to deny participation to any person at any time.
5. Chaperones are entitled to occasional breaks from supervision at the direction of the teacher when student safety is not materially compromised.

**F. Field Trip Transportation**

1. In accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 545, any vehicle designed to carry more than 10 persons including the driver is defined as a school bus.
2. In accordance with California Vehicle Code Section 12517, (a) No person shall operate a school bus unless that person has in his or her immediate possession a valid driver's license for the appropriate class of vehicle to be driven endorsed for passenger transportation. When transporting one or more pupils at or below the 12th-grade level to or from a public or private school or to or from public or private school activities, the person shall also have in his or her immediate possession a certificate issued by the department to permit the operation of school buses.

3. Any out-of-State drivers used for Field Trip transportation in a state other than California shall have licensure and certification qualifying them to transport school children in a school bus, student activity bus, or certified tour bus.
4. Upon recommendation of the NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,):
  - a. 15-passenger vans shall transport no more than 10 people including the driver.
  - b. Vans designed for 10 or more occupants and Sport Utility Vehicles shall not utilize top carriers for transport of field trip luggage/equipment.
  - c. No vehicle shall load to such a capacity that safety is compromised.
5. Privately owned vehicles may be used to transport students in grades K-8 on Field Trips with prior approval of the NCS Director.
  - a. Vehicles must be driven by adult licensed drivers who have appropriate insurance and have completed all driver forms prior to the date of the Field Trip.
    1. Before students may be transported in any private vehicle, the driver of each vehicle must complete and sign Novato Unified School District Driver Information Employees and Volunteers Form (NUSD#600130 – Annex I) and submit all necessary documentation required by the above referenced form.
    2. The form and documentation must be submitted to the NCS office for approval.
  - b. The NCS Director will evaluate and sign the vehicle forms indicating approval of all Field Trip drivers. The school Director or designee shall deny the opportunity to transport students to any person who does not meet all requirements.
  - c. Driver approval expires June 30 and must be renewed each school year.
  - d. The number of passengers, including the driver, shall not exceed the capacity for which the vehicle was designed.
  - e. All drivers and passengers shall secure themselves in the vehicle in accordance with the law.

- f. Prior to departure on all Field Trips, specific written permission of the student's parent or guardian must be provided in order for a student to ride in an owner-driven vehicle, a school bus, or a SPAB (School Pupil Activity Bus) certified tour bus.
- g. Prior to departure, drivers will be instructed as follows:
  - 1. The teacher will provide a detailed map with the route and planned stops to all drivers. The driver will follow these directions except for emergencies or unplanned teacher approved stops (e.g., to purchase gas or allow participants to use the restroom).
  - 2. To caravan with the other drivers during the entire trip and, in accordance with California State Vehicle Code, all vehicles in caravans must proceed with headlights turned on.
  - 3. To designate the form of communication between cars to use in route.
  - 4. Only participating students, teachers, and other Director-approved Field Trip participants may ride in private Field Trip vehicles.
  - 5. The driver of the student must carry copies of each student's emergency card and permission slip.

## **G. Safety**

- 1. Supervision
  - a. Teachers or other designated personnel shall accompany students on all Excursions and Field Trips and shall assume responsibility for their proper conduct. Students and adults on approved Field Trips are subject to school rules, regulations and policies.
  - b. Before Overnight Field Trips, the class teacher, director or designee must hold a mandatory attendance meeting for staff, parents/guardians and students to discuss safety and the importance of safety-related rules and issues for the trip including local wilderness hazards pertinent to the destination.

- c. All Excursions and Field Trips will have provisions made for proper supervision. (See Attachment B – Student/Chaperone Ratio Summary.) The Director and class teacher will ensure that there is adequate adult-to-student ratio to maximize student safety. Standard minimum ratios are as follows:
  - 1. Supervision for an Excursion with a Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class must include at least two (2) Chaperones in addition to a teacher, for a total of three (3) supervising adults.
  - 2. Supervision for an Excursion with a 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> grade class must include at least one (1) Chaperone in addition to a teacher, for a total of two (2) supervising adults.
  - 3. Excursions with 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade do not require a chaperone provided the teacher carries a cell phone.
  - 4. Supervision for Day Field Trips in grades K-5 must include one (1) Chaperone for every eight (8) students including the class teacher.
  - 5. Supervision for Day Field Trips in grades 6-8<sup>th</sup> must include one (1) Chaperone for every ten (10) students including the class teacher.
  - 6. Supervision ratio for Overnight Field Trips is one (1) adult per five (5) students including the class teacher.
  - 7. The Director has the discretion to change minimum ratios depending on class makeup and the demands of the trip.
- d. Each student shall be assigned to a teacher or Chaperone at all times. The Chaperone shall be responsible for the continuous supervision of these students' activities and at all hours for the duration of the assignment. Students shall not be left unsupervised for any reason.
- e. The teacher is in charge of supervision assignments and changes as necessary throughout Excursions and Field Trips.
- f. If a student's behavior is such that it endangers the group, the teacher can request at any time that the parent/guardian immediately take the child home.
- g. The NCS Director may exclude from any Excursion or Field Trip any student whose presence would pose a safety or disciplinary risk.

- h. As per California State regulation, written permission from both the parent and the prescribing physician is required to administer student medication on Field Trips. (See NUSD for #600135E/S NUSD Authorization to Administer Medication/Treatment.)
  - I. Appropriate educational experience and supervision shall be supplied for any student whose parent(s)/guardian(s) does/do not wish them to participate in a Field Trip (e.g. assigned independent study, or in-class assignment with another class).
  - j. Charter school staff and Chaperones shall not consume alcoholic beverages, use controlled substances or tobacco while accompanying or supervising students on an Excursion or Field Trip.
  - k. Chaperones will be asked prior to departure to inform the Director of any medication being used that could impair their ability to perform their driving or Chaperone duties in a prudent and safe manner.
  - l. In the case of a missing child, California Ed. Code 49370 requires that specified persons, including school teachers, school administrators, and etc. report missing children to a law enforcement agency in a timely manner, in order to provide those children a necessary level of protection when they are at serious risk.
2. First Aid Kits – reference Ed. Code 32040 & 32041
- a. The Charter school shall provide a first aid kit(s) whenever students are taken on Excursions or Field Trips. (See Attachment C – First Aid Kits for contents and Kit to student ratio).
  - b. The teacher, instructor agent, or employee shall have the first aid kit in his/her possession, or immediately available, while conducting an Excursion or Field Trip.
3. Poisonous Snakes – reference Ed. Code 32043 & 32044
- a. Whenever Field Trips are conducted in areas commonly known to be infested by poisonous snakes, the following requirements shall be met:
    - 1. The first aid kit taken on the Field Trip shall contain medically accepted first aid and remedies.

2. A teacher, employee, or agent of the school (parent Chaperone) must have completed a course in first aid, certified by the American Red Cross, which emphasizes the treatment of snakebites.
- b. See Attachment D for assessment of wilderness hazards in different regions.
4. Water Activities/Swimming
  - a. Participation in water activities shall be allowed on trips when planned and approved in advance by the NCS Director.
  - b. Parents/guardians must provide written permission for their student to attend/participate in water/swimming activities. See Attachment E – Water Activity/Swimming Permission Form.
  - c. School sponsored swim parties at private residences are prohibited.
  - d. Swimming will be allowed in commercial swimming facilities with prior director approval. The swimming facilities or field trip sponsor must provide a certificate of insurance, designating the Novato Charter School as an additional insured, for not less than \$1,000,000 in liability coverage.
  - e. Lifeguards must be designated and on active duty for all swimming activities. Lifeguards must be Red Cross certified or equivalent.
  - f. U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation devices, properly fitted and secured, must be worn at all times while participating in any boating/rafting activities
5. Bicycles
  - a. Students, faculty and chaperones will wear bicycle helmet at all times while riding a bicycle on an Excursion or Field Trip. Parents/guardians will be instructed via Bicycle Safety flyer to ensure proper fit of their child's helmet prior to excursion or field trip. (See Attachment F Proper Fit and Usage of Bicycle Helmets.)



6. Emergency Situations

All Medical (illness or injury) and Non-medical (vehicular breakdown, vehicular accident with no personal injury, missed flights etc.) emergency situations shall be handled using NCS Director approved procedures that Chaperones have been informed of prior to departure. (See Attachment G– Field Trip Emergency Procedures)

7. Fingerprinting

Chaperones on overnight field trips must be fingerprinted and cleared by the Novato Police Department, Sheriff's Department or other appropriate law enforcement agency. The school is not financially responsible for the cost of fingerprinting.