

Mercer Island School District
Guidelines for Volunteer Chaperones
Field Trips, Athletic Trips, and Outdoor Educational Opportunities

Mercer Island School District (the “District”) believes that field trips provide a valuable educational experience for students. Thank you for giving your time and support to these important activities. Without the help of volunteer chaperones, many field trips would not be possible.

In order to help ensure that District-sponsored field trips result in safe and rewarding experiences for all participants, these guidelines have been prepared to provide information about being a field trip chaperone.

Becoming a Volunteer Field Trip Chaperone

Because student safety is our paramount concern, the District has established procedures for screening all school volunteers who may have unsupervised access to children. Please check the District website Board Policy 5631 P, [Background Checks for Volunteers and Individuals under Contracted Service](http://www.boarddocs.com/wa/misd/), at <http://www.boarddocs.com/wa/misd/> for the latest requirements. No volunteer may chaperone a field trip until the background check and other requirements are completed. If you have recently moved to Washington State and plan to chaperone an overnight field trip, the District may require you to take additional steps.

The District also requires that volunteer chaperones for overnight trips be at least 21 years old to supervise students in grades K-8, 24 years old for students in grades 9-12. Full time student teachers/interns may chaperone whether or not 24 years of age or older.

Guidelines for Volunteer Chaperones

Prior to your field trip, the staff field trip sponsor will provide you with information regarding the activities planned for the trip, expectations for supervising students, and emergency procedures. In addition, we have developed the following general guidelines to help you perform your duties as a chaperone. If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please contact the staff field trip sponsor or the building principal/program manager.

1. All school rules apply on District-sponsored events. Chaperones are expected to comply with District policies, follow the directions given by the field trip staff sponsor, work cooperatively with other staff and volunteers, and model appropriate behaviors for students. Be sure you are familiar with the District’s Code of Conduct which can be located on the District website.
2. In order to comply with District policy, during District sponsored events, chaperones:
 - a. may not use, sell, provide, possess, or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol
 - b. may not use tobacco in the presence of, or within the sight of, students
 - c. may not possess any weapon
 - d. may not administer any medications, prescription or nonprescription, to students
3. Student behavior is your responsibility. School rules related to student behavior apply. Go over rules and standards of behavior, safety rules, and any site specific rules with students. Ensure that students do not get involved in any activities not pre-approved by administrators and parents. If a student will not follow your reasonable requests to comply with behavior and safety rules, please notify the staff field trip sponsor or other District staff chaperone promptly.

4. Students are expected to ask/tell the chaperones where they are going and must always go in a group of at least two students of the same sex (e.g. if a female student needs to use a restroom at an event, another female student must accompany her. No student is ever to be out of the company of another student of the same sex). Chaperones are responsible for reminding students of this.
5. Students must be supervised while at District-sponsored events. Therefore, Chaperones must:
 - a. Go over use of the buddy system with students under the chaperone's care. Students are always to be in groups of two or more. If only two students are in a location, those students must be of the same sex. A single male and female student is never to be alone.
 - b. Account for all participants regularly and before changing activities. Attendance must be taken every time students get on buses or otherwise change locations as well as when students arrive in a new venue.
 - c. If the students are split into groups, know when and where to meet the larger group at the end of a visit or event.
 - d. Be readily available 24/7 in case of an emergency.
 - e. Be mindful of safety concerns and respond to students' needs. This means that Chaperones should let the students know where they are going to be located during free times or whenever else appropriate.
 - f. Be familiar with and regularly refer to the itinerary often and become familiar with the field trip activities.
 - g. Help students know what attire is appropriate for upcoming events and encourage adherence to the dress code for the trip.
6. Night-time supervision can be challenging. Unless circumstances dictate (e.g. if lodging in a communal setting such as a large cabin or gym) and it is pre-approved by a school principal or District-level administrator, chaperones should not sleep in the same room with students. Still, chaperones must ensure that students are in their rooms and not engaged in prohibited activities. This will generally mean that chaperones are responsible for conducting:
 - a. Bed checks at lights out and at least one additional check during the night. Curfew is curfew – students should be in their rooms and staying there unless there is an emergency;
 - b. Night watches. Night watches require the chaperones to walk the halls outside of the student rooms at least once every two hours. These watches should be done on a rotating basis to make it more manageable for all. Should there be concerns regarding student behavior or the hotel environment, more night watches may be necessary.
 - c. In the event there is third party security monitoring the halls, the Staff Sponsor is required only to: 1) confirm that security will consistently be walking the halls outside of the rooms, and 2) provide the on duty security information on how the Staff Sponsor can be contacted if a problem arises during the night;
 - d. Wake up knocks/calls. It is helpful to be up and about and knocking on doors or making phone calls to get students up and ready.

Your staff field trip sponsor will help you understand the requirements and procedures for specific locations where students will be lodging. Different rules may need to be established for locations where students are staying in a gym, in open cabins or other non-traditional lodgings.

7. For the protection of both the student and the chaperone, chaperones should not place themselves in situations in which they are alone with a student. Chaperones may not, therefore, be in the company of less than two students. In an emergency a chaperone can be responsible for supervising one student e.g. when a student is admitted to the hospital and an adult needs to stay with the student. Any exception must be coordinated through the Staff Sponsor.
8. With prior written approval of the principal, a chaperone's spouse/partner may attend an overnight Field Trip. Other family members/friends of a chaperone may not participate in a District-sponsored overnight field trip.
9. Chaperones who transport students in their personal vehicle must complete AGREEMENT – ADULT DRIVER OF PRIVATE VEHICLE, Form No. 6625F1. You are expected to comply with all District and State student transportation rules and regulations. Be aware that your personal vehicle insurance provides primary coverage in the event of an accident or injury.
10. Chaperones should be sure to know what to do in an emergency (medical emergency, natural emergency, lost student, serious breach of rule, etc.). That is, Chaperones must know who on the trip is first aid trained, where the first aid kit is, where the cell phone is kept if applicable, and know who has the copies of parental permission slips with emergency phone numbers and medical information.

Chaperone Emergency Contact Information:

In the event that I have a personal emergency, please contact:

Printed Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Primary Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Chaperone Acknowledgment

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the “Guidelines for Volunteer Chaperones – Overnight Field Trips,” have read these guidelines, and agree to comply with the guidelines as a school volunteer.

Chaperone: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____