

VALLEY ACADEMY TRAVEL POLICY

I. Purpose and Philosophy

- a. To provide appropriate, safe transportation for students to and from school.
- b. To provide educational field trips for students that are appropriate to the students' grade and class and that are adjunct to the instructional program.
- c. Extended travel requests will be granted most often when they:
 - i. Reflect the school's educational and behavioral objectives and
 - ii. Provide an educational value to students that justify the loss of traditional instructional time.
- d. Extended travel will never be used as a student incentive or reward.

II. Definitions

- a. "Board" means the local Valley Academy Charter Board
- b. "School" or "VAC" means Valley Academy Charter School
- c. "Student travel" means daily student travel to/from school, instructional field trips, travel for extracurricular activities and extended travel
- d. "Instructional field trip" (or field trip) means a planned visit off school property taken by students, with appropriate and adequate teacher/school employee supervision for the purpose of enriching and extending the classroom experience. Field trips also connect the school experience and students to the community.
- e. "Extended travel" means and includes travel when school is not in session or during the summer. It also includes one or more of the following circumstances:
 - i. Overnight stays
 - ii. Destinations of more than 100 miles from school
 - iii. May include missed school days
 - iv. May involve student fundraising
 - v. Financial cost to students (consistent with fee waiver rules and law)
 - vi. Out-of-state travel
 - vii. Travel regulated by DOT

III. School buses and commercial transportation

- a. All buses used for daily student transportation, including field trips and extracurricular activities, shall meet all Utah requirements for transporting Utah students (*See Utah Code §41-6a-1304 and Utah Administrative Code R909.3.3*)

- b. The School Director shall appoint a certified Utah school bus driver who shall be responsible for the school's compliance with safety and maintenance measures for certified Utah school buses and has responsibility for all school bus drivers.
- c. VAC buses may allow advertising that is consistent with Utah Administrative Code R909-3.
- d. Certified school buses or insured commercial transportation are preferred for all student travel and extended travel. The use of private vehicles *may be approved* for field trips or short-term travel if the drivers and vehicles meet requirements of this policy (see Sec. V.8.)

IV. Extended travel criteria

- a. Extended travel by VAC students is not authorized or school-sponsored unless pre-approved by the Director and/or the Board.
- b. VAC assumes no responsibility or liability for travel (including extended travel) that is not specifically approved in writing.
- c. Extended travel may be approved if:
 - i. It enhances the VAC instructional and/or cultural program, including part of a planned sequence of educational activities and satisfies school or course objectives;
 - ii. It requires students/supervising employees to miss fewer than five school days;
 - iii. Is only within the continental United States or Canada;
 - iv. Is not, in the Director's or Board's judgment, hazardous;
 - v. Does not penalize students who do not go on the trip

V. Travel approval, procedures and requirements

- a. Travel or field trip preparation shall include the following:
 - i. Pre-approval by School Director
 - ii. Pre-approval must be at least 72 hours in advance of the travel *and include adequate time and notice to students and families.*
 - iii. Parents/students shall receive a detailed itinerary that includes academic objectives for the trip.
 - iv. VAC must have a signed written permission form for each participating student in advance of the departure. The permission forms shall be maintained by the VAC main office/School Director for the school year in which the field trip takes place.
 - v. In addition to the school supervisor (a licensed teacher is the preferred supervisor), there must be one adult per every 5-10 students. The exact number of chaperones shall be determined by the trip supervisor and depend upon the age of the students, the trip destination, student circumstances and other criteria.
 - vi. Travel during the school day shall be free to all students in grades K-5.

- vii. If travel includes meal times, the school is responsible for regular school day meals for K-5 students and for all fee waiver eligible students. Meals or expenses for meals should be arranged in advance to avoid embarrassing students.
- viii. The “buddy system” or “squad system” shall be used for all travel.
- ix. Employee drivers, parents or volunteers who travel with students for short-term travel shall provide proof of insurance to School Director (and have information on file) prior to driving students. The School Director may approve short-term travel involving students if parent drivers have provided required information to the school. Private drivers must be at least 21 years old and have had background checks (consistent with Utah Code [53G-11-402](#)) and clearance.
- x. Travel will begin and end at the school. Students will not be picked up or let off at other points. Only designated students, school employees and approved volunteers may travel with students. No other individuals, including non-school age children, may travel with students without express written approval by the Board.
- xi. School personnel and parents shall work together to make all field trip opportunities available to all students, including students with disabilities. To the extent necessary, school employees and adult chaperones shall be aware of students’ special needs including required medication and/or services.
- xii. The travel supervisor for both short-term or extended travel shall have parent contact information, including emergency contact information, in the supervisor’s possession for all student and adult travel participants.

VI. Extended travel

- a. Travel that includes any over-night travel shall be approved at least 60 days in advance; the Board shall be notified of extended student travel activities. Teachers or parents may not plan or fundraise for extended travel prior to approval by School Director and notice to Board.
- b. **All other requirements of Sec. V.A. (above) apply for extended travel.**
- c. Any extended travel that exceeds 100 miles from the school or crosses state lines shall be by **properly** insured commercial carrier. Commercial vehicles that seat 11 or more (driver included) may NOT be used to transport students unless the vehicle meets the federal school bus safety standards ([Utah Code 53-8-211.5](#)).

VII. Additional provisions

- a. **Reimbursement:** School employees and *designated and approved* travel chaperones/volunteers may be reimbursed for travel expenses, as approved with the travel authorization, including overnight lodging and gasoline/miles reimbursement (at the State-approved rate).
 - i. Employees and volunteers will not be reimbursed for meals or incidental items.
 - ii. Approved travel reimbursements shall be processed using VAC-approved forms and procedures.

- b. Fundraising:** Fundraising for short-term and extended travel shall follow all required fundraising requirements and all school fee requirements and Utah laws.
- c. Forms:** All required travel forms (private vehicle transportation, parent permission, medical release, student code of conduct, bus requisition, etc.) shall be available in the VAC main office or on the school website.