



# Providing Health Services on Field Trips

## Guidance for Tennessee School Districts

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction .....	3
Rationale .....	3
Summary of the National Association of School Nurses Position Statement on School Sponsored Field Trips.....	4
Planning for Field Trips.....	4
Approval and Notification Process .....	5
Medication Administration During Field Trips .....	5
Handling, Storage, and Disposal of Medications.....	6
Emergency Preparedness During Field Trips .....	6
Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)/Emergency Care Plans (ECPs) .....	7
Emergency First Aid.....	7
Delegation and Supervision of School Health Services on Field Trips.....	7
Nurse Licensure Compact .....	8
In-State Field Trips .....	9
Out-Of-State Field Trips .....	9
Out-Of-Country Field Trips .....	9
Role of the School Nurse When Planning for Field Trips.....	10
Field Trip Tools and Resources.....	11
Field Trip Preparation Checklist.....	11
Example School Sponsored Field Trip Protocol.....	12
Example Field Trip Authorization Form .....	16
Considerations for Field Trips .....	17
Example Field Trips and Off Campus Activities Administration Form .....	18
Example Roles and Responsibilities .....	19
Non-Exhaustive List of First Aid Kit Supplies.....	21
Nursing Assessment for Field Trips.....	22
Additional Resources.....	23
Frequently Asked Questions.....	24
References .....	26

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## Introduction

Students with health needs can and should fully and safely participate in school-sponsored field trips. It is a requirement school districts provide health care services during school-sponsored field trips and extracurricular activities, just as school districts are required to provide health services on the school campus during the regular school day.

The school nurse has the expertise and knowledge necessary to prepare, plan, educate, and coordinate with staff, the parent/guardian, the student, and other health care professionals in arranging equitable, inclusive, and appropriate healthcare for all students to be able to attend school-sponsored trips.

Collaboration and team planning among school administration, teachers, school nurses, families, and students is essential to ensuring safe and successful field trips. School districts should have district-wide policies, protocols, and/or procedures that address team planning during field trips.

School districts may use this toolkit to plan and prepare for school-sponsored field trips and to establish and/or review local policies, protocols, and procedures. This document is not intended to replace any federal or state laws, regulations, or requirements and nothing in this document should be seen as having the force of law. Districts must adhere to federal and state law and the rules and regulations of Tennessee and the Tennessee State Board of Education. Districts should consult their local board attorney when developing local policies, protocols, and procedures, and for guidance on specific situations related to field trips and to ensure that all related policies and procedures comply with all applicable laws.

## ***Rationale***

Students on school-sponsored field trips are entitled to the same health services, including medication administration, to which they are entitled during the school day attending school. State and federal law support school districts and the school nurse in ensuring students with disabilities receive appropriate care on school-sponsored field trips.

Districts should be knowledgeable about and ensure compliance with applicable federal laws including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These laws provide protections to students with disabilities and all programs and activities of public schools and other schools that receive federal funding are subject to Section 504 and ADA. Under these federal laws, a student with a disability may not be excluded from field trips and other school-sponsored activities due to a student's disability. Rather, the healthcare needs of the student must be met to assure they have the same benefit from the school-sponsored activity as a student without a disability. Health services and how they are provided are determined on a case-by-case basis and will vary from student-to-student.

Denying a student with special healthcare needs the right to participate in field trips due to the student's disability potentially violates the IDEA and/or Section 504. Decisions about the student's participation in field trips should be discussed during the child's IEP, 504, and/or IHP meeting. Parent/guardian attendance

cannot be a condition of the student's participation or safety during field trips. However, a parent/guardian may choose to accompany their child on a field trip.

The [Guidelines for Healthcare in a School Setting](#) contain a list of applicable federal and state laws but are not guaranteed to be up-to-date.

### **Summary of the National Association of School Nurses Position Statement on School Sponsored Field Trips**

It is the [position](#) of the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) to actively support and protect the right of all students, including those with healthcare needs or disabilities, to participate in school-sponsored trips, in accordance with federal regulations. The school nurse has the expertise necessary to prepare, plan, educate, and coordinate with staff, families, students, and other healthcare professionals in arranging equitable, inclusive, and appropriate care for all students to be able to attend school-sponsored trips.

School-sponsored trips require school nursing oversight and expertise with additional planning for students with healthcare needs or disabilities. Students may need healthcare services during the trip that involve, for example, medical treatments or procedures, health monitoring, medication administration, dietary adjustments, and/or transportation aid to participate.

To address student health and safety needs, it is imperative that school systems collaboratively engage school nurses in a timely manner throughout all phases of planning and implementation of school-sponsored trips, including the initial trip approval process. School district policies, protocols, and procedures should be developed and maintained with school nursing input, to incorporate parameters involving the planning and provision of healthcare on school-sponsored field trips. Students who require special healthcare support should have individualized healthcare plans (IHPs) and/or emergency action plans (EAPs)/emergency care plans (ECPs) to guide care throughout the school day including during school-sponsored activities.

## **Planning for Field Trips**

Planning and coordination of care by the school nurse, in collaboration with school team members (e.g., the student, parent/guardian, teachers, administrators, and other school staff) ensures the high-quality care provided to students at school travels with them on their school-sponsored field trip off school campus.

Field trip sponsors should communicate with the school nurse in advance of field trips at an established timeline designated by the school district (e.g., four school weeks in advance of overnight trips) to identify students who may require medication administration or the provision of healthcare procedures. School health staff and the parent/guardian should be notified in advance of any field trips to ensure sufficient time to coordinate plans for field trips that are consistent with the student's medical orders, IHP/ and/or IEP/504 Plans, including arrangement of any necessary personnel, medical orders, and authorizations/consents required for medication administration/healthcare procedures during the field trip.

Planning for field trips may include assessment of transportation plans, determination of dietary/nutrition options, duration and location of the field trip, access to health/emergency care resources, and preparations for potential emergencies. Families and school staff need additional time to obtain authorization forms and related supplies (e.g., equipment for tube feedings). Staff may need additional time to receive training to assist with self-medication administration or assist with delegated nursing tasks, etc.

The school nurse should collaborate with school administrators and teachers to receive a field trip schedule with sufficient time to coordinate plans for field trips that are consistent with the student's medical orders, IHP, and/or the IEP/504 Plan.

Health services should be provided on field trips in accordance with the student's medical orders and/or Individualized Health Plan (IHP) and/or Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP). It is encouraged that health and/or education plans have a provision for field trips to ensure a smooth and safe transition from the classroom to off-campus field trips. To ensure a smooth and safe transition, school districts should consider how a student with a disability would participate in all school-sponsored activities and events. 504 plans and IEPs need to document considerations to support students with disabilities during all school-sponsored activities and events and non-academic activities, including field trips. School districts should consider how a student with a disability would have access to participate in all school-sponsored activities and events, as determined by the IEP or 504 team in consultation with building-level administration.

Nursing or school health services identified in a student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan as related services must be provided to the same level by qualified staff during the field trip if nursing or school health services are necessary to provide access for the student to participate.

School districts must ensure that medications and procedures administered to students on field trips guarantee safety and compliance with school district policies, protocols, and procedures and Tennessee law. The school nurse is responsible for the scope of practice in the state they will be traveling to and their scope of practice in Tennessee.

### ***Approval and Notification Process***

It is encouraged for school districts to include school nurses in the field trip approval process to identify potential concerns with the location, transportation, meals and food plans, safety, and health needs of students. School districts are encouraged to review and adopt policies and protocols that require school nurse authorization. Early notification ensures the school nurse has sufficient time to plan, including investigating state laws pertaining to nursing care out of state and conducting training of designated school staff.

### ***Medication Administration During Field Trips***

Medication not routinely administered during the school day may be needed for off-site or extended field trips and is most likely to occur on overnight or extended field trips. If a medication can be taken before or after the field trip a nurse/trained school staff may not be needed. This is dependent on the individual student's needs and duration of the field trip. Time to obtain authorization should be considered when planning and preparing for field trips and school districts should develop guidance and timelines for returning required authorization and permission forms, including medication authorization forms.

The parent/guardian is responsible for providing all medications (unexpired) to the school nurse in appropriately labeled, original containers accompanied by the appropriate school district form(s). The school nurse is responsible for reviewing all medication requests including those for field trips. Students over the age of eighteen may sign for their own medications.

School staff can assist with self-administration of medication if staff (e.g., school nurse) who normally administers medications are not scheduled or able to attend the field trip. Staff training and authorization requirements are the same for field trips as during the regular school day and school district medication



administration policies should be followed. The [Guidelines for Healthcare in a School Setting](#) contains information and guidance on the administration of prescription and non-prescription medication in the school setting but is not guaranteed to be up-to-date.

If the school nurse is unable to accompany the student on a field trip, the school nurse should work to identify and train at least one school staff who is going on the trip to provide care in accordance with state law and the Tennessee Board of Nursing Rules and Regulations. Students who cannot self-administer their medications (even with assistance from trained school staff) should have a nurse available to administer the medication/procedure. School nurses should provide school district approved training to school staff assisting with self-administration of medication. The [Chronic Health Conditions Toolkit](#) includes training information for staff assisting with self-administration of medication and volunteer staff assisting with certain rescue medications but is not guaranteed to be up-to-date.

If a trained school staff or nurse is not available to attend the trip to meet student health needs, and the parent/guardian does not volunteer to attend, then the local board attorney should advise the school to determine what arrangements should be made regarding the field trip.

### **Handling, Storage, and Disposal of Medications**

Districts' medication administration policies and protocols should include procedures for the safe storage, handling, and transportation of medication during field trips, including for students deemed capable of self-administration of medications. Policies and protocols should also address the disposal of medications and documentation of medication administration. Districts should determine where medication, including emergency medication, will be stored keeping in mind temperature, accessibility, and safety. School districts should have a system to document medication administration and a plan to dispose of medication post-administration (e.g., epinephrine auto-injector cartridge or Diastat cartridge disposal).

### ***Emergency Preparedness During Field Trips***

During a field trip, school staff will perform emergency first aid to their level of training and competence and activate emergency medical services/911. All field trip staff are encouraged to receive general awareness training on common chronic health conditions (e.g., asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes, and seizure disorders) including:

- Signs and symptoms,
- Emergency management (who is responsible for administering the emergency medication and where the emergency medication will be located during the field trip),
- Documentation of training, and;
- Review of emergency protocols with appropriate field trip staff.

Tier-level training information for school staff can be found in the [Chronic Health Conditions Toolkit](#).

The parent/guardian and school district should have a clear understanding of the circumstances/situations when the parent/guardian will be contacted and the parent/guardian should understand their responsibilities during field trips (e.g., providing a supply of emergency medication on the field trip).

The following is a non-inclusive list of field trip preparation tasks related to field trip emergency preparedness:

- Obtain consent and insurance information from the parent/guardian to obtain emergency medical services while on the field trip.

- Plan emergency procedures for areas in which cell phone reception may not be available.
- Identify hospital locations on the field trip route and at the final destination.
- Ensure all school staff have emergency contact numbers.
- Train all field trip school staff who will be assisting with medication administration and ensure documentation of training and competency.

### **Emergency Action Plans (EAPs)/Emergency Care Plans (ECPs)**

An EAP/ECP may be needed when a student has a potential urgent health need that may become life-threatening and require quick action to maintain the health and safety of the student. Conditions that may require an EAP/ECP include but are not limited to, severe allergic anaphylactic reaction, asthma, diabetes, seizure disorders, or epilepsy. The EAP/ECP is used by non-nursing school staff who may respond to an emergency and should be written in language that a layperson can understand. EAP/ECPs are written in clear action steps and are provided to appropriate school staff to assist them when responding to an emergency. The EAP/ECP should include:

- Definition of medical emergency for the student,
- Specific actions to be taken during and after the emergency,
- Based on the signs and symptoms present,
- List of individuals to be notified when an emergency occurs, and;
- Transportation procedures.

School staff attending field trips should be provided with EAPs/ECPs and understand their responsibilities during the field trip in accordance with district policy and applicable confidentiality and privacy laws. EAPs/ECPs should be stored to ensure accessibility during an emergency.

### **Emergency First Aid**

It is encouraged that an assigned school staff member takes an easily carried emergency/first aid pack during the field trip. Items recommended in the emergency/first aid pack can be found [here](#).

## ***Delegation and Supervision of School Health Services on Field Trips***

School-sponsored field trips may occur locally, in Tennessee, out-of-state, or out-of-country. School districts should be familiar with and adhere to laws and regulations for nursing practice in the state or country of the field trip where healthcare will be administered.

Healthcare procedures that are delegated and supervised by a school nurse in the school building may be performed outside the school setting during a field trip if factors unique to the field trip and the student requiring the health care procedure have been assessed by the school nurse and determined safe to delegate during a field trip. Changes in who performs the procedure may be needed depending on the factors and circumstances of the field trip. The responsibility of supervision and delegation does not end even though a procedure is occurring during a field trip and school nurses should reassess the delegation process in preparation for field trip planning.

School nurses should determine the location, type of activity, and healthcare needs of students who will be attending the field trip. These factors, including the legal ability to delegate nursing care, should be considered when determining the need for a school nurse to accompany students during a field trip.

Health services provided for in-state, out-of-state, and out-of-country field trips are made on a case-by-case basis and dependent upon the needs, age, competence, developmental ability, and independence of the

student, the field trip destination, and the qualifications of the school staff on the field trip. Student safety while following state law is paramount.

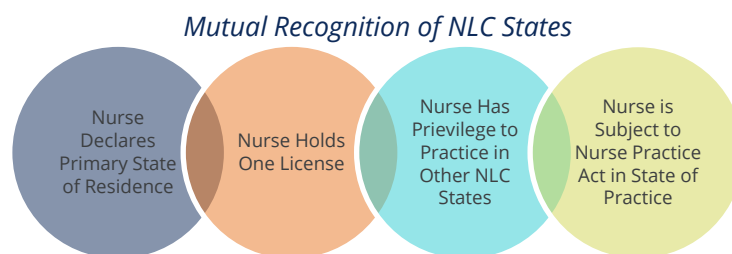
A state's Board of Nursing governs the scope of nursing practice, including delegation of health services procedures and tasks and it varies from state-to-state. When determining if a nursing task can be delegated, school nurses are accountable to state laws, rules, regulations, employer regulations, and standards of professional school nursing practice.

Field trips enhance the learning experience and school districts must provide services for students with special healthcare needs so the students may participate fully in the field trip no matter where they occur. If it is determined that health care procedures may only be performed by licensed health care professionals, arrangements should be made for this to occur during the field trip, whether the field trip is in-state, out-of-state, out-of-country or overnight.

The school nurse coordinates planning for healthcare services that will be needed for students with special healthcare needs during the field trip. School districts, schools, and school nurses should understand Tennessee laws governing nursing practice. When planning for out-of-state or out-of-country field trips, school districts, and school nurses need to know the laws and regulations governing nursing practice for the state or country of the field trip, if outside of Tennessee. If a school nurse travels on a field trip, districts should consider arranging a substitute nurse to address the health needs of students still in the school building.

### **Nurse Licensure Compact**

The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) provides for multistate licensure. The nursing license is based on the nurse's state of residence but allows the nurse to practice in other member states without obtaining an additional nursing license for that state. The nurse must follow the nurse practice act of each state. It is important to note that not all states are NLC members, and a nurse licensed by a state that is not a member of the NLC has a single-state license valid only in the state of residence. The NLC applies only to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. Unlicensed school personnel and advanced practice registered nurses are not included. Therefore, when considering out-of-state field trips, school districts and school nurses must understand the NLC and also be aware of delegation variation between states.



Before an out-of-state field trip occurs, the school nurse should contact the board of nursing in the state where the field trip will occur to determine the practice allowances for the nurse, including delegation of nursing functions.

The NLC allows nurses to have one multistate license with the ability to practice in all compact states/territories. The list of states/territories participating in the NLC is on [the National Council for State Boards of Nursing webpage](#).



### **In-State Field Trips**

Just as on a typical school day, it is imperative to adhere to all Tennessee laws regarding medication administration and to abide by the [Tennessee Board of Nursing rules and regulations](#). The [Guidelines for Healthcare in a School Setting](#) provide additional information on and health care procedures administered by Tennessee schools when occurring in Tennessee.

### **Out-Of-State Field Trips**

For out-of-state field trips, school districts should ensure the school nurse and/or trained school staff can provide health services to the students in the visiting state(s). The school district should understand the nursing scope of practice and delegation laws in the state(s) where care will be provided. Tennessee law allows trained school staff to assist with medication administration. However, not all states allow this practice, and some do not allow the delegation of medication administration to unlicensed personnel.

Nurses are accountable to the nurse practice laws where care will be provided, and if a nurse delegates a task that is not allowed in the state where the field trip occurs, the nurse's actions are accountable to both state boards of nursing.

If a field trip occurs in a state(s) not part of the NLC, the school nurse may need to obtain licensure in that state to practice there. A school district may need to make arrangements with a nurse licensed in the field trip's destination state if the destination is not part of the NLC and the school nurse cannot obtain licensure in the state of the field trip.

Some states allow exemptions for nurses practicing for a limited time or under certain circumstances. For example, Tennessee Board of Nursing Rule 1000-01-.04(2)(i) allows an exemption for the practice of any currently licensed registered nurse of another state whose responsibilities include transporting patients into, out of, or through Tennessee. Such exemption shall be limited to a period not to exceed forty-eight (48) hours for each transport. Tennessee Board of Nursing Rule 1000-02-.04(2)(i) allows the same aforementioned exemption for licensed practical nurses of another state. Similar exemptions may exist in other states' nurse practice acts, and the school district is responsible for determining if there is an exemption in the destination state.

When a field trip occurs (during or beyond school hours), the school nurse and school administration are responsible for contacting the Board of Nursing in the state(s) where a field trip will occur regarding practicing in other states. Information may change, and school districts are encouraged to check frequently. It is also encouraged to inquire if the delegation of medication administration and other nursing activities is allowed in the state where the field trip will occur.

Other states may not allow unlicensed school staff to administer medications or assist with medication administration. Some states may have exceptions to these laws for certain emergency medications (e.g., epinephrine auto-injectors).

Information specific to each state board of nursing is on the [National Council of State Boards of Nursing webpage](#).

### **Out-Of-Country Field Trips**

Districts should allocate sufficient time to plan for medication administration, provision of delegated nursing acts, immunization requirements, and management of potential health emergencies for out-of-country field trips.

School districts should determine applicable laws for out-of-country field trips, as nurses licensed in the United States, including Tennessee, cannot practice nursing outside the United States. School districts should contact the United States State Department for out-of-country field trips to be referred to the contact in the country to be visited. The country's consulate should provide guidance concerning unlicensed staff providing health services to students in the visiting country.

## Role of the School Nurse When Planning for Field Trips

The school nurse and school administration should review and understand the school district's medication administration policy and any other policies, protocols, and procedures related to medication administration and delegation before making decisions regarding delegation of medication administration or health care procedure administration during field trips.

The following is a non-exhaustive list the school nurse may be responsible for when planning field trips.

- Review the list of students participating in the field trip and identify health-related concerns for students, including food/allergy issues.
- Consult with the food service supervisor to make nutrition accommodations as necessary.
- Prepare a health concerns list.
- Review any IHPs, EAPs/ECPs, and education plans (IEP/504 Plans) as necessary
- Revise IHPs/EAPs/ECPs for field trip circumstances, if needed.
- Distribute health concerns list and IHP/EAP/ECPs per district policy and in accordance with relevant privacy laws (e.g., FERPA).
- In conjunction with the school administrator/field trip supervisor, determine staff needs to ensure nursing services are provided in accordance with applicable state laws.
- Identify and make preparations for medications needed for the field trip (e.g., prescription, non-prescription over-the-counter, emergency, scheduled, as needed, etc.) and train staff to assist with medication administration as necessary and document training.
- Determine and make arrangements for healthcare procedures that will occur during the field trip, train school staff, as necessary, and document training.
- Ensure field trip first aid kit(s) are stocked and prepared.
- Debrief with school staff/field trip supervisors/school administration after the field trip, as needed.

# Field Trip Tools and Resources

School administrators, school staff, families, and students must collaborate closely with the school nurse to ensure that the healthcare needs and safety of all students are provided for during school-sponsored field trips. The resources provided in this section are intended to support school districts with the delivery of health services on field trips. The school district maintains responsibility for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and school district policy, protocol, and procedures.

## Field Trip Preparation Checklist

This checklist outlines example considerations when planning for field trips. The school district and school nurse are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, and school district policy, protocol, and procedures.

<b>Prior to the Field Trip</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify any health-related concerns and determine the student’s needs based on the duration and location of the field trip and the student’s health condition/health status.</li> <li>▪ Ensure handicap accessibility for students who are wheelchair-bound.</li> <li>▪ Review/revise student’s IHP for field trip circumstances, as needed.</li> <li>▪ Discuss with the school administrator and/or field trip sponsor the staffing necessary to meet student health needs in accordance with state and federal law (and the student’s 504 plan or IEP, if applicable).</li> <li>▪ Distribute health concerns lists and IHP/EAP/ECP per district policy and confidentiality and privacy laws (e.g., FERPA).</li> <li>▪ Develop a list and schedule of medications (emergency/scheduled/prescription/nonprescription).</li> <li>▪ Prepare field trip first aid kit(s).</li> </ul>
	<b>Considerations for Students with Diabetes</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the student has the correct amount and types of food (meals and snacks) plus extra food and plenty of water in accordance with the medical orders and IHP, ensure the student has fast-acting and glucagon in case of low blood glucose.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the student has diabetes care supplies (testing strips, blood glucose meter, lancets, antiseptic wipes, etc.) and a logbook.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the student has enough insulin and syringes.</li> <li>▪ Ensure students with insulin pumps have the pump and related supplies.</li> </ul>
	<b>Considerations for Students with Seizure Disorders</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine if the field trip might expose the student to seizure triggers (e.g., bright strobe lights).</li> </ul>
<b>After the Field Trip</b>	<b>Considerations for Students with Anaphylactic Allergy</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify any food/allergy-related issues. Contact food service/field trip sponsor/parent/guardian to ensure arrangements/accommodations, as necessary.</li> <li>▪ For overnight trips, consider requesting a room with a kitchen, refrigerator, and/or microwave so students with food allergies can prepare meals if needed.</li> <li>▪ Ensure accommodations are available for students with food allergies at destination locations/restaurants.</li> <li>▪ For outdoor field trips, plan ahead to reduce potential exposure to insect/animal allergens for students with these allergens.</li> </ul>
<b>After the Field Trip</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Evaluate the field trip process with field trip staff (e.g., what worked well, suggestions for improvement, how were any health emergencies managed).</li> </ul>

## **Example School Sponsored Field Trip Protocol<sup>1</sup>**

The example protocol is intended to serve as a tool for drafting procedures that meet district needs. It is the district's responsibility to ensure procedures comply with specific requirements and align with federal and state law and school district policy. This procedure does not substitute the advice of local board attorneys and districts are encouraged to seek guidance from local board attorneys to ensure district procedure aligns with all applicable laws.

### **Recommendations**

- The school nurse/school health office should be notified of any daytime field trip at least two weeks in advance, and overnight field trip notification should occur at least one month (four school weeks) in advance.
- Medications usually taken before or after school but required for overnight field trips should meet the same requirements outlined in school district policy and procedure and outlined in state law and state board rule.
- Trained school staff responsible for assisting with medication administration should follow district protocol and procedure related to medications (picking up medication and related supplies, and paperwork at a designated time prior to field trip (e.g., the morning of).
- Medication should be stored in pharmacy-labeled containers or properly labeled containers in accordance with district policy and procedure.
- Trained school staff will receive training on assistance with medication administration in accordance with district policy and procedure.
- The trained school staff should verify the medication and/or procedure by documenting the date, time, and initials following assistance with medication administration or procedure administration.
- If a student is injured or becomes ill in accordance with district policy and procedure, parents/guardians and school administration should be contacted.
- Field trip protocol should be followed on all field trips.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this protocol is to provide for the safety and appropriate management of health care needs of students when they participate in school-sponsored field trips, including day and overnight field trips.

All students are eligible to fully participate in school-sponsored field trips to ensure their right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Individuals with Disabilities in Education (IDEA), and Section 504. No student will be denied the right to a field trip due to a disability. Many students require medications and/or nursing procedures while attending school and school-sponsored field trips to maintain their health. Students may occasionally require medications or procedures that are only administered/provided at home or only at times when the student is not typically in school but may require the medication(s)/procedure(s) outside of the typical school day to the time/duration of the field trip.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the National Association of School Nurse's *Medication Administration Toolkit*, 2021

There will be communication between appropriate staff (e.g., the school principal, teaching staff, food service manager, and transportation) when planning all field trips to ensure that appropriate measures are in place prior to the field trip.

## **Responsibilities**

### *School Administration/Field Trip Sponsor Responsibility*

The field trip sponsor/teacher will provide the school nurse with the list of students anticipated to attend the field trip at least two weeks in advance prior to the trip (at least one month for overnight field trips). School administration/field trip sponsor(s) should provide a list of field trips in advance on a pre-determined schedule (e.g., monthly).

### *School Nurse's Responsibility*

At the start of each school year, the school nurse should meet with school administrators/ staff/designated personnel to emphasize early identification of all school field trips, including extended day/overnight trips, to ensure nursing coverage is available.

The nurse will review IHPs, 504 Plans, and IEPs for field trip planning needs, as needed. The nurse will determine if the parent/guardian of any student with health care needs plans to attend the field trip and which students with health conditions will require nursing intervention during the field trip. If it is determined that a student requires nursing intervention and it cannot be safely delegated to non-nurse school staff, arrangements will be made for a nurse to accompany the student on the field trip. In accordance with district policy and procedure, the nurse will notify the school administration, the field trip sponsor, and/or district lead nurse/health services supervisor when a nurse is required for a field trip.

### *Nurse Attending the Field Trip's Responsibility:*

Nurses attending the field trip will be responsible for medication and procedure administration in accordance with the student's medical orders and IHP/ECP, assessment/monitoring of students with health care needs, providing first aid, as needed, and dietary planning due to anaphylaxis or other special nutritional needs.

## **Before the Field Trip:**

The school nurse is made aware of all partial/day field trips at least two weeks in advance by the school staff arranging the trip. At least one school personnel will complete approved training on the medication needs of students (if there are students with medication needs attending the field trip).

The school nurse is made aware of overnight field trips at least one month in advance by the school staff arranging the trip.

A list of participating students will be provided to the school nurse, after a field trip is approved by the principal/school administration. The nurse will then assess the medical needs of students attending and consult with school staff about field trip specifics (e.g., duration/length of trip, food requirements, type of activity, etc.) as it relates to the medical needs of the students. Failure to promptly inform the school nurse about a school-sponsored field trip may impact the ability to adequately safeguard the health and safety of the students attending the trip.

The school nurse will recommend nursing coverage for a field trip:



- Nursing coverage is not needed.
- The school nurse will coordinate nursing coverage utilizing the school nurse, another district school nurse, school staff, or per diem/sub nurses.
- The school may hire an agency/contract nurse to provide nursing coverage.
- School staff will be trained to assist with self-administration of medication/delegated nursing tasks. Training documentation will remain on file with the district prior to the date of the field trip.
- The parent/guardian of the student requiring nursing services will attend the field trip and provide care to their own child only (the parent cannot be required to attend for their child to participate in the field trip).
- The school should consult with their local board attorney to decide on necessary modifications to the field trip if they cannot secure nursing coverage.

The parent/guardian will provide the appropriate amount of medication needed for the field trip.

Medication authorization forms signed by parent/guardian and health care provider (e.g., prescription medications) will remain on file with the district.

The school nurse will arrange for nursing coverage when required. Based on the needs of the students both attending the trip and remaining at school, the school nurse will decide whether the school building nurse or another nurse will attend the field trip. If the parent is unable to attend a field trip and an alternate plan is not arranged (e.g., cannot be delegated to trained school staff) then the district will work to arrange nursing coverage.

Assigning the school nurse as a chaperone is not recommended. The nurse should be available to all students and staff in an emergency.

### **On Day of the Field Trip:**

The building principal or their designee assigned to assist with medication administration shall:

- Gather/collect the needed medications for the field trip (inhalers, epinephrine auto-injectors, etc.)
- Transport medication(s) in accordance with district policy. Ensure medications are secure/locked and that students do not have access.
- Ensure the responsible school staff in charge of the care of the student on the field trip is aware of the side effects of the prescribed medication, knows where to access the student's emergency care plan/emergency action plan (if applicable), and who to contact should an emergency occur.

### **After the Field Trip:**

Return medications, care plans, first aid kits, and confidential information to the school nurse or appropriate designee immediately after the field trip in accordance with district policy and procedure.

Document the medications/treatments/first aid provided during the field trip in accordance with district policy and procedure.

Verify medication counts upon return and collect administration forms from trained school staff.

### **Out-of-State Field Trip:**

Ensure plans are in place to meet the nursing license and practice laws of the state where the field trip will take place and states through which transport/overnight stays are occurring.

The Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC) allows nurses to have one multistate license, with the ability to practice in Tennessee and other participating states. Even if a field trip occurs in a compact state, the school district is responsible for understanding the nursing regulations and laws and scope of practice in the states traveling to, regardless of whether the licensed nurse is delegating tasks to non-nurse school staff or attending the field trip and providing health services.

The U.S. Embassy should be contacted for directions for field trips that occur out of the country.

## Example Field Trip Authorization Form<sup>2</sup>

School:	Grade:
Purpose of field trip:	Destination of Field Trip:
Date of Departure:	Date of Return:
Trip Sponsor:	
Student Name:	Date of Birth:
Parent/Guardian(s):	
Emergency Contact Phone:	
History of:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Asthma	<input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes <input type="checkbox"/> Seizure Disorder
Allergies <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please list:	
Epinephrine: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Inhaler: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Medical needs/treatment on field trip <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please list:	
Medications needed during the trip: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, please list:	
All medications must be provided by the parent/guardian Prescription and non-prescription medication(s) must be provided in accordance with district policy and procedure	
Health Insurance Provider:	Policy Number:
I give permission for my child to attend the field trip. In case of an emergency, I give permission for my child to receive medical treatment. I have provided the necessary district authorization forms and/or medical authorization forms for my child during the field trip.	
Parent/Guardian Signature: _____	Date: _____

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Williamson County Schools Extracurricular/Overnight Field Trip Authorization Form

### Considerations for Field Trips<sup>3</sup>

Health Services/School Nurse Considerations	School and Student Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine if the state the school is visiting is a member of the NLC. Tennessee is a member of the NLC. If not a part of the NLC, determine what the state requires in order for the school nurse to provide nursing care in that state.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Federal law requires equal access to school activities, including health services, while participating in a field trip. Students cannot be denied access to activities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the scope of practice in the state(s) being visited or traveling through (e.g., does the state allow medication administration by anyone other than a licensed health care professional).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents can be invited to accompany the student on a field trip but <b>cannot</b> be required to attend.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify if there are state-specific restrictions related to the storage, possession, and administration of particular medications or substances.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School nurses should assess the student's needs/limitations of the field trip and determine the frequency of service needed and the level of care required (e.g., will medications need to be refrigerated? What special equipment may be needed during the field trip?)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine if the state where the field trip occurs allows the student(s) to self-carry/self-administer medication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider accommodations as specified in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), Individualized Health Plan (IHP), and/or 504 Plan.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine if delegation of a health service to unlicensed personnel is permitted in the state you are visiting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine safe and legal delegation of nursing services, if allowed in the state to be visited. School nurses providing nursing services on out-of-state field trips are subject to the state nursing laws in the state where the services are provided.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If delegation is allowed, identify limitations on delegation (e.g., remote supervision if a school nurse is not attending the field trip).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability of trained school staff to provide healthcare services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If delegation is allowed, determine if training and competency verification are required for unlicensed personnel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide documentation and confidentiality of student health information while on the field trip.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine options for cancellation or alteration of the field trip if all students cannot be reasonably accommodated.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> From *NASN School Nurse, Providing Health Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs on Out-Of-State Field Trips*, 2013

## Example Field Trips and Off Campus Activities Administration Form<sup>4</sup>

**The principal shall complete this form for any activity to be conducted away from school. Field Trips must be directly related to subject or areas taught, and must be approved by the principal. Form must be submitted to the Board for approval prior to trip.**

Activity	School
Group	Sponsor
Cost per Student	Number of Students Attending
Date/Time Leaving	Date/Time Returning
Learning Objective	
Means of Transportation	
Driver(s)	
Principal must verify that drivers have proper license (check) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Names and Phone Numbers of Chaperones	
Cafeteria Manager's Signature _____ (Must be notified two weeks in advance)	
School Nurse Signature _____ (Must be notified two weeks in advance)	
_____	_____
Signature of Sponsor	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Principal	Date
_____	_____
Signature of Director of Schools	Date
_____	_____
Date of Board Approval	Board Secretary

<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Sullivan County Schools Field Trips and Off Campus Activities Administration Form



## Example Roles and Responsibilities<sup>5</sup>

<b>School Administrators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure adherence to the districtwide policy for school-sponsored trips.</li> <li>• Communicate the policy to all parties involved, including staff, parents, and students.</li> <li>• Encourage and support team planning for successful trips.</li> <li>• Support school nurse notification (at least ten school days in-state, twenty school days out-of-state) prior to the trip.</li> <li>• Support school nurse involvement in the planning and approval of field trips so the health needs of the students are identified and potential barriers to participation are addressed before administration approval.</li> <li>• Serve as the key contact for emergencies during trips and involve school nurse and medical advisor as needed.</li> <li>• Determine alternative options or cancel the trip if all students cannot attend the field trip due to the inability of the school district to accommodate the health or other special needs of students.</li> <li>• Initiate debriefing discussion after field trip among staff participating on the trip and school nurse to evaluate what worked well and suggestions for improvement on subsequent trips. Particular attention should be given to how any health emergencies that occurred were managed.</li> </ul>
<b>School Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to the districtwide policy regarding field trips.</li> <li>• Include the school nurse in planning the field trip to identify and plan for situations of concern (allergies, special transportation needs, delegated procedures, medication administration).</li> <li>• Communicate to parents the need for updated health and emergency information.</li> <li>• Participate in training regarding the health and safety of students as necessary prior to departure.</li> <li>• Be prepared to address emergency situations.</li> <li>• Follow district policy regarding notification of school administrator and school nurse as needed for health questions or emergencies while on a field trip.</li> <li>• Meet with school nurse upon return to review documentation and performance of procedures and medication administration.</li> <li>• Debrief with the school nurse and make suggestions for future field trips in regard to meeting student health needs.</li> </ul>
<b>School Nurse</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to the districtwide policy regarding field trips.</li> <li>• Follow applicable federal and state laws regarding the performance of nursing procedures, including delegation and medication administration.</li> <li>• Contact visiting state boards of nursing for information on and permission to practice if the destination state is not part of Nurse Compact.</li> <li>• Consult with school administrators, other school nurses, state school nurse consultants, and professional resources regarding best practices.</li> <li>• Conduct a health and safety assessment of student needs based on a multitude of factors (e.g., severity of needs, location of the trip, length of trip, staff attending the trip, etc.)</li> <li>• Prepare (emergency) health concerns list of students based on information provided by parents and contained in school records.</li> <li>• Develop an Emergency Action Plan or health management plan (IHP) for students as noted in the health concerns list.</li> <li>• Develop a list of medications to be administered on a field trip based on information provided by parents.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Adopted from Meeting Student Health Needs While on Field Trips Toolkit for Wisconsin Schools, 2019

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide medication administration training to staff and chaperones, as necessary. · Determine if special health care procedures will be required and arrange for their performance and any necessary supplies and training.</li> <li>• Consult with food service and field trip supervisor regarding meeting dietary needs and restrictions as noted in the health concerns list.</li> <li>• Consult with administration and field trip supervisor regarding special circumstances, including special immunization requirements or health alerts if traveling out-of-county.</li> </ul>
<b>Parent/Guardian/Student</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adhere to the districtwide policy regarding field trips.</li> <li>• Provide the school with updated health and emergency information as requested, including medication administration orders.</li> <li>• Communicate with the school nurse and teacher regarding any special health, diet, or transportation concerns, including mental health or behavior concerns.</li> <li>• Adhere to districtwide policies regarding medication administration and self-administration of medication by students while on field trips.</li> <li>• Provide the school with an appropriately labeled medication bottle/package with only the amount needed on the field trip. May need to request a labeled container from the pharmacy for prescription medication.</li> <li>• Obtain any required immunizations for travel.</li> <li>• Adhere to any travel alerts for out-of-country travel.</li> <li>• Parents of students with special health care needs may be requested to accompany their child on a field trip but cannot be required to attend.</li> </ul>

## ***Non-Exhaustive List of First Aid Kit Supplies<sup>6</sup>***

Abdominal pad	Disposable gloves (latex free)	Sanitary supplies/napkins/tampons
Antiseptic Towelettes	Disposable surgical masks	Soap
Bandage scissors	Emitus bag	Splints (long and short)
Bandage tape	Eye flush	Sterile adhesive compresses, individually packaged
Band-Aids	Flashlight with spare bulb and batteries	Sterile cotton-tipped applicators, individually packaged
Cold packs	Gauze bandage	Sterile gauze squares, individually packaged
Cotton balls	Non-mercury thermometer	Tongue blades
Current first aid, choking, and CPR manual (American Red Cross has a first aid phone application)	Pocket mask/face shield for CPR	Triangular bandages for sling
Disposable facial tissues	Safety pins	Tweezers

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Children's Emergency Care Alliance of Tennessee's *Emergency Guidelines for Schools*, 2021

## Nursing Assessment for Field Trips<sup>7</sup>

Healthcare Needs of Students	Type of Trip	Staff	Meals/Food	Nurse-Accompanied Trips	Non-nurse Accompanied Trips	Supervision
<p>What are the health needs?</p> <p>Do students require medication?</p> <p>What types of procedures will be required while on the trip?</p> <p>Do any students require health monitoring, and if yes, what type of monitoring?</p> <p>To meet the health needs of the students, is a nurse needed, or can the health needs be met by trained school staff?</p>	<p>Length of trip (day, overnight, extended)</p> <p>Intensity of activities</p> <p>Indoor vs. outdoor</p> <p>Destination/Location (proximity to health care facilities, availability/timeliness of emergency response)</p> <p>Time of year (e.g., weather/allergen concerns)</p> <p>Are adequate communication services available?</p>	<p>What preparation is needed if a nurse is required but is not available?</p> <p>Are the staff trained/competent to perform health care procedures or assist with medication administration?</p> <p>Is the parent/guardian accompanying their child (a school district cannot require this)?</p>	<p>Will meals/food be offered on the trip?</p> <p>Do any students have special dietary needs?</p> <p>What accommodations are needed?</p>	<p>What coverage is needed for the school building if the school nurse attends the field trip?</p> <p>If the field trip occurs out-of-state, what are the state or country's requirements to practice nursing?</p>	<p>What health care procedures can be delegated to trained volunteer staff?</p> <p>What are the delegation laws/rules that determine what health care?</p> <p>Can procedures/medication administration be delegated to unlicensed personnel for out-of-state or out-of-country trips? Are there limitations?</p> <p>What are the supervision requirements?</p> <p>Are there competency requirements?</p> <p>What is the competency of staff accompanying the students to provide the necessary healthcare?</p>	<p>What nursing supervision is needed during day trips?</p> <p>What nursing supervision is needed on overnight or extended trips?</p> <p>What alternatives are in place in the absence of nursing supervision?</p> <p>Is the nurse able to supervise assigned delegations (ability of staff to contact the nurse with problems/questions)?</p>

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from the Connecticut Department of Education's [Field Trip Planning Considerations](#)

## ***Additional Resources***

[School Nurse Considerations for Field Trips](#), an online learning module provided by School Health Associates, reviews the planning steps the School Nurse should take to improve student safety and health outcomes while on a field trip. The module covers field trip planning, medication administration, performing nursing procedures, in-state, out-of-state, and international field trips. There is a \$15 fee to access the course.

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Connection Team (FACCT)'s [Best Practices for Field Trips](#) can assist in planning for food allergies on field trips. [FAACT'S Education Resource](#) Center contains additional tools and resources, including [5 Things to Know Before Your Child Attends a Field Trip](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Managing Food Allergies in Schools: The Role of School Teachers and Paraeducators](#) contains a Field Trip Checklist of important actions to take prior to field trips for students with allergies.

The [American Diabetes Association's Extracurricular Activities and Field Trips](#) webpage is designed to ensure students with diabetes have a chance to fully and safely participate in all school activities, including field trips and extracurricular activities.

The American Lung Association has a [sample field trip medication policy](#).



# Frequently Asked Questions

**1. How can the school nurse participate in the planning of school-sponsored field trips?**

School nurses can provide information to the field trip sponsor/school administration regarding medication administration and nursing care to ensure best practices for student health and safety.

**2. Can a parent/guardian accompany their child on a field trip?**

The parent/guardian may attend field trips and may choose to resume responsibility for providing health services for their child, but their attendance cannot be required for their child to participate.

**3. Can Tennessee nurses administer nursing services on out-of-state field trips?**

School districts, administration, and nurses should determine the licensure and practice acts in the visiting state(s) for field trips outside Tennessee. Rules and regulations for nursing practice vary from state to state.

**4. How should school districts manage the need for nursing tasks for students on field trips?**

A licensed nurse can attend the trip to provide healthcare, or trained school staff can assist (in accordance with state law and district policy and procedure). If a task cannot be performed by a non-nurse, the school should send a licensed nurse on the field trip to provide care, or the parent/guardian may choose to attend the field trip and complete the health task. A parent/guardian cannot be required to attend the field trip as a condition for their child to attend. The local school board attorney can be consulted for guidance, if a school district requires guidance related to staffing shortages during field trips.

**5. How should schools handle medication administration for students who need medications during a field trip?**

The school sends a licensed nurse on the field trip to administer the medication, the parent/guardian may choose to attend the activity and administer the medication, or a trained school staff can assist with self-administration of the medication, if appropriate.

**6. What if a school nurse is not available for a field trip where there are students with special health care needs who are not independent in self-care and require a nurse for medication administration or provision of a healthcare procedure?**

School districts should consult their local board attorney for guidance due to staffing shortages. Options may include:

- Hiring float nurse(s) to serve as needed each day, including but not limited to substitute school nurses,
- Reassigning nursing staff from other sites within the school/district to meet needs at school-sponsored field trips,
- Using alternate schedules for school nursing personnel,
- Assessing nursing salaries to determine if competitive and/or;
- Contracting with neighboring boards of education or nursing agencies.

**7. Can non-nurse school staff, who receive appropriate training, assist students with medication administration?**

Yes, an employee or a person under contract to the board to assist in the self-administration of medications under the conditions outlined in Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-50-1602 and State Board of Education Rule 0520-01-13.

**8. Can an independent student self-carry medication during a field trip?**

It is encouraged for school staff to be responsible for and maintain all medications in a secure location during field trips. However, independent students can self-carry and self-administer medication in accordance with school district policy, medical provider authorization, and parent/guardian authorization. The school nurse should verify the health care provider's determination of the student's ability (skills) to self-carry and self-administer medication. School districts should consult their local board attorney for guidance on specific situations related to self-carrying medication.

Tennessee law permits students to self-carry asthma rescue inhalers, epinephrine auto-injectors, pancreatic enzymes, and diabetes care supplies. The school district must have a written medical order and parent/guardian authorization to self-carry and self-administer the prescription medication. The student should demonstrate that they are responsible for safely self-carrying and self-administering the medication.

**9. Can a parent/guardian assign a friend or relative to go on a field trip with their child to administer medication?**

Only school nurses, trained school staff, or the parent/guardian may administer medications to students. School districts are encouraged to seek guidance from their local board attorney regarding specific scenarios/situations.

**10. Is the school district responsible for providing a school nurse for non-school-sponsored field trips?**

No, school districts are not required to plan, coordinate, or supervise non-school-sponsored field trips.

**11. My school district maintains a school supply of epinephrine for emergencies. Should we bring a school supply of epinephrine on field trips?**

School districts with a school supply of emergency medication (e.g., Narcan, epinephrine auto-injectors) can consider, in consultation with their local board attorney, bringing a school supply of emergency medication on a field trip. It is not recommended to take a school supply of emergency medication unless a school supply remains available to students present in the school building.

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