FIELD TRIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Young Children’s Program
James Madison University
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JMU Young Children’s Program

The procedures described in this document are intended to protect the safety of children, staff, and volunteers while participating in field trips planned by the Young Children’s Program. All adults with supervision responsibilities during a class trip must be familiar with these procedures and demonstrate commitment to abide by them. In order for a child to participate in field trips, the parent must sign the YCP Field Trip Permission Form (included with initial registration materials). Parents have the right to withdraw permission for a specific trip by keeping their child home on that day. There is no supervision at school for children who do not attend a field trip.

Field trips are considered an extension of the YCP classroom with specific learning objectives and expectations for appropriate behavior. JMU student staff and parent chaperones support the teacher’s goals for the trip and help to assure the children’s safety. Because all adults involved in a field trip must be focused on their supervisory role, attendance of siblings or other children is not allowed unless notified otherwise by the teacher. Care is taken to avoid an excessive number of adults on most field trips so the children have the opportunity for group experiences that support their learning.

Teachers notify families at least a week in advance of field trips requiring transportation. This communication includes the destination, date, purpose of the trip, and number of chaperones needed. A time is listed for departure from school, as well as an estimated arrival time at the trip site. Specific information that will support the children’s comfort and safety during the trip is communicated at this time (special clothing or footwear, sunscreen, etc.). At this time parents will be given the opportunity to volunteer as chaperones. Families are encouraged to rotate this involvement so all who are interested can participate during the school year. A form will also be available on the message board for parents to indicate the transportation preference for their child. Options are described in the following section.
OPTIONS FOR FIELD TRIP TRAVEL

Parents have two transportation options for field trips. When choosing an option, all of the expectations listed below must be followed.

**OPTION 1:**

A parent provides transportation directly to and from the field trip site for his or her child (PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION).

Expectations:

- The Field Trip Permission Form must be signed.
- The parent communicates to the teacher his or her intention to transport the child. This is done in writing at least one day in advance of the trip.
- The teacher provides directions if needed.
- The parent delivers the child to the field trip site at the time designated for the group’s arrival. The teacher is not expected to wait for late arrivers.
- The parent is responsible for his or her child until the group’s arrival and the teacher assumes responsibility for the entire class. If the parent is involved as a chaperone, he or she assumes that role and follows the trip plan developed by the teacher.
- If the parent is not involved as a chaperone, he or she may leave the trip site and return at the time designated by the teacher. If the parent chooses to stay, it is best to find a location away from the group in order to avoid an excessive number of adults with the group.
- At the conclusion of the trip, the parent informs the teacher before leaving. At this point, he or she assumes responsibility for the child.

**OPTION 2:**

A parent arranges with another YCP parent to transport his or her child directly to and from the field trip site (PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION).

Expectations:

- The Field Trip Permission Form must be signed.
- The parent communicates to the teacher the plan for transportation of his or her child. This is done in writing at least one day in advance of the trip.
- The transporting parent delivers both children to the field trip site at the time designated for the group’s arrival. He or she is responsible for both children until the group’s arrival and the teacher assumes responsibility for the entire class. The teacher is not expected to wait for late arrivers.
- If the parent is involved as a chaperone, he or she assumes that role and follows the trip plan developed by the teacher.
If the parent is not involved as a chaperone, he or she may leave the trip site and return at the time designated by the teacher. If the parent chooses to stay, it is best to find a location away from the group in order to avoid an excessive number of adults with the group.

At the conclusion of the trip, the transporting parent informs the teacher before leaving. At this point, he or she assumes responsibility for both children.

**GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIP DRIVERS AND CHAPERONES**

**Volunteering**

Complete the *Safety Verification for Field Trip Vehicles and Drivers* and give it to your child’s teacher (this is done at the beginning of the school year and updated as needed).

On the posted volunteer form, list the number of seat belts with shoulder harnesses available for passengers in your vehicle (including your own child).

Field trips are only for children enrolled in the YCP, so child care arrangements for siblings may be necessary.

Be sure your car has enough gas before arriving at school.

Bring your cellphone.

**Preparing to Leave (if leaving from school)**

Arrive promptly.

Make your car is available for car seat installation.

Be sure the teacher has your cellphone number (for use in case of emergency).

Take the children traveling with you to the bathroom before leaving.

Move the group to your vehicle with another adult (a student will be assigned to help). Keep the children near you and be sure they enter the vehicle in the safest manner possible.

Fasten each child in his or her car seat and check for proper installation of the seat. Notify the teacher of missing seats or safety problems.

Lock all vehicle doors.

Stay in your vehicle until the lead car leaves. The teacher will be in this vehicle and will carry emergency information on each child. For this reason, it is important for all drivers to stay together while traveling. **No one is to travel or arrive ahead of the identified lead vehicle.**

**Traveling**

Monitor that YCP children and staff remain in child restraints or use safety belts as required by VA law.
Assure that each child’s arms, legs, and head remain inside the vehicle.
Assure that all vehicle doors are closed properly and locked while traveling.

In the event of an emergency, follow the procedure outlined in the packet given to you by the teacher. The contact numbers for the Early Childhood Education Office are 568-6292 and 568-6255. Reece Wilson’s numbers is 540-568-7671 (office).

Arriving at the destination

Stay in your vehicle with the children until the teacher provides direction.
Arrange for a safe exit (on the curb side or in a protected parking area or driveway).

Serving as a chaperone

If you have been asked to serve as a chaperone, the teacher will assign a group of children to you (usually 2-3). You are to assume responsibility for the safety and behavior of your group. Keep the children together at all times.

The teacher will have specific objectives for the trip and will share ways you can support the learning opportunities it offers. Talk with your group about what you are experiencing, ask questions to extend the children’s thinking, and help to position children in ways that enable everyone to be involved as meaningfully as possible.

If snack is served on a field trip, assist the teacher with distribution and clean up.
You may take pictures as long as it does not interfere with your ability to supervise and support your group of children.

Avoid carrying children (even your own) unless it is absolutely necessary.

Follow the teacher’s lead at all times. The teaching staff is ultimately responsible for the safety and behavior of all children participating in the trip. For this reason, the teacher or a JMU staff member may step in to provide direction for your child or the children in your group. Please don’t be offended by this; it is their job.

Communicate with the teacher if you need assistance with a child or if you observe conditions that may affect the safety of children or adults.

Returning to JMU

Be sure all children are secured in their car seats before leaving the trip site.
Follow the previously stated guidelines for traveling.

When you arrive at school, keep the children inside your vehicle until the teacher gives instructions for exiting.