

York Technical College
Student Field Trip Procedures

Definition of Field Trips

For the purpose of this procedure, “field trip” is meant to convey an out-of-the-ordinary and off-campus experience requiring participant travel by vehicle. Field trips and travel may be categorized as out-of-area or in-area, depending upon the nature and destination of the experience. “Out-of-area” is defined as any location outside the York Technical College service area of York, Chester, and Lancaster counties. “In-area” is defined as any location within the YTC service area of York, Chester, and Lancaster counties. Section I through Section VII of this procedure govern all out-of-area travel with YTC students, in- and out-of-area field trips with minor participants—not including transport to and from regular campus activities—and all travel requiring overnight stays.

In-area field trips/travel and learning experiences involving YTC students and such as are typical to the College environment, including site visits, demonstrations, field work, lab activities and other appropriate activities offered as a part of or supplement to learning, are governed by Section VIII of this procedure, as well as all other applicable policies and procedures.

Purpose of Field Trip Procedures

YTC recognizes the benefits of off-campus student/group travel in conjunction with academic, co-curricular, and college-sponsored programs. YTC also acknowledges the need for certain regulations and procedures to promote safety, maximize educational value, manage risk, minimize liability, and enable appropriate response in times of crisis.

It is the responsibility of the authorized Field Trip Coordinator of the organized student/group travel (College department, registered student organization, academic program, College employee, etc.) to assure compliance with College policy and procedures. If an individual student travels under this policy, a college employee (Field Trip Coordinator) must assume the responsibility for compliance with the policy and procedures. The College requires all faculty and staff members to complete training on the role and responsibilities of the Field Trip Coordinator position prior to being approved as a Field Trip Coordinator. In addition, all Field Trip Coordinators, chaperones, and volunteers must undergo a background check and receive institutional clearance from the Human Resources Office to accompany students on field trips.

I. Faculty and Staff Responsibilities for Field Trips

Faculty should have field trips planned prior to the beginning of the semester/school year so as to tentatively include all field trips in the course syllabus. Club advisors/sponsors should also begin planning field trips as early as possible to inform the Associate Vice Presidents and all club participants of the club’s activities for the academic year. However, if a field trip is planned

after the semester/academic year begins, faculty must obtain written approval from their academic department manager, Associate Dean, and Associate VP at least ten (10) working days before a scheduled field trip or class activity away from campus. Advisors to student organizations must obtain written approval from the Associate Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs at least ten (10) working days prior to the field trip. Faculty/club advisors/sponsors must specify how the proposed field trip is related to the course objective or club mission. Faculty/club advisors are responsible for making all trip preparations including transportation after written approval is obtained. Any exceptions to the 10-day advance notice requirement must be pre-approved by the Associate VP or Dean for the division, and all procedure and form requirements still must be fully met.

Blanket Approvals

If frequent field trips are a routine part of the teaching methodology, including but not limited to, building construction trades students visiting sites to obtain hands-on work experience or allied health students visiting clinical sites, blanket approvals may be requested to cover defined activities throughout the term in specified geographic areas.

Costs

As a part of the field trip approval process, the Field Trip Coordinator will provide the College with information regarding the costs of the field trip, including but not limited to, travel costs, lodging, meals, or other expenses that may be incurred. Participants must be informed of what costs will be covered by the College and what their estimated out-of-pocket expenses will be to participate in the field trip. Additional cost considerations may include stating what percentage of the trip the College will pay, what the limit to the cost of the field trip may be, what the College's policy is on reimbursements, and what the College policy is on paying for modes of travel/transportation as long as an adult does not drive a personal vehicle, etc.

Absence from Class

Adult students and minor students participating in field trips must notify all college instructors affected by an authorized field trip at least two (2) working days in advance regarding the student's absence and request an allowance to make up missed work. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to notify the minor child's high school or middle school to inform them that the child will be absent. Please note that instructors should not unreasonably withhold permission for students to make up missed work. If a student is denied permission to miss class for a field trip or to make up the missed work, the student is responsible for notifying the Field Trip Coordinator for alternatives or resolution.

Supervision

All students/groups must be supervised by a member of the faculty or a college staff employee (Field Trip Coordinator) regardless of the mode of

travel, excluding instances where an exception is granted for adult students to arrange their personal travel, pursuant to Section IV of this procedure. The designated faculty or staff member is responsible for compliance with all outlined procedures.

Alternatives for Students Who Cannot Participate

Faculty/staff must prepare viable alternatives of equal grading value or attendance credit for students who are not able to attend a required field trip or who refuse to sign the required forms.

Prohibition of Alcohol and Illegal Drugs

Faculty/staff members and students should not consume alcoholic beverages or use illegal drugs during field trips including while traveling to and from sites to be visited.

Faculty and staff members are responsible for avoiding willful misconduct including, but not limited to:

- Using alcohol or controlled substances while on the trip,
- Engaging in solicitous relationships,
- Placing students in clearly dangerous circumstances,
- Not taking appropriate, expedient action (such as sending the student home, if prudent) when it becomes evident that a student is placing himself/herself or the group in danger; and
- Hosting or condoning an occasion where any of the above is violated.

Retention and Distribution of Forms

The Field Trip Coordinator is required to take copies of the Field Trip Roster, Field Trip Release of Liability Agreement form and the Authorization to Secure Medical Treatment and Medical Coverage form on the field trip to have them available if needed. The department conducting the field trip must retain these forms for all participants for at least one year following the date of the field trip. The Associate Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs Office and the Public Safety Office will receive the Field Trip Request forms and Field Trip Rosters.

Specialized Approval

Individual departments or groups may have further requirements for approval of student/group travel which must be submitted to the appropriate Academic Department Manager, Dean, AVP, and AVP for Academic & Student Affairs for review and authorization in advance, as defined by the Associate Vice President for the division.

II. Student/Field Trip Coordinator Responsibility

It is the responsibility student participants to advise the Field Trip Coordinator of any known limitations, special disabilities, certified medical conditions, or needs that may require an accommodation.

The Field Trip Coordinator must advise students of rules and regulations, verbally and in writing, regarding conduct during the trip including, but not limited to, hotel curfew and responsibility for obligations, purchases or damages incurred by the students/group. At all times, students will be subject to enforcement of the YTC Student Code of Conduct and local, state, and federal laws while traveling on an authorized trip. The Field Trip Coordinator must report immediately any disciplinary issue to the Dean for Students and submit written documentation of the incident upon return from the field trip.

III. Required Documentation

All requests for student/group travel must be initiated by YTC employees, as outlined in Section I, and authorized in advance. A Travel Authorization Request must be submitted and approved no less than (ten) 10 working days prior to the date of departure.

In addition to the travel authorization, the following are the minimally required documents that must be obtained from each participant prior to trip departure. Participants unwilling or unable to provide required documentation will not be permitted to travel.

- A. Itinerary: The Field Trip Coordinator must provide appropriate trip information to all students traveling (e.g., Pre-trip meeting/orientation; date and time of departure/arrival and duration of trip; mode of travel; number of chaperones; purpose of trip; known hazards; special clothing or equipment required because of planned group activities; weather; or other conditions, etc.) Further, an orientation meeting is recommended for all trips. A parent/guardian orientation is required for all trips involving minors.
- B. Field Trip Release of Liability Agreement: In order that students, parents, and/or legal guardians may fully appreciate and assess the risks associated with the off-campus activity and make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in the activity, or limit participation in certain aspects of the field trip, all student/group travelers and/or their parent/guardian must complete a Field Trip Release of Liability Agreement form. This form will verify that the student travelers and/or their parent/guardian understand and accept the risks involved in participating in the travel activity, assume full responsibility for their behavior, and voluntarily agree to release the College from liability for any claims or injuries that may arise from their participation in the activity. The Field Trip Coordinator will collect and retain the Field Trip Release of Liability Agreement forms for all participants.
- C. Authorization for Medical Treatment: All student/group travelers (including minors) must complete an Authorization for Medical Treatment form that authorizes medical treatment in the event of an emergency during the off-

campus trip. Minor students must obtain the signature of a parent or guardian.

- D. Medical Coverage: YTC assumes no responsibility for medical coverage of student travelers. It is recommended that each student, staff, or faculty member have his/her own medical and accident insurance. Any costs not covered by insurance will be the responsibility of the traveler. Insured travelers must carry their insurance cards or proof of insurance with them on the trip. Minor participants must provide a copy of an insurance card or proof of insurance (if insured) to the Field Trip Coordinator no later than five (5) working days prior to the field trip.

IV. Modes of Travel/Transportation

Absent extraordinary circumstances (specifically approved by the President or Executive Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs), no personal vehicles shall be used by any college personnel for transporting students on field trips. This does not preclude adult students from providing their own transportation to and/or from events or sanctioned travel opportunities, providing the student notifies faculty/staff in advance of departure and provides all required documentation as outlined in Section III. In such instances, the student assumes all liability as a driver and waives college liability for their actions as a driver. Please note that if students are planning to leave their vehicles on campus overnight, the Public Safety Office should be notified of the model, color, tag number, and location of each vehicle being left overnight.

Absent extraordinary circumstances (specifically approved by the President or Executive Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs), field trip transportation offered by York Technical College shall be conducted by:

- Fully insured, properly licensed professional drivers using either licensed commercial/charter vehicles or vehicles owned and maintained by the State of South Carolina that meet all appropriate safety standards, including but not limited to, use of passenger restraints and occupant protection requirements.
- Faculty members, staff, and/or club sponsors driving college cars or vehicles rented by the College deemed to have met the licensure and safety requirements.

Each mode of transportation requires that common and mode-specific safety precautions (e.g. seatbelts) be used at all times. In addition to following applicable local, state and federal laws and using sound judgment when traveling, students and college personnel must follow the procedures associated with this policy according to the specific mode of travel involved. Travel conditions must be considered prior to departure on any travel involving students.

- A. Vehicles Owned, Leased, Rented or Borrowed by the College: All drivers operating college-owned, -rented, -leased or -borrowed vehicles as part of organized student/group travel must

1. be a full- or part-time faculty or staff member, and
2. possess a valid South Carolina or other state driver's license.

B. Commercial Travel: Faculty, staff, and students traveling by commercial transportation must comply with all laws regulating travel and the rules of the specific carrier.

C. Safety Requirements: Drivers and passengers must act responsibly and use sound judgment when traveling. Further, drivers must

1. obey all traffic laws and regulations including posted speed limits.
2. not drive under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs or transport or possess alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, unauthorized firearms or other types of weapons as indicated in the Code of Conduct.
3. wear seat belts at all times The number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts.
4. not exceed the vehicle manufacturer's recommended load capacity (See owner manuals for specific instructions.)
5. not exhibit horseplay, racing or other distracting or aggressive behavior.
6. refrain from cell phone use while driving.
7. refrain from eating while driving.

V. Unapproved Expenses: Any unapproved travel-related expense incurred by the student, faculty or staff traveler is the responsibility of the respective traveler. Students must be informed that the College assumes no responsibility for providing student/groups with funds in case of unanticipated delays or other incidents that may require additional expenditures. Reimbursement for emergency circumstances may be considered.

VI. Special Requirements for Travel Involving Minors

The following requirements are specific to travel involving minors, i.e., Educational Talent Search participants and others. These requirements are in addition to other procedures outlined herein.

- A. All participants in overnight travel and events must be rising seventh-grade students or older.
- B. A mandatory orientation meeting with parents/guardians must be scheduled no fewer than ten (10) working days prior to departure. Participants who are not represented at the meeting by parent/guardian will not be allowed to participate. At the mandatory meeting, all required documents will be distributed and all necessary forms collected.
- C. Required documents must be received no later than five (5) working days prior to travel or student participation will be disallowed.
- D. Only activities directly related to scheduled events shall be allowed, with absolutely no participation in unscheduled, unauthorized or unnecessarily risky activities. Activities will be outlined, in detail, on the travel itinerary and strictly adhered to.
- E. It is the responsibility of participants and/or parents/guardians to inform the College of any existing certified medical condition that requires medication or

accommodation. Further, all participants with said condition(s) must be able to keep, monitor, and administer all required medications without assistance; however, if assistance is required, the College reserves the right to determine what level of assistance is reasonable and does not negatively affect the rights or participation of other students.

Student-to-Chaperone Ratio

- F. For minors to participate, the student-to-chaperone ratio should not exceed 10:1. For adults to participate, the student-to-chaperone ratio should not exceed 15:1. Exceptions may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and must be pre-approved by the Associate Vice President for the division.
- G. The College reserves the right to restrict, limit, or disallow student participation if extenuating or unusual circumstances exist that do or may cause unnecessary risk or liability to the participant, faculty, staff or other participants.

VII. Trip Contingencies and Emergencies

A. Trip Contingencies

Even with the best planning, events can still not go as planned. Faculty/club advisors and Field Trip Coordinators should try to anticipate complications that could arise and develop contingency plans in advance. Examples of unplanned circumstances include, but are not limited to, the following: student needs to return early because of a personal or family emergency; student violates established conduct rules; weather, transportation delays, cancellations that require overnight housing. Faculty/club advisors and Field Trip Coordinators should seek to understand contract limitations and restrictions, whether they arise from rental vehicle, lodging, or other agreements. (Determine whether any portion of pre-paid trip expenses will be refundable, etc.)

B. Emergencies:

In the event of an emergency (e.g., car accidents, injuries, hospitalizations or death), faculty and staff will immediately seek professional assistance as required and then immediately notify: 1) the listed emergency contact(s) for the student(s) involved, 2) the Associate Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs, and 3) the respective department manager. If the participant having the emergency is a college employee, the Human Resource Office should be notified.

VIII. In-Area Field Trips/Travel with YTC Students

The following requirements apply to in-area field trips and field trips with minor and adult participants.

- A. Student/Field Trip Coordinator Responsibility: It is expected that YTC faculty, staff and students participating in in-area field trips/travel will exercise all

appropriate caution and protocol, in keeping with applicable College policies and procedures, state and federal laws, and general safety guidelines.

- B. Notification: It is the responsibility of the in-area Field Trip Coordinator to notify his/her appropriate department manager and the Associate Vice President at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to departure.
- C. Required Documentation: The in-area Field Trip Coordinator is required to provide his/her chain of command and the Associate Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs a Field Trip Notification Form, including a roster of all participating students and faculty/staff, prior to departure.
- D. Vehicles: Use of college Vehicles for in-area field trips/travel is governed by YTC College Vehicle Usage procedures