



INSTRUCTION: Field Trips

Cultural Exchange

I. Issue

- A. Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) is committed to providing cultural exchange programs as part of the school system's overall academic program. Exchanges involve the reciprocal agreement where BCPS students are sent to a host institution and students from the host institution attend BCPS. The cultural exchange program enhances student achievement by providing opportunities for students to develop cultural awareness, effective communication skills, and a global perspective.

II. Purpose

- A. To establish guidelines and responsibilities for cultural exchange programs.

III. Definitions

- A. *Chaperoning Teacher* – is a tenured teacher who holds a Class 1 professional certificate from the Maryland State Department of Education and who accompanies and supervises students on an approved cultural exchange outbound trip.
- B. *Cultural Exchange Outbound* – A cultural exchange trip sponsored by BCPS where BCPS students travel outside of the United States, reside with a host family or in dormitories, and attend classes at a school with which BCPS has established reciprocity.
- C. *Cultural Exchange Inbound* – A cultural exchange program where foreign students from a school with which BCPS has established reciprocity visit BCPS, reside with a Baltimore County host family, and attend classes at a Baltimore County Public School.
- D. *Office Head* – The director or coordinator of a curriculum and instruction content office hosting a cultural exchange program.
- E. *Selection Committee* – A group consisting of the program coordinator, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students that reviews student applications, conducts interviews, and recommends student participants.
- F. *Sponsoring School* – The BCPS school hosting a cultural exchange program.

- G. *Program Coordinator* – The BCPS employee designated with oversight responsibility for the cultural exchange program by the principal of the sponsoring school or by the office head.

IV. Guidelines

- A. The cultural exchange program shall align with the educational goals of the school system and align with student achievement goals outlined in the *Blueprint for Progress*.
- B. Participation in a cultural exchange program is limited to BCPS students in Grades 9-12.
- C. Students shall not be denied access to cultural exchange opportunities because of gender, race, color, disability, or economic status. Efforts shall be made to find ways to maximize participation of interested and qualified students in these opportunities.
 - 1. Students with disabilities shall be provided equal opportunity for participation in all planned educational, extra-curricular, and recreational activities that take place during the cultural exchange. As part of the planning and implementation process, students with disabilities shall be given the opportunity to participate with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of any student with a disability. For this purpose, the student’s IEP shall be provided to staff coordinating and participating in these cultural exchange opportunities.
- D. The principal of the sponsoring school or program coordinator shall monitor the scheduling and involvement of participating and non-participating teachers and students to make certain that neither instructional time nor school resources are unduly impacted by the cultural exchange.
- E. Employees are prohibited from participating in any aspect of a cultural exchange program when such participation violates the Board’s Ethics Code.

V. Proposal and Approval

- A. Proposals shall align the objectives of the cultural exchange with the instructional program to enrich or extend the curriculum.
- B. Proposals shall be submitted by a school principal or office head and include the following:
 - 1. The *Cultural Exchange Proposal* form (Rule 6801, Form E).

2. The *Cultural Exchange Reciprocal Agreement* (Rule 6801, Form A).
 - (a) The Reciprocal Exchange Agreement shall include provision for student housing, selection of host families, planned activities beyond the school day, behavioral expectations, and necessary health insurance and vaccinations.
- C. All proposals shall be submitted no later than six months prior to the scheduled departure date.
- D. The proposal shall be forwarded to the Assistant Superintendent serving the school zone who will review the proposal. Based on the Assistant Superintendent's review, the proposal will either be approved or rejected.
- E. If the proposal is approved by the Assistant Superintendent, the proposal will be forwarded to the Executive Director of Special Programs, who will review the proposal and evaluate the potential success of the exchange. If the Executive Director approves the proposal, the proposal will be forwarded to the Superintendent for final approval.
- F. The Superintendent has the sole authority to approve/deny a cultural exchange program under this rule.

VI. Student Application and Selection

- A. BCPS students wishing to participate in an exchange program must submit an application and be approved by both the principal of the student's home school and the selection committee. (Rule 6801, Form N)
- B. Students will be selected on the basis of the following criteria: demonstrated and continued strong academic performance (no final grade below a "C"); teacher recommendations; interest and aptitude for learning the language and culture of the host country; successful completion of the application and interview process.
- C. Students selected for participation as a student ambassador shall attend all orientation sessions and sign a *Student Ambassador Contract*.

VII. Cultural Exchange Outbound – Responsibilities

- A. Executive Director, Special Programs, or his/her Designee shall:
 1. Review and approve all procedures and forms governing the cultural exchange program.
 2. Monitor the state department's current travel warnings. If the U.S. Department of State advises against travel to a country involved in

the cultural exchange the executive director shall immediately notify the superintendent.

3. Upon conclusion of the program, and in consultation with the principal of the sponsoring school office head, review and evaluate the value of the cultural exchange in terms of:
 - a. Its contribution to the education of the participating students;
 - b. The criteria included in the cultural exchange evaluation form.
4. Submit the completed cultural exchange evaluation form to the superintendent 60 days after the conclusion of the cultural exchange.

B. Principal or Office Head

The principal of the sponsoring school or office head shall:

1. Develop an agreement with the foreign sponsor.
2. Ensure compliance with the *Cultural Exchange Planning Timeline* (Rule 6801, Form B).
3. Identify chaperoning teachers to accompany and supervise students on the cultural exchange.
4. Obtain the final approval from the superintendent within one week of the date of departure.

C. Program Coordinator

The program coordinator will oversee all phases of the exchange. Coordination will include:

1. Organizing the committee for the selection of students and teacher chaperones.
2. Developing a plan for appropriate fundraising activities.
3. Acting as the liaison with the reciprocating foreign institution and acting as the BCPS contact person for the exchange.
4. Providing application forms and registration materials to interested students.
5. Identifying chaperoning teachers to accompany and supervise students on the cultural exchange and notifying teachers of their academic and employment responsibilities.
6. Coordinating travel, trip cancellation insurance, health/accident insurance, and lodging.
7. Preparing, distributing, and collecting all pertinent information, including parent permission, health history, and authorization to carry and self-administer medication forms.
8. Coordinating and presenting all orientation meetings with staff, parents, and students.

9. Developing an emergency action plan in the event a student becomes injured or falls ill during the exchange.
10. Ensuring completion of student culminating projects and requisite evaluations.
11. Maintaining all requisite forms until the conclusion of the program and in accordance with BCPS records retention schedule.
12. Scheduling, at a minimum, four (4) mandatory pre-travel orientation sessions to inform students, chaperoning teachers, and parents/guardians about the cultural exchange and their responsibilities.
 - a. Orientation sessions shall be mandatory for the student participant and his/her parents/guardians.
 - b. The mandatory orientation sessions will include the following:
 1. Student behavior expectations.
 2. Those expenses, not included in the costs, such as required inoculations, passport/Visa expenses, and personal expenses.
 3. Parent financial responsibility in the event a student is removed from participation in the program for any reason.
 - c. Review, as part of the pre-travel orientation sessions, the academic and employment responsibilities of the chaperoning teachers and the students in terms of the cultural exchange's contributions to the education of the participating students.
 - d. Introduce the key components of the culminating project based on the cultural exchange student project proposal form. (Rule 6801, Form C)
 - e. Review operational and academic expectations before and during the cultural exchange by referencing the Cultural Exchange Evaluation Form (Rule 6801, Form D).

D. Chaperoning Teacher

Chaperoning teachers shall accompany the students on the exchange program and shall be responsible for:

1. Completing the *Cultural Exchange Chaperone Agreement* (Rule 6801, Form F).
2. Attending all requisite orientation sessions.
3. Devising a plan, approved by the principal of the sponsoring school or program coordinator, for maintaining daily and emergency communications with participating students during the cultural exchange.

4. Notifying the school nurse of the cultural exchange in sufficient time to review the list of participants in terms of student health information, and to develop a plan for administration of medications or medical treatment.
5. Maintaining an additional copy of the cultural exchange parent/guardian permission form, with emergency contact information, and the *Student Health History Form* for each participant for the duration of the cultural exchange.

E. Parent/Guardian

The parent/guardian of the student participant shall be responsible for:

1. Attending all orientation sessions.
2. Completing the following forms:
 - a. Cultural Exchange Parent/Guardian Permission Form (Rule 6801, Form G).
 - b. Cultural Exchange Student Health History form (Rule 6801, Form H).
 - c. If applicable, Cultural Exchange Authorization Carry and Self Administer Medication/Medical Emergency Form (Rule 6801, Form I).
3. The cost of travel to and from the host country, requisite inoculations, passport/Visa expenses, medical/travel insurance (mandatory), and any personal costs associated with the trip.
4. All financial costs associated with returning the student participant to the United States for disciplinary or other reasons.

F. Student Participant

The student participant shall:

1. Adhere to the BCPS student code of conduct at all times while participating in the cultural exchange program. (See Board of Education Policy 5550, *Behavior*)
 - a. Violations of the student code of conduct may result in immediate dismissal from the program.
 - b. In the event a student is dismissed from the program or is sent home for any reason prior to the conclusion of the program, the student's parents/guardians shall assume all financial responsibilities for returning the student to the United States.
2. Develop a culminating project, approved by the principal, in which the student identifies a theme related to the culture and documents, in journal form, the steps used to complete the project. (Rule 6801, Form C)

3. Upon conclusion of the cultural exchange, the student shall make a formal culminating presentation, as well as a written summary, which includes the purpose of the project and summarizes the knowledge gained as a result of the experience.
 - a. The evaluation of the student creative presentations shall be completed by the principal or program coordinator and be based on the Baltimore County Public Schools' performance task rubrics, utilizing the rubrics provided appropriate to the presentation.

VIII. Cultural Exchange Inbound – Responsibilities

- A. The principal of the sponsoring school or program coordinator shall be responsible for the following when the school participates in a reciprocal cultural exchange for students coming to the States, staying with host families, and attending a BCPS school:
 1. Identifying and selecting host families for the foreign students and, if applicable, the teacher chaperones accompanying the students.
 2. Identifying alternate host families in the event the host family cannot fulfill its commitment.
 - a. Host families will be selected in accordance with procedures established by the Office of World Languages.
 - b. Families wishing to host foreign students must complete the Cultural Exchange Host Family Application Form and be able to host the student for the entire exchange.
 - c. When appropriate, host families shall also be provided for chaperones accompanying the foreign students.
 - d. Alternate host families shall be identified in case a host family cannot fulfill its commitment.
 3. Ensuring parents/guardians of students coming to BCPS have provided documentation of the necessary vaccinations and home contact information for the host family.
 4. Communicating to the principal of the reciprocal school the costs of mandatory health insurance which allows inbound students to be treated in the United States for the duration of the cultural exchange.

5. Collaborating with the principal of the reciprocal school to create a schedule of activities for the inbound students prior to the beginning of the cultural exchange.
 - a. The schedule of activities shall include the anticipated costs to the inbound students, number of participants, beginning and ending times of the activities, and other arrangements, such as transportation.
6. Making provisions for foreign students to participate in the regular school day activities and extra-curricular activities of the Baltimore County School that they are visiting.

IX. Cancellation

- A. The Superintendent reserves the right to cancel the cultural exchange or recall the group, if the circumstances suggest that foreign travel is unsafe or for any reason determined within the Superintendent's sole discretion.
- B. Neither the Board of Education, the Superintendent, or the school system shall be financially responsible for losses due to changes or cancellation of the cultural exchange program.

Rule
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Superintendent of Schools