

AIKEN TECHNICAL COLLEGE
PROCEDURE

Policy Title: FIELD TRIPS	Procedure Number: 2-3-111.1
Institutional Authority: Vice President of Administrative Services	
Associated SBTCE Policy/Procedure:	
Associated ATC Policy: 2-3-111	

Approved:  President  Vice President of Administrative Services

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DISCLAIMER

PURSUANT TO SECTION 41-1-110 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SC, AS AMENDED, THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY.

Field Trip/Student or Group Travel Procedure

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 Aiken Technical College service area of Aiken County. "In-area" is defined as any location within the ATC service area of Aiken County. Section I through Section VII of this procedure govern all out-of-area travel with ATC 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 ATC students are typical to the College environment, this includes site visits, demonstrations, field work, lab activities and other appropriate activities offered as a part of or supplement to learning. These experiences are specifically governed by Section VIII of this procedure, as well as all other applicable policies and procedures.

ATC recognizes the benefits of off-campus student/group travel in conjunction with academic, co-curricular, and college sponsored programs. ATC 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 sponsor 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 (sponsor) must assume the responsibility for compliance with the policy and procedures.

I. Faculty and Staff Responsibilities for Field Trips

- A. Faculty must obtain written approval from their academic chair at least ten (10) working days before a scheduled field trip or class activity away from campus.
- B. Advisors to student organizations must obtain written approval from the Vice President for Student Services at least ten (10) working days prior to the field trip. Written approval may be obtained through the completion of two forms: the Field Trip Notification Form which is necessary for all trips and the Travel Authorization Request which is necessary for trips that require funding. The two forms can be prepared and submitted simultaneously, when applicable.
 1. Field Trip Notification Form - Submitting this form is a requirement for all field trips. Faculty/club advisors/trip sponsors should complete this form to provide full trip information including the itinerary, roster, and sponsor contact information. A signed Field Trip Notification Form provides general approval for the field trip from the sponsors' supervisors and from designated administrators at the College.
 2. Travel Authorization Request - Faculty/club advisors/trip sponsors are only required to complete this form when funding is needed for the field trip. A signed Travel Authorization Request provides funding approval. Out of state travel requires approval from the College President.
- C. 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.
- D. All students/groups must be accompanied by a full-time member of the faculty or a full-time college staff employee (sponsor) who has official oversight for/affiliation with the students/group regardless of the mode of travel, except in instances where exception is granted for adult students to arrange their personal travel, pursuant to Section IV of this procedure and in instances where a part-time temporary employee of the College who has official oversight for/affiliation with the students/group coordinates an in-area day trip

for adult ATC students. The designated faculty or staff member is responsible for compliance with all outlined procedures.

- E. 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 necessary forms. Students who refuse to sign necessary forms will not be permitted to travel. Faculty/staff members shall not consume alcoholic beverages or controlled substances during scheduled activities including travel to and from sites to be visited. Faculty and Student Code of Conduct regulations are in force for all off-campus activities sponsored by the College.
- F. Faculty and staff members are responsible for avoiding willful misconduct including, but not limited to:
 - Using alcohol or controlled substances while on the trip (Policy 2-3-110 Drug Free Environment),
 - Engaging in solicitous relationships (Policy 3-3-127 Non-Fraternization),
 - 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 themselves or the group in danger; and
 - Hosting or condoning an occasion where any of the above is violated.
- G. Faculty/staff must maintain Hold Harmless Agreement and Voluntary Assumption of Risk Agreement forms which must be completed by students as a condition of participation.
- H. Individual departments or groups may have further requirements for approval of student/group travel which must be submitted to the appropriate academic dean or Vice President for Student Services for review and authorization, in advance.

II. Student/Sponsor Responsibility

- A. Students must notify all of their instructors affected by the authorized field trip at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance regarding their absence and to request an allowance to make up any missed work.
- B. It is the responsibility of the authorized sponsor and student participants to advise of any known limitations, special disabilities, certified medical conditions, or needs that may require an accommodation.
- C. The sponsor must advise students of rules and regulations regarding conduct during the trip including, but not limited to:
 - Hotel curfew and responsibility for obligations,
 - Purchases or damages incurred by the students/group,

- Using alcohol or controlled substances while on the trip (Policy 2-3-110 Drug Free Environment),
- Engaging in solicitous relationships (Policy 3-3-127 Non-Fraternization),

D. Students will be subject to enforcement of the ATC Student Code of Conduct and local, state, and federal laws at all times while traveling on an authorized trip. The sponsor must report any disciplinary issue to the Vice President for Student Services immediately.

III. Required Documentation

All requests for student/group travel must be initiated by ATC 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. The completed Travel Authorization Request is required for the College to process any advance payment for the trip and for the College to provide reimbursement to employees for trip expenses. A copy of the completed Travel Authorization Request should be submitted to the Office of Student Services and to the Office of Education and Training no less than ten (10) working days prior to the date of departure.

A. Field Trip Notification Form. The field trip/travel organizer/sponsor is required to provide a Field Trip Notification Form, including a roster of all participating students and faculty/staff members prior to departure. The Field Trip Notification Form should be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Services and to the Office of Education and Training no less than ten (10) working days prior to the date of departure.

In addition to travel authorization and the Field Trip Notification Form, 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.

1. Itinerary/ Required Forms - The sponsor must provide "appropriate" trip information to all students traveling. (e.g. Pre-trip meeting/orientation, date and time of departure 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.) Upon receipt of trip information, all participants will be required to provide a signed Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver & Release Agreement and a signed Limited Power of Attorney. Further, an orientation meeting is recommended for all trips, and a parent/guardian orientation is required for all trips involving minors.
2. Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver & Release 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 Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release 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 Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver & Release Agreement should be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Services and to the Office of Education and Training no less than five (5) working days prior to the date of departure. Faculty or staff sponsors will also maintain copies of the Voluntary Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release Agreement.

3. Limited Power of Attorney - All student/group travelers (including minors) must complete a Limited Power of Attorney 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. The Limited Power of Attorney should be completed and submitted to the Office of Student Services and to the Office of Education and Training no less than five (5) working days prior to the date of departure. Faculty or staff sponsors will also maintain copies of the Limited Power of Attorney Form.
4. Medical Coverage - A group policy paid by ATC from student fees provides accident insurance for all registered students. Students are insured while on College premises during scheduled class days and on College-sponsored activities and trips. Coverage does not extend to students attending athletics events as spectators or attending other social activities.
 - a. It is recommended that each student, staff, or faculty member have their own medical and accident insurance. Any costs not covered by their insurance will be the responsibility of the traveler. Insured travelers must carry their insurance cards or proof of insurance with them on the trip.

IV. Modes of Travel/Transportation

- A. Absent extraordinary circumstances (specifically approved by the President or Vice President for Education and Training), 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.

B. Absent extraordinary circumstances (specifically approved by the President or Vice President for Education and Training), field trip transportation offered by Aiken 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 shall be deemed to have met the licensure and safety requirements.

C. 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:

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

B. Commercial Travel - 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:

- Obey all traffic laws and regulations, including posted speed limits.
- 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.
- Wear seat belts at all times. The number of occupants in the vehicle must not exceed the number of seat belts.
- Not exceed the vehicle manufacturer's recommended load capacity (see owner manuals for specific instructions.)
- Avoid horseplay, racing or other distracting or aggressive behavior.
- Refrain from cell phone use while driving.
- 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, which may require additional expenditures. Reimbursement for emergency circumstances may be considered.

- VI. **Trip Contingencies and Emergencies**

- A. **Trip Contingencies**

Even with the best planning effort, things can still go wrong. Faculty/club advisors and sponsors 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 or transportation delays or cancellations require overnight housing. Faculty/club advisors and sponsors should seek to understand contract limitations and restrictions, whether they arise from rental vehicle, lodging, admission or other agreements.

- 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 Director of Procurement & Auxiliary Services, 3) the Vice President for Student Services, and 4) their respective department chair/dean. The Vice President for Student Services will notify executive staff immediately.

In the event of an emergency or accident, field trip sponsors should also complete the Field Trip Report Form for Accident, Injury or Illness and submit it to the Office of Student Services with copy to the Director of Procurement & Auxiliary Services, as soon as possible.

- VIII. **In-Area Field Trips/Travel with ATC Students**

- A. **Student/Sponsor Responsibility:** It is expected that ATC 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/travel organizer/sponsor to notify his/her appropriate department chair/dean and the Office of Student Services with copy to the Director of Procurement & Auxiliary Services, at least 10 business days prior to departure.

- C. Required Documentation: The in-area field trip/travel organizer/sponsor is required to provide to the appropriate department chair/head and the Office of Student Services with copy to the Director of Procurement & Auxiliary Services, a Field Trip Notification Form, including a roster of all participating students and faculty/staff no less than ten (10) business days prior to departure.