


Appendix E
Field Trip Procedures

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Field Trip Procedures

Definitions:

- A. **Field trips:** the term field trip is a general term used to describe any use of a district school bus outside of normal daily route operations during the school year or summer school. Field trips include field studies, community-based initiatives (CBI), school athletic trips, marine science camp, and the like.
- B. **Long Trips:** Long trips are any trip more than one hundred (100) miles in one direction. Any trip which employs an operator past 11:00 PM originating from 100 miles or more from the bus compounding location is also defined as a long trip.
- C. **Risk Assessment:** A proven method to identify and assess the probability and consequence of risks, determine an overall risk, and establish risk mitigation measures to reduce risks to acceptable levels when possible.
- D. **School Bus Operator:** A school bus operator is someone who possesses a Commercial Driver's License with Passenger and School Bus endorsements and a current DOT physical and dexterity test.
- E. **Field Trip Route:** A field trip route is the safest route as decided by the assigned operator for the field trip. School based personnel may recommend but not prescribe routes to and from field trips.
- F. **Transportation Department:** The Transportation Department is defined as any personnel who are assigned to the administrative and/or managerial functions of the Transportation Department to include personnel assigned to Dispatch and Routing.
- G. **Safe Operator Points:** Safe operator points are assigned by the Safe Operator Committee to adjudicate safe school bus operation and services provided to student riders. The committee assesses positive points to reward exceptionally safe bus operation and extraordinary service to student riders. The committee assigns negative points to adjudicate unsafe bus operation and shortcomings in services provided to student riders.
- H. **Field Trip Order of Merit List (OML):** The field trip order of merit list is the ranking of operators based on eligibility for field trips. At the start of each school year, operators performing field trips are arranged in an OML for each board based on seniority.

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Participation

- A. **Eligibility:** All personnel assigned to full time bus operator positions are eligible to participate in field trips.
- B. **Other Licensed Operators:** Part Time as Needed (PTAN) bus operators and other personnel authorized to operate district school buses (mechanics) but not assigned to full time bus operator positions are not eligible for field trips.
- C. **Voluntary:** Participation by full time operators in field trips is voluntary.
- D. **Boards:** The Transportation Department divides field trips into multiple field trip boards by time and/or location as appropriate.
- E. **Number of Boards:** Full time school bus operators may elect to participate in any or all field trip boards. Transportation limits school bus operators to one (1) day, one (1) night, and one (1) weekend board.
- F. **OML:** At the beginning of each school year, the Transportation Department will arrange school bus operators on each field trip board in seniority order establishing an initial OML for initial field trip issuance.
- G. **Late Entry:** For school bus operators joining a field trip board after school start, the Transportation Department will assign them to their place in the OML based on seniority for the respective board(s).
- H. **Performance:** St Johns County School District school bus operators are expected to set the highest standards in safe bus operation and exceptional services to student riders always. Accordingly, the Director of Transportation will suspend field trip eligibility for operators in accordance with points assigned by the Safe Operator Committee in keeping with the Safe Operator Plan. Suspension is based on the number of Safe Operator points assigned to an operator in the past twelve (12) months. For operators who appeal points assessed by the Safe Operator Committee, if the subsequent committee revokes or reduces assessed points such that an operator does not exceed the limits noted in the table below, the Transportation Department will adjust their status and reinstate the operator to the respective field trip board(s) as appropriate.
- I. **Safe Operator Plan:** In keeping with the Safe Operator Plan, the Fleet Operations Manager will refer operators to the Safe Operator Committee for reports of unsafe operation of a school bus or inappropriate service to children while on a field trip.

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J. **Restriction:** The Transportation Director may indefinitely restrict an operator from performing field trips for specific schools if evidence shows that such a restriction is in the interest of the children, school, and operator.

K. **Crosswalk:** Crosswalk from Safe Operator Committee Points to Field Trip Board Assignments:

Safe Operator Committee Points	Field Trip Board Assignment Actions
6-10 Points	30-Day Suspension from Field Trip Boards
11-15 Points	90-Day Suspension from Field Trip Boards
16-20 Points	365-Day Suspension from Field Trip Boards
31 Points or more in two years	Indefinite Suspension from Field Trip Boards

L. **Early Trips:** Operators performing early trips in lieu of their high school runs will receive a minimum of two (2) hours compensation for the trip at the flat rate. ~~payment of \$16.01/hour.~~ The purpose for this minimum compensation is to not disadvantage operators performing early trips in lieu of their normally scheduled high school runs.

M. **Failure to Report:** Failure of an operator to report for a previously accepted field trip:

- 1- 1st of offense in a school year: thirty (30) day suspension from all field trip boards
- 2- 2nd offense in a school year: ninety (90) day suspension from all field trip boards
- 3- 3rd offense: suspension from all field trip boards for the remainder of the school year.

N. **Notification:** The Transportation will not penalize operators for failing to report for a scheduled trip if the operator was not notified by email, phone, and/or school messenger by the Transportation Department of the field trip.

O. **Reinstatement:** When an operator is reinstated to field trip board(s) after suspension or voluntary removal, the Transportation Department will assign the operator to the bottom of the respective filed trip board(s).

P. **Recurring School Activity Runs:** Recurring activity trips from schools for after school enrichment programs to include tutoring, Boys and Girls Club St Augustine, and the like are not governed under field trips. Recurring activity runs are an extension of normal school bus routes for dismissal operations. The intent is to have school bus operators establish habitual association with the children, schools, and routes associated with recurring activity runs hence management of this program through normal school bus routing activities.

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Scheduling

- A. The Transportation Department will assign field trips in the order they are received from the schools based on the OML.
- B. The Transportation Department will assign field trips to the first eligible operator at the top of the OML.
 1. **Day Boards** – Day boards are between arrival and dismissal operations only. Transportation will only assign an operator to one (1) day board. Day boards are established based on an operator's regional assignment. Transportation assigns operators to day boards based on where the last morning run ends. Operators of ESE buses are not eligible for day trips. Regional day boards follow:
 - i. **Northeast**
 - ii. **Northwest**
 - iii. **South**
 - iv. **Central**
 2. **Community Based Initiative (CBI) Boards:** The community-based initiative boards are limited to ESE operators and attendants only based on regional assignment. Regional CBI boards follow:
 - i. **Northeast South**
 - ii. **Northwest North**
 - iii. **South**
 3. **Night Boards-** Night boards are following dismissal operations, Monday through Friday. Transportation will only assign an operator to one (1) night board. Night boards are established based on an operator's regional assignment. Transportation assigns operators to night boards based on where the last afternoon run ends. Regional night boards follow:
 - i. **Northeast**
 - ii. **Northwest**
 - iii. **South**
 - iv. **Central**

Note: If the Transportation Department is required to cover an operator's high school run to support a night board trip, the operator will receive a minimum of two (2) hours for the trip to not disadvantage the operator from not completing their high school run.

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4. **Weekend Board** – The weekend board is countywide regardless of an operator’s regional assignment. Weekend boards are available to all eligible field trip operators.

 5. **Summer Board** – Transportation will solicit all full-time operators in March of each school year regarding interest in summer work. Transportation will assign available work based on operator interest, abilities, and demonstrated performance.
- C. **Effects on Daily Runs:** If a field trip is scheduled between morning or afternoon runs, or if a field trip impacts a regularly assigned route, then the Transportation Department will consider factors such as schools served, bus compounding locations, and route coverage to assign the field trip.
- D. **By Name Requests:** Schools may not request specific operators for field trips.
- E. **Contact:** The Transportation Department will contact operators by email, phone and/or school messenger to confirm or deny assignment of a field trips. Transportation will not address field trip work with operators by radio unless a need arises to cover a field trip with limited notice.
- F. **Multiple Attempts to Communicate:** The Transportation Department will make two (2) attempts to contact an operator by email, phone, and/or school messenger before assigning a field trip to the next eligible operator on the respective board orders.
- G. **Refusal:** If a trip is refused by an operator for reasons other than a previously recorded appointment with the Transportation Department or the operator fails to report for the accepted field trip, the operator will move to the bottom of the OML.
- H. **Post Acceptance:** Once an operator accepts a trip, the Transportation Department will only make exceptions for emergencies with regards to moving an operator to the bottom of the OML for failing to perform the trip.
- I. **Independent Boards:** Each field trip board will operate independent of other field trip boards.
- J. **Board Coordination:** An operator accepting or denying a trip on one (1) board will not affect the operator’s placement on other field trip boards.
- K. **Trip Cancelled:** The Transportation Department will not move an operator to the bottom of the OML if a field trip is cancelled by a school or the school district. If

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some but not all buses are cancelled for the trip, Operations will cancel buses based on the OML.

- L. **Compensation for Cancelled Trip:** In the event of an operator arriving at a school for an assigned field trip and the field trip is cancelled, the Transportation Department will pay the operator a minimum of one (1) hour or more if appropriate for their driving time from the compound location to the respective school and back.
- M. **Operator Cancellation:** If an operator cancels a trip after accepting a trip and within twenty-four (24)-hours of the start time, the Transportation Department will move the operator to the bottom of the OML.
- N. **AM Run:** If an operator is not present for their morning route, he/she is not eligible for a trip until after their afternoon route.
- O. **PM Run:** If an operator is not present for their afternoon route, he/she is not eligible for a trip that afternoon/night.
- P. **Last School Day of the Week:** If any operator calls out on the last school day of the week, the operator is not eligible for a weekend trip. This restriction does not apply if an operator was previously scheduled to be off duty the last school day of the week.
- Q. **Accident or Incident:** If an operator experiences an accident or incident during the school day, the Director of Transportation may suspend the operator from their field trip for the day or longer without penalty. The intent is to afford the operator sufficient time to recover from the incident/accident and conduct remedial training as appropriate.
- R. **Switching Trips:** Operators are not authorized to switch trips with other operators. The Transportation Department is the only entity authorized to reassign trips.
- S. **Short Notice:** A short-notice trip is defined as a field trip that is scheduled within twenty-four (24) hours of the start time. As time allows, the Transportation Department will use the corresponding field trip board to identify the next eligible operator for the trip. If an operator accepts a short-notice trip, the Transportation Department will move the operator to the bottom of the OML on the corresponding board for that trip. If an operator denies a short-notice trip, the Transportation Department will not move the operator to the bottom of the OML on the corresponding board.
- T. **Immediate Trips:** An immediate trip is a trip requiring immediate transportation support. The circumstances leading to an immediate trip may include the school forgetting to submit trip, Transportation forgetting to assign the trip, etc. Dispatch will

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make immediate trip assignments using GPS to determine which bus is closest to the school pickup location. Full time operators not assigned to trip boards are eligible to perform immediate trips.

Communication

- A. **Radio:** The Transportation Department will not notify operators of upcoming field trips via the 800 MHz radio system. The 800 MHz radio system is intended for time sensitive communications between base and operators relevant to ongoing school bus operations only.

- B. **Methods of Communication:** The Transportation Department will notify operators of field trips via an email alert triggered by the field trip program. All operators are required to have district email accounts and check them regularly throughout the school year. The Transportation Department will contact operators by email, phone, and/or school messenger alerting them of an upcoming field trip. The operator has until close of business of the next business day to accept or decline the trip with the Transportation Department. If the operator does not reply, the Transportation Department will send the operator a reminder notification. The operator has until close of business the next business day to respond to the reminder notification, accepting or declining the field trip. If the operator does not respond by the suspense for the reminder notification, the Transportation Department will decline the field trip on behalf of the said operator and move the operator to the bottom of the order of merit list and subsequently offer the trip to the next operator on the board order. Once the next operator completes the trip, Transportation will move that operator to the bottom of the order of merit list.

- C. **Field Trip Committee:** The Transportation Department will establish a field trip committee consisting of three (3) representatives from SJESPSA and three (3) managers from the Transportation Department. The committee will meet once per school quarter to review, assess, and refine the field trip MOU and program.

Compensation

- A. The Transportation Department will pay operators for field trips at a flat rate. The Transportation Department will calculate the flat rate for the upcoming school year at the beginning of each fiscal year (01 July). The Transportation Department will only calculate the rate one (1) time per year at the start of the fiscal year, 01 July. Any changes in step rates, minimum wage, or other relevant factors post 01 July will apply to the flat rate for the following fiscal year.

- B. The flat rate accounts for historical averages in drive and wait times for field trips.

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- C. The Transportation Department will calculate the flat rate using the following formula:

$$[(0.47) (\text{Step 14 Operator Pay Schedule})] + [(0.53) (\text{Minimum Wage})] = \text{Flat Rate Trip}$$

Flat Rate Trip for the 2023-2024 SY

$$(0.47) (25.2160) + (0.53) (15.00) = \$17.44 \mathbf{19.98}$$

- D. The Transportation Department will pay operators for field trips from the time they leave their last school or bus compound location until the time they return to their compound location based on the established flat rate.

Risk Assessment

- A. **School Board Employees and Chaperones:** Every trip requires a school board employee on board at least one (1) of the buses for the trip. All other buses must have at least one (1) vetted and approved chaperone aboard each bus. If a single bus is used, a school board employee must be aboard that bus. School board employees and chaperones are responsible for all student riders while aboard the bus.
- B. **Trip Route:** Bus operators are responsible for determining the safest and most appropriate route for the bus to and from destination. School board employees and chaperones may recommend routes however operators are ultimately responsible for determining the safest route. Weather and traffic are route considerations.
- C. **Long Trips:** Long trips requiring operators to travel beyond 100 miles one way and/or return to the compound later than midnight require a risk management review meeting by the Director of Transportation, Assistant Director of Transportation, Fleet Operations Manager and Fleet Maintenance Manager at least one (1) week prior to execution.
- D. **Risk Mitigation Measures:**
- I. Assign multiple operators to the trip
 - II. Require a prescribed rest period for the assigned operator before, during, or after the trip
 - III. Select and assign a specific bus for the trip (Fleet Maintenance Manager)
 - IV. Inspect the bus before the trip (technical inspection by mechanic)
 - V. Adjust the departure and/or return times for the bus or buses
 - VI. Send additional bus or buses with operators on the trip
 - VII. Send a service truck with mechanic on the trip

- E. **Decision Matrix:**

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ITEM	QUESTION	YES	NO
1	Is the trip more than 100 miles one way?	Go to Item 2 below	Go to Item 2 below
2	Will the trip return to the school later than 11:00 PM?	Apply effective risk mitigation during the weekly operations meeting or disapprove the trip	Go to item 3 below
3	Will the trip return to the bus compound later than midnight?	Apply effective risk mitigation during the weekly operations meeting or disapprove the trip	Approve the trip

F. Buses/Operators added for Risk Mitigation Reasons: If Transportation adds extra buses and/or operators to a trip due to risk mitigation reasons, Transportation will not charge the school for the extra buses and/or operators. Additionally, schools may use the extra buses to distribute students/chaperons/school officials attending the trip. Under no circumstances will anyone other than the Director of Transportation decide to not use extra buses and/or operators assigned to a trip. In the event of an emergency (bus breaks down, operator becomes sick, etc.), school officials will make use of the extra buses/operators leaving the disabled bus (mechanically or due to lack of operator) behind for recovery by Transportation later/time. Officials will take measures to secure and safeguard the bus before leaving it behind.

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Field Trip Brief

1. **Introduction and Welcome:** Good morning/afternoon, my name is _____ and I am your school bus operator for today's trip to _____. Today, we are travelling from _____ to _____.
2. **Attention:** Please give me your undivided attention for just a few minutes while I cover important safety and administrative matters with you.
3. **Safety:**
 - a. Please remain seated facing the front of the bus while the bus is underway
 - b. Please wear your seatbelt
 - i. Alert and encourage high school and middle school students and school staff/chaperons to wear their seatbelts. Require absolute compliance with seatbelt use by elementary age student riders. Leverage the teachers/chaperones to affect student behavior.
 - ii. Point out all emergency exits
 1. Roof hatches
 2. Side evacuation door for 84 passenger buses
 3. Rear evacuation door for 77 passenger buses and ESE
 4. Evacuation windows
 5. Passenger door
 - c. Evacuation: In the event of an evacuation:
 - i. Exit the bus in an orderly manner with a sense of urgency
 - ii. Assemble at a safe location away from the bus
 - iii. Await further instructions by emergency responders
 - d. Radio:
 - i. In the event I am incapacitated or unavailable, the bus is equipped with an 800MHz radio system which is integrated with transportation dispatch and the SJSO
 - ii. Demonstrate which microphone is used and how to trigger the microphone
 - iii. Point out the orange emergency button on the radio
 1. Once the button is pushed, the light will flash indicating that dispatch and the SJSO were alerted of an emergency with the bus
 2. Dispatch will come over the radio requesting details about the emergency. Use the microphone to provide details about the emergency.

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3. All buses are equipped with GPS so authorities will pinpoint the location of the bus
 - e. Fire Extinguisher: Point out the location of the fire extinguisher and describe how to use it.
 - f. First Aid Kit: Point out the location of the first aid kit describing the contents.
 - g. Seatbelt Cutter: Point out the location of the seatbelt cutter and how to use it.
 - h. Bodily Fluids Kit: Point out the location of the bodily fluids kit describing the contents.
 - i. Railroad Crossing: if a railroad crossing is planned for the trip, advise the students of normal procedures to include ensuring absolute quiet when the bus is stopped at the tracks.

4. Your rules:

- a. Eating and Drinking: Cover your rules about eating and drinking aboard the bus.
- b. Electronic Devices: Cover your rules about the use of electronic devices.
- c. Noise: Cover your rules about music, talking, and noise in general.
- d. Behavior: Point out that coaches/chaperones will address any behavior issues should they occur during the trip.
- e. Other Rules: Cover other rules you expect riders to comply with during the trip.