

Chaperone Guidelines

1. Review the trip rules so the chaperones are thoroughly familiar with them. Make every effort to assure that the rules will be firmly supported by every adult on the trip.
2. Review the expectations for adult behavior on the trip. Stress that this is an extended "field trip" and that smoking and drinking are not allowed. Remind them that a chaperone has many of the same responsibilities as a teacher. Reinforce being on time for activities, being with your group at all times, and being a good role model.
3. Review the trip itinerary in detail, emphasizing the learning experiences and tips for creating a memorable visit. As the schedule is reviewed, emphasize the chaperones' responsibilities at each point: at the trip check-in, on the bus, in the hotel, at meal times and at attractions. I also recommend mentioning the need for flexibility if last-minute changes occur during the trip.
4. Be candid in discussing the types of problems that can arise on a school trip, making it clear which ones chaperons have authority to handle and which should be referred to school staff. Encourage discussion of their relationship with their own children within the group context.
5. Provide pointers for working with this student age group. Suggest ways they can get to know their group members before or at the start of the trip. Emphasize that the chaperones' role is to be an authority figure, not a buddy to the students. Let the parent chaperons know that the experienced teacher group leaders will support and guide them during the trip.
6. Discuss how to handle emergencies during the trip. Establish a chain of command so that parents report to teachers, and teachers report to the trip sponsor and/or administrator.
7. Review the nighttime security procedures at the hotel. Prior to lights out, adult chaperones should check the student room(s) assigned to them to make sure that everyone is accounted for. They should also check the rooms in the morning to ensure that everyone is awake and ready for the next day's activities. Note: During room check, you should always physically ID each student assigned to that room.
8. Conclude with a Q & A session to allow the chaperone's an opportunity to get clarity on their roles and responsibilities. Remind the chaperones that the tour and activities are designed for students, not adults. Although the trip can be fun for adults, the chaperone's primary responsibility is for the safety and education of the students.

Selecting and training adult chaperones for your school travel experience will prepare them to do their job well, and ensure that safety and the welfare of the participants is the top priority.