

**MOUNT DESERT ISLAND REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
MAJOR SCHOOL TRIPS**

The Board recognizes that the educational program for students is significantly enhanced through the wise use of off-campus experiences. The purpose of this policy is to guide, promote, and support the effective planning and execution of major school trips.

The objectives for all student trips must be clearly defined and consistent with the educational objectives of the class or activity. While student trips may include activities that are not directly related to the approved curriculum or school activities, it is understood that the general purpose of student trips is to supplement and enhance the educational program.

**1. School Committee Approval**

A. Major school trips, those of more than one night, overnight trips that leave the state, trips that involve missing more than two days of school, and trips of more than nominal cost, must be submitted to the School Committee for review and approval. This policy does not apply to school sponsored competitions during their regular seasons.

- There can be no binding commitments until final approval is received.
- There can be no trip specific fundraising until final approval is received.

Trip applications must be made initially to the Principal and the Superintendent for approval. Only then will they be submitted to the School Committee. The decisions of the Principal and Superintendent on trip applications are final and not subject to appeal.

B. The School Committee will consider in its decision:

- i. Does the educational value of the trip justify the cost of the trip to the community?
  - a. Will the trip be accessible for students? Given reasonable expectations for student fundraising effort, trips associated with classes, teams, or extracurricular performance groups should be accessible to all enrolled or member students regardless of income. Students will be accepted to participate in these trips on a needs-blind basis.
  - b. What is the cost of the trip to students, trip organizers, chaperones, and other participants?
  - c. Is there adequate planning for fundraising?
  - d. What are the selection criteria for participation? Selection criteria for participation in major trips should be set by the trip organizers to support the educational mission of the trip.
  - e. What other trips and activities are approved or proposed that will compete with this trip for community support?
  - f. Trips that are primarily social or recreational should have a limited impact on curricular time and be of nominal cost.

- ii. Does the educational value of the trip justify the time taken from other classes?
  - a. Is there adequate planning for academic support?
  - b. How much school time will be missed?
  - c. What is the educational value of the trip?
- iii. Have the organizers planned for trip safety?
  - a. Is the level and quality of teacher, administrator, and chaperone supervision appropriate for the trip's needs?
  - b. Has the trip been carefully planned and organized?
  - c. What is the quality and reputation of outside group(s) providing services and organization supporting the trip?

## **2. General Guidelines for Major Trips**

### **A. Supervision and Participation:**

- i. There should be at least 1 chaperone for every 7 students; there should be no more than 1 chaperone for every 4 students, unless there are special needs related to the trip as determined by the Principal.
- ii. As a general rule there should be no participants in a trip who are not necessary to the educational mission or functioning of the trip.
- iii. Occasional exceptions, however, including, but not necessarily limited to those that allow a family member of a faculty or staff person to attend, when that faculty or staff member is vital to the trip's success, may be made by the principal. Adequate supervision must be provided. Spouses of faculty and staff may attend as chaperones.
- iv. All major trip participants must comply with all school rules and policies and meet all other behavioral expectations for the trip, as described in the Student Behavioral Expectations forms presented with the trip application.
- v. Students selected for participation in major trips must sign and comply with the school's extra-curricular policy.
- vi. A student who has been on step 5 or higher of the disciplinary ladder in the past 6 months will require permission from the administration to be eligible for participation in a major trip.
- vii. The school administrators will conduct a public records background check of all adult participants. This is not necessary for school employees who are already screened through Department of Education fingerprinting. This information will be confidential and will serve only as a trigger for further investigation, if appropriate. This information will be limited to the Principal and Superintendent.
- viii. The Principal must approve all chaperones and participants in advance of the trip.
- ix. The school administration or the School Committee may request that an Administrator accompany the trip based on the size, complexity, location, organization, or special needs of the trip.

## **B. Fundraising/Trip Costs:**

- i. Students should be accepted and able to participate in these trips on a need-blind basis.
- ii. Trips must be financially accessible to all students regardless of income. Students may be expected to contribute financially and to fundraising in accord with their ability and resources.
- iii. Trips must propose a fair, equitable, transparent process or processes for students to apply for needs-based scholarships.
- iv. Sufficient funding must be provided, through fundraising or designated school funds to support these scholarships.
- v. Students' personal financial information is confidential under law and should only be shared with an organizing faculty member and the school administration.
- vi. Student fundraising for participation in trips must offer something of value in exchange for donations.

## **C. Behavioral and Academic Expectations for Major Trips**

- i. Participation in out-of-school trips is a privilege. A student who within a month of the trip:
  - a. Is on step 4 or higher of the discipline ladder (Note: Corresponds to 1 day of suspension or more)
  - b. Is under suspension from extra curricular activities for a level 2 or 3 violation (Note: possession, use, or aggravated furnishing)
  - c. Is carrying a D or lower in any class
  - d. Is referred to the school attendance committee

will be subject to review by the Hearing Committee along with an organizing faculty member from the trip.

- ii. Questions to be considered by the Hearing Committee include:
  - a. Does the student's presence on the trip pose a physical or emotional risk to any other?
  - b. Does the student's behavior indicate a risk to the educational purposes and functioning of the trip?
  - c. Does the student's behavior raise concern about the ability of the student to positively represent the school?
  - d. Does the student's participation in the trip jeopardize the student's ability to fulfill his/her academic requirements in other classes?
- iii. The student or the organizing faculty members may appeal the decision of the Hearing Committee to the Principal, whose decision shall be final and not subject to further review.
- iv. Exclusion from a trip for the reasons above will result in the following consequences:
  - a. Class grades will not be affected by exclusion from a trip.
  - b. Students will be provided with alternative assignments to make up for any trip work.
  - c. Funds or deposits may not be returned.

### **3. Non-School-Sponsored Trips**

Any trip that has not been approved by the Board and/or administration is considered a non-school-sponsored trip. Non-school-sponsored trips operate independently of the school, even if school employees are involved in the trip. All responsibilities for non-sponsored trips lie with the individual(s) or group(s) sponsoring and organizing the activity.

Non-sponsored trips are subject to the following rules:

- i. Individuals may not organize trips of this sort in the school.
- ii. To minimize the impact on the educational program and school operations, organizers and sponsors are strongly encouraged to schedule non-sponsored trips during weekends and vacation periods whenever possible. If travel arrangements result in missed school days, normal attendance procedures for students and school employees will be followed.
- iii. Recruiting and organizing trips are prohibited during instructional time or any employee's workday.
- iv. Use of school equipment, including but not limited to computers, fax machines, photocopiers, telephones, letterhead and other supplies is prohibited.
- v. Non-sponsored trips may not be represented as a school function or as related to, or an extension of the school's instructional or extracurricular activities. To minimize any risk of misunderstanding, when school personnel are involved in the organization of student-age trips the following statement should be included in informational meetings or literature concerning the trip:

“This trip is not sponsored or approved by the Mount Desert Island High School or its School Committee.”

First Reading: 10/12/10  
Second Reading: 11/08/10  
Adopted: 11/08/10