
SECTION: I - Instruction
POLICY TITLE: Student Educational and Activity Field Trips
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1. PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

The Utah County Academy of Sciences (UCAS) believes that field trips are a valuable part of a students' learning experience. They provide students with the opportunity to take their learning outside of the classroom and apply it to real-world contexts. We believe that field trips should be planned with an academic purpose and a reasonable budget. As such, the following policy has been established.

2. DEFINITIONS AND BASIC UNDERSTANDING

2.1. Educational Field Trips become a part of the total educational program by serving as an extension of the classroom. Because of limited transportation abilities, UCAS field trips will be limited and must be planned in a way that will fill a genuine curriculum need and serve a definite educational purpose. Educational Field Trips are defined as:

2.1.1. Educational in nature as described above

2.1.2. Taking place off of UCAS campus

2.1.3. Requiring students to miss more than one class period

- 2.2. Activity Field Trips are defined as activities that have a high degree of educational value, but are not necessarily directly connected with a unit of study. Events such as concerts, contests, competitions, conferences, club activities, and educational tours may be in this category.
- 2.3. Field trips for the purpose of rewarding student behavior or attendance will not be allowed.
- 2.4. All field trips must have prior approval of the UCAS administration.
- 2.5. Activities taking place during the regular class period (e.g. taking a class to Utah Valley University to visit the library) are not considered field trips.
- 2.6. A parent or guardian consent form will be sent home to be signed giving permission for students to attend a field trip. Overnight or out-of-state trips require an additional consent form that is specific to that particular trip.
- 2.7. The administration and teachers or advisors share the primary responsibility for proper planning, organizing, and conducting of field trips within the limits as specified by the UCAS Board of Trustees.
- 2.8. In proposing any field trips, school personnel should consider the distance, cost, and time out of school that will be involved. The scope of a field trip should be reduced if the same or similar opportunities can be provided closer to home or within a shorter time frame.
- 2.9. Mandatory travel expectations must be disclosed to students and parents in the Field Trip Permission Form (Policy IE Form C), as required by UCA 53G-4-409, before travel groups are selected. Mandatory attendance for out-of-state or overnight trips is prohibited.

3. FUNDING AND COST OF TRAVEL

- 3.1. Local field trips held during the school day are to be financed primarily through school funds. An allocation to the field trip fund will be made in the annual budget. Field trips involving long-distance, overnight, or out-of-state travel may also be funded, in part, through student fundraising activities or contributions (see UCAS Policy DI). Students who participate in any optional travel activity may be expected to bear at least some of the cost of the travel or to participate in fundraising efforts. No student will be charged a fee or travel expenses for any required activity that occurs during the school day.
- 3.2. UCAS will comply with Utah Law regarding school fees and fee waivers. The cost of participation in any travel experience sponsored by UCAS must be waived upon request from a fee waiver eligible student. (See UCAS Policy JF)
- 3.3. A plan must be created that will allow all qualifying students to participate in the travel experience. Travel costs must be waived upon request by fee waiver eligible students.
- 3.4. Students must be given the opportunity to participate in approved fundraising activities or to directly pay their assessed portion of the cost. Before recommending approval of a trip, the administration will consider the fundraising plan for the trip and its impact upon the parents or guardians and upon the community.
- 3.5. A reasonable estimate of the cost of travel must be determined prior to submitting a travel request for approval.
- 3.6. The cost of the travel will be kept as low as reasonably possible without compromising the safety of the students and advisors involved.

4. SUPERVISION

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of the UCAS administration to ensure that at least one supervising teacher will ride with each bus load of students on a field trip.
- 4.2. An increase in the above teacher-to-student ratio may be required by the administration.

5. TRANSPORTATION

- 5.1. Since UCAS does not have school vehicles, the use of commercial means of transportation is allowed.
- 5.2. The use of privately owned automobiles is discouraged. Privately owned automobiles may be used in connection with field trips only when no other viable options are available. In those cases, proper proof of insurance and permission must be submitted to and approved by the UCAS administration. An exception is granted when a parent or guardian chooses to transport his or her own student to or from an event, with the prior notification and approval of the administration.
- 5.3. Except when traveling in buses or public transportation, all passengers will wear seat belts when provided and whenever a vehicle is moving.
- 5.4. If non-professional drivers (counselors, teachers, etc.) are used, the following restrictions apply:
 - 5.4.1. A driver may not drive more than 400 miles in one day.
 - 5.4.2. An exception to the above will be made for a trip within the State of Utah if the driver does not exceed 275 miles one way and the return trip, within the same day, is preceded by at least three hours of non-driving activity.
 - 5.4.3. A trip involving more than two hours of continuous driving should not be commenced after 10:00 p.m.
 - 5.4.4. Trips will be planned in order to avoid late night driving whenever possible.
 - 5.4.5. Out-of-state travel must be by commercial carrier or in vehicles rented through the approved rental contract. Vehicles that were designed for more than ten passengers including the driver may not be rented for use in transporting students.
 - 5.4.6. Use of students as drivers is never allowed. Drivers must be adults, 21 years of age or older.

6. LIMITATIONS ON TRAVEL

- 6.1. Trips should not be scheduled during the first two weeks or last two weeks of the school year.
- 6.2. Absence from school should not exceed three days for in-state trips or four days for out-of-state trips.

7. PARENT OR GUARDIAN APPROVAL AND CONSENT

A parent or guardian consent form must be signed by a parent or guardian prior to each trip. The consent form will disclose the nature of all of the activities in which the students will participate. It must also include permission to participate in the trip, emergency contact telephone numbers, and permission to provide emergency medical care.

8. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES FOR TRAVEL

- 8.1.** All travel must be planned in such a way that it will meet appropriate educational objectives. Those objectives must be defined as part of the process for seeking approval for the trip. (See Policy IE Form B)
- 8.2.** No part of a student travel experience may violate any other UCAS policy or state or federal law. UCAS sponsored student travel may not violate the Constitution and By-laws of the Utah High School Activities Association.

9. ADVISORS AND CHAPERONES

- 9.1.** Both male and female chaperones are required if both male and female students are involved in overnight travel. The ratio of chaperones to students must be at least one chaperone for every ten students. Students must be supervised at all times. Adult chaperones will not stay overnight in rooms with students.
- 9.2.** Chaperones must be at least 21 years of age.
- 9.3.** In connection with an approved trip, teachers or advisors may only be compensated for meals, lodging, and other approved trip related expenses.
- 9.4.** No children of chaperones will be allowed to go on field trips unless they are UCAS students. Only students of UCAS will be allowed to go on field trips.

10. PROCEDURES FOR APPROVAL

- 10.1.** After considering all requests and gathering the required information, the administration will make a recommendation as to which out-of-state or overnight trips will become part of the school's plans for the year and will submit travel requests for those trips to the Board of Trustees. A proposed travel itinerary will be attached to each travel request.
- 10.2.** Two categories of travel require approval by the Board of Trustees:
 - 10.2.1.** Trips that involve travel outside the state of Utah and involve an overnight stay.
 - 10.2.2.** Trips that involve more than one night in-state.
- 10.3.** Travel requests for any of the trips described in section 10.2 will be submitted to the administration at least ten (10) calendar days in advance of a Board of Trustees meeting. Approval by the Board of Trustees authorizes the school to develop detailed plans and to make travel arrangements for those trips.
- 10.4.** The UCAS administration's approval is required for all other trips.
- 10.5.** Approval by the administration authorizes the teacher to develop detailed plans and make travel arrangements for those trips.
- 10.6.** Approval or denial of a travel request is based upon many factors. Those with authority to approve or deny a request do so based upon their best judgment in weighing the educational purposes of the trip against the cost of the travel and the time out of school for students and teachers. They will also consider any possible risks to students and the

impact of the travel on the school and on other school programs. An individual request may be denied even though it meets the minimum standards established by this policy if those with authority to approve or deny it do not feel that it is in the best interest of the students or of the school.

- 10.7.** Once a trip has been approved, the teacher or advisor does not have authority to change destinations, add unapproved activities to the trip, or make other major modifications to the approved initial itinerary without approval of the administration. In the case of an emergency occurring during a trip, the teacher or advisor is authorized to make those adjustments necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the students and will immediately report the emergency to the administration for further direction.

11. OTHER GUIDELINES

- 11.1.** No student will be subjected to undue pressure to participate in a school sponsored travel experience. Non-participation in an overnight or out-of-state trip may not result in loss of credit, reduction of grade, removal from a team, or any other similar consequences to students. When there is a conflict between two or more school trips, the student and parent or guardian will decide which trip to participate in, with no penalties attached.
- 11.2.** Students who do not belong to the class, organization or club making the trip will not be allowed to participate. All chaperones and other trip participants must be approved by the administration.
- 11.3.** UCAS will follow state guidelines regarding grouping students in rooms for over-night field trips.

12. PRE-TRIP CHECKLIST

Not later than one week prior to leaving on any travel experience involving overnight or out-of-state travel, a Student Travel Pre-Trip Checklist must be submitted to the administration. The checklist will give assurance that all appropriate requirements for the trip have been met. The travel experience may not begin until the completed checklist has been approved by the administration.

13. PROCEDURES IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

In the event of an accident or injury the teacher or advisor will obtain emergency help as needed and then immediately notify the administration by telephone. All circumstances related to the accident will be documented. The administration will notify the parents or guardians. Appropriate follow-up action will be taken as the circumstances dictate.

REFERENCES

UTAH CODE ANN. § 53G-4-409

FORMS

None

HISTORY

Revised – February 17, 2026. Cost of travel which used to be section 10, combined with section 3. Transportation requirements which used to be section 11, combined with section 5.

Approved – March 16, 2013.
