

Fieldwork and Overnight Policy

Venture Academy provides compelling learning experiences both within the school walls and outside of them in the larger community and natural surroundings. The Board recognizes the value of direct research at relevant sites of interest, conferring with local experts, and visiting resource rich locations like museums, libraries, research institutions, operating businesses, farms, etc. Consequently, students at Venture participate regularly in fieldwork that may also involve overnight excursions.

In order to maintain the safety, welfare, and educational interests of students, teachers, and volunteers, the following policy shall apply.

Fieldwork Approval Procedure

All proposed fieldwork must be approved by the building principal in advance of any trips. Trip planners will follow guidelines established by administration and school policies that provide adequate advance notice to parents and students and sufficient time for review and preparation by administration and office staff.

Participation Requirements

Fieldwork excursions are intended to provide direct, specialized, and compelling educational experiences. Consequently, Venture Academy hopes to have all students participate. However, in situations where parents prefer not to have their child participate in overnight trips, such participation is not required and students will not be penalized for failure to attend. Under circumstances of non-participation, the school is not responsible for any missed experiences that students forgo for having elected not to attend.

Fieldwork Costs

1. The School must stay within the budget allocated for the experience.
2. Students will be given enough time to know costs, and will be required to make a reasonable effort to provide for needs through individual, outside of school fund-raising, borrowing of equipment, etc.
3. Fieldwork costs are subject to fee waivers.

Parental Consent and Release of Liability

1. For each fieldwork excursion, information must be sent home to parents/guardians describing the date, time, location, and purpose of the trip.
2. A consent and release of liability form must be completed and returned to the school with the parent's signature or electronic permission slip prior to departure.
3. For all trips, parents and students shall abide by any safety rules of the trip, school rules of conduct, and will be given consequences if rules are broken.
 - a. Fieldwork is an extension of the school. Consequently, the school dress code policy and all rules related to the prohibition of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, and weapons with regard to both adults and students apply in all aspects of the trip including night-time, while in transport, and at all fieldwork locations. It is expected that the staff members leading the fieldwork enforce these rules.

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b. Parents will be required to pick up and transport their child home from a trip at any time during the trip should the need arise due to illness or unacceptable misbehavior.

Basic Fieldwork Safety

1. The safety of both students and chaperones will be the top consideration in planning all fieldwork experiences. School safety protocols for fieldwork shall be adhered to, including, but not limited to:

- criminal records background checks for volunteers;
- frequent “roll calls” and other means of ensuring attendance;
- clear supervision responsibilities for volunteers and staff;
- special medical consideration for designated students;
- communication methods and procedures both within the excursion group and with the school, including procedures and guidelines to be followed in the event of an emergency.
- No one-on-one grouping of adults to students. If, for instance, a private conference is needed, this must be done in view of other adults and students unless it is a parent-child relationship.

2. Prior to fieldwork, students and chaperones will receive training in their respective responsibilities and in the basic safety considerations appropriate to the nature of the fieldwork. With respect to overnight trips, chaperones are required to acknowledge and sign a compliance form. There shall be strict enforcement of the rules.

Adventure Education Coordinator and all Fieldwork Staff

The adventure education coordinator and all fieldwork staff are responsible for implementing and following all safety and procedural requirements outlined by school administration and governing policies.

Transportation

1. When students leave campus for any school-sponsored activity not within walking distance, the preferred mode of transportation is a school bus.
2. When acquiring bus services is not possible or practical, volunteers may transport students in their own vehicles. All volunteer drivers are subject to the requirements of the volunteer policy including criminal records background checks.
3. All Volunteer drivers will complete the State Risk Management Online Driving Test prior to driving on any fieldwork for a school year.
4. Volunteer drivers shall submit their current driver’s license and proof of insurance to be photocopied and kept on file in a secure location at the school.
5. If teachers serve as drivers to transport students on fieldwork, there will be two adults present whenever possible. If there is only one staff member, they cannot drive fewer than three students.
6. Volunteer drivers must have at least two students assigned to each car. They may transport one if it is only their own child.

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Supervision Ratios

Maintaining prescribed student to adult ratios serves a very important role in fieldwork. The role of chaperone is to assist teachers in keeping students safe, following rules, and facilitating participation as directed by teachers. Venture reserves the right to choose both who will serve as chaperones and the number. In determining ratios, more chaperones is not necessarily better.

Day Ratios

A student to adult ratio will be maintained of no more than 8:1 for K-8 trips and 12:1 for 9-12 trips. Exceptions to the student/adult ratio may only be granted or required by administration on a case-by-base basis.

Overnight Fieldwork

Student to Chaperone ratios are as follows (exceptions to the student/adult ratio may only be granted or required by administration on a case-by-case basis:

6-8 POD

-8:1 ratio (in order to meet sleeping requirements, a lower ratio may be required at night to meet sleeping arrangement requirements)

High School

-10:1 ratio (in order to meet sleeping requirements, a lower ratio may be required at night to meet sleeping arrangement requirements)

Sleeping Arrangements

Gender specific camps/sleeping areas shall be clearly separated from one another. Care will be given by staff to assign or change sleeping arrangements to ensure the safety of all students.

In line with policy descriptions below, administration shall create specific guidelines that mitigate potential risks; keep students, teachers, and chaperones safe; and allow for appropriate fieldworks to take place. Teachers planning overnight fieldworks must consult with their principal and obtain and satisfactorily complete the assigned guidelines prior to announcing all trips.

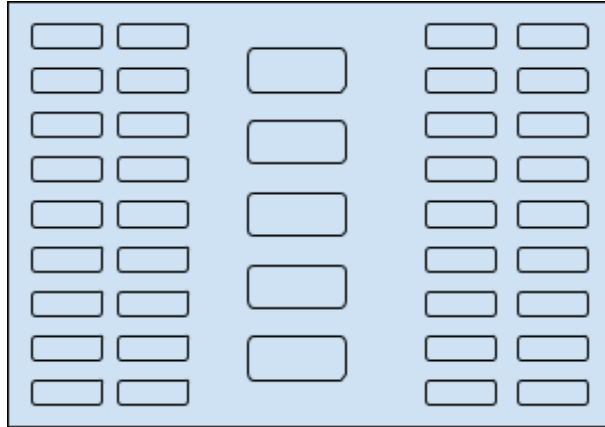
Students who have a preferred gender must consult with the principal about options.

Large, single-room lodging (this is the school preferred option for all overnight trips):

- A. The room will be clearly divided into a male and female-separated student sleeping areas and adult sleeping areas are separated by three feet or a physical barrier (includes adult's child)

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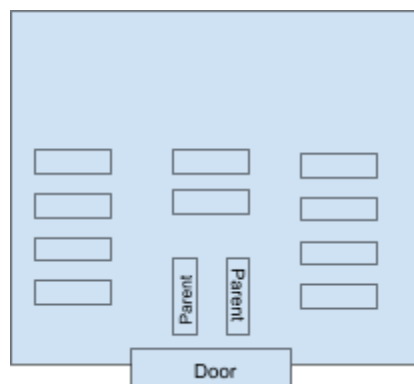
- B. Appropriate measures will be taken to maintain individual privacy when needed (individual washroom time, only one person is allowed in any washroom at any given time).



Tent Lodging

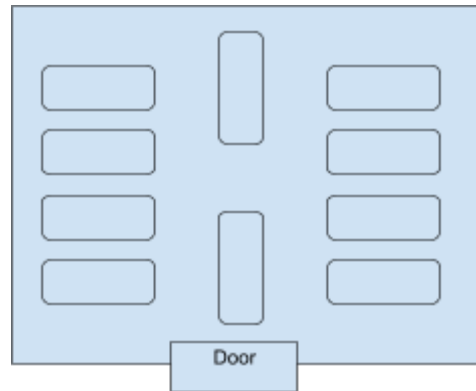
To maintain the safety and well-being of all involved, all tent lodging plans aim to meet the highest preference level possible for the given event. The configurations in the images below are based on principles of safety for the purpose of guidance, but are not the only configurations that meet the safety principles.

1st Preference--Very Large one-room Tent (at least able to accommodate 10 people): Two or more adult chaperones/teacher(s) share a large tent with students. The sleeping arrangements for the adults and students must be separated by three feet or a physical barrier (includes adult's child) and adults must be able to monitor both the activity within the tent and the activity entering and leaving the tent at all times.

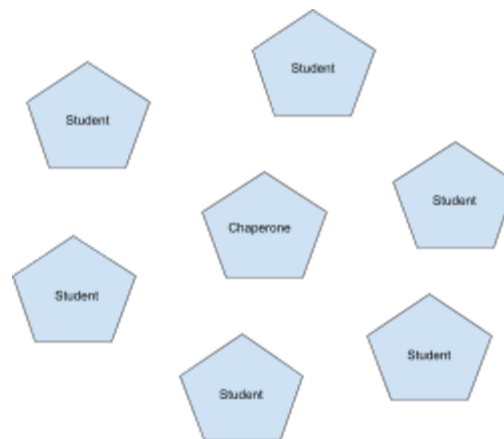


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Medium-sized tents (6-9 person) should only be used when necessary after fully utilizing the Very Large one-room Tents. Note: doing so will increase the number of chaperones needed because there *must* be two adults in each tent.



Not preferred, but necessary for the situation (e.g., backpacking). Small tents (1-6) arranged in close proximity to one another and to assigned chaperones. In this case, chaperones do not sleep in tents with students. This option must be arranged in consultation with the principal *and* prior to announcing trips. Special focus on groupings/couplings is given to assure safety of all. As part of announcing said trip, parents must be notified that it requires sleeping arrangements of fewer than three per tent.



Hotel/motel/large house lodging are not preferred, but are allowed where necessary. All reasonable measures must be taken to minimize the risks associated with these venues

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(e.g., such as access to inappropriate media or lack of supervision). Other preferred options such as Large Single Room must be explored prior to using this option. These options must be arranged in consultation with the principal *and* prior to announcing trips. A minimum of three students must be in each room.

Maximum Trip Overnight Thresholds

High School students (9th-12th) have a five day maximum trip allowance, however, care will be taken to reflect the Venture Values including respect for family time in planning and carrying out trips, as well as the impact on other classes that are missed. All overnight trips that span a weekend must be approved by the building principal.

Middle School students (6th-8th) may have a maximum of four (4) overnight trips (camping or otherwise) with no single trip consisting of more than five (5) consecutive nights (Mon.-Sat.) and the total number of nights for all trips in a given year shall not exceed twelve (12).

Upper Elementary (3rd-5th) students do not have overnight trips as a general rule with the exception of the 5th grade Passage overnighter. If there is a rare, clear, and compelling educational opportunity which cannot be had by other means, one (1) overnight trip per year may be proposed by the teachers. Though single night trips are preferred, the total number of nights for a single trip shall not exceed two (2).

Lower Elementary (K-2nd) students may have day trips only.