121.1. OVERNIGHT/FOREIGN TRAVEL

1. Purpose

The Board of School Directors recognizes valuable educational experiences may be gained by students in a setting other than the classroom. It is, therefore, the policy of the Board to permit student educational travel pursuant to guidelines and conditions herein set forth. Two (2) categories of student educational travel are delineated for grades K-12:

1. Overnight trips.
2. Foreign travel.

2. Guidelines

The following conditions shall apply to all overnight and foreign trips:

Superintendent/Board Approval

Any overnight trip shall require the written approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee upon the written recommendation of the principal and approval by the Board at a School Board meeting. The request must be submitted no less than six (6) months prior to the planned trip. The Superintendent may waive the six (6) month requirement in special circumstances. Fundraising campaigns may not be initiated for the specific event before approval is granted by the Superintendent and School Board.

In the event that a school board meeting is not scheduled prior to a post-season athletic event, extra-curricular activity and/or club competition advancement of similar situation, the Superintendent or his/her designee has the authority to approve the specific overnight travel and will notify the school board members of the decision. At the next regularly scheduled board meeting, the specific overnight travel will be on the agenda for ratification.
Dissemination Of Information

An information flyer for either school sponsored overnight travel and/or school sponsored foreign travel approved by the Superintendent and School Board may be distributed to interested students during the appropriate class or extra-curricular activity.

Parental Permission

The sponsor of the school sponsored approved trips shall acquire written permission from the parents/guardians for each participant for each trip. Copies of the written permission slips shall be kept on file by the appropriate principal.

School Facilities And Transportation

The sponsor of the approved trips may use school facilities to meet with students and parents/guardians involved in the trip. The purpose of the meeting is to disseminate information related to the trip.

The use of vans or private automobiles for trips planned to include late night or overnight student travel should generally be avoided. Such trips should generally use commercial motor coaches paid for by the participants of the trip.

Cost

Students may be charged for the cost of overnight and activities trips; however, provisions may be made by the sponsor to provide financial assistance so that students of all economic backgrounds are able to participate. Students will be refunded the cost of the trip minus any applicable administrative fees should the trip be canceled.

Chaperones

An overnight extracurricular trip for high school students shall be attended by a minimum of one (1) chaperone per twelve (12) students; the preference is to include at least one (1) chaperone of the opposite sex. A request for an exemption to this requirement must be submitted with the Trip Approval Request form. If the trip is approved by the School Board and Superintendent, substitute coverage will be provided, at district expense, for the sponsor and chaperones.

A chaperone, who is not an employee of the school district, must be in full compliance with Policy 916 – Community Volunteers including all necessary paperwork and clearances prior to attending the trip.
Conduct

Students, faculty and chaperone volunteers participating in an approved school sponsored overnight/foreign travel field trip are bound by personal conduct standards as stated in the Spring-Ford Area School District Policy Manual.

Tentative Itinerary

The application for an overnight trip shall be accompanied by a tentative itinerary to include purpose/value of the trip, anticipated departure and arrival times, housing arrangements, and activities in which the students are expected to participate. Cost estimates and plans for paying for the trip are to be provided at the time of the request. A detailed itinerary must be provided to the Superintendent and the building principal prior to departure.

When in the judgment of the Superintendent, the safety and security of the students and faculty involved in a field trip are endangered; the Superintendent or his/her designee shall cancel an approved field trip.

Examination Week

Overnight trips are not to be scheduled during exam weeks or during the testing window of State Assessments.

Excess Accident Medical Insurance

The school district does not carry Excess Accident Medical Insurance for students and chaperones. Advisors shall require proof of personal medical insurance coverage for all students and chaperones. Students can purchase 24-hour optional volunteer medical insurance coverage with the district, Voluntary Student Accident Coverage Accident Insurance Emergency forms shall be completed to list emergency contact information and give authorization of medical treatment if necessary. The district does not cover for out of pocket medical expenses.

Liability Insurance

Liability insurance in an amount not less than $50,000 shall be provided by the district for all designated employee and nonemployee chaperones while involved in school-sanctioned activities.
Trip Reimbursement Insurance

Trip reimbursement/return transportation insurance must be made available for purchase individually to all students and volunteer chaperones of a school-sponsored foreign travel event by the sponsoring organization.

District Funds

No district budget funds may be used to finance such trips without prior approval of the School Board.

Fundraising

The cost to students to participate shall be minimized. Through optional fundraising activities, attempts will be made to provide financial assistance so that students of all economic backgrounds are able to participate.

Accounting Substantiation

Spring-Ford Area School District requires a separate account for each foreign trip. A cash receipt journal should be maintained detailing each participant's name, date, payments, and the amount deposited in the bank, or an official financial account statement shall be submitted from the travel agency. The district is to receive the final revenue/expenditure statement upon the completion of the activity.

Overnight Trips Not Endorsed by the Superintendent or School Board

The Board does not endorse, support, nor assume responsibility in any way for any district staff member who takes students on trips not approved by the Board or Superintendent. Any staff members who are organizing a non-endorsed trip with District students must still place the Superintendent or designee on notice of such pending trips. No staff member may solicit district students for such trips in class, on school grounds, using school e-mail, through school provided technology or within district facilities. Employees who violate this direction may be dismissed or otherwise disciplined.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 517, 1361


Board Policy – 218, 317, 417, 517, 916