



Cumberland School Department Policy Manual

Draft of Proposed

Special Needs Inclusion Policy (Field Trips, Co curricular & Extra Curricular Activities)

Purpose:

The School Committee recognizes that participation in co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities, and field trips can be a critical part of a student's overall educational experience. The School Committee acknowledges its responsibility to ensure equal opportunities and access to participate in school events and trips for all students, including those with disabilities as required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), that each child with a disability participates with nondisabled children in those extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the need of that child, ensuring that each child with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the child's IEP Team to be appropriate and necessary for the child to participate in nonacademic settings. 34 C.F.R. § 300.117.

The intent of the policy is not to require that a student with a disability be allowed to participate in any selective or competitive program offered by the school district, so long as the selection or competition criteria are not discriminatory. In some instances, accommodations or services may not be required if they would fundamentally change the nature of the activity or require an excessive or undue financial burden.

Definitions:

Co Curricular Activities-

A co curricular activity is an activity, programs, and learning experiences that complement, in some way, what students are learning in school. Examples include: debate, student council, school newspaper, spelling bees, mock trials, drama productions

Extracurricular Activities (school sponsored)-

An extracurricular activity can be defined as activities, programs, and learning experiences that are sponsored by and usually held at school, but that are not part of the academic curriculum. Examples include: school dances, school sports, field day events

Field Trip-

A field trip is an educational experience that involves leaving the school grounds; the trip may or may not involve transportation and the trip may or not require an overnight stay and/or may not be within the continental US. Trips can be considered instructional, celebratory, or supplemental.

Inclusionary Considerations:

- Schools can better identify when to implement modifications by considering the following questions:
 - Is the student a student with a disability?
 - Section 504 or IDEA
 - Is a modification necessary for equal opportunity?
 - Would there be a fundamental alteration if the modification was allowed?
 - consider whether the change would
 - (1) alter such an essential aspect of an activity that it would be unacceptable even if it affected all competitors equally (such as adding an extra base in baseball)
 - Or (2) give a student an unfair advantage over others
 - Are other modifications, aids, or services available that would not be a fundamental alteration?

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Inclusionary Practices:

● Co curricular & Extracurricular Activities

- All co curricular and extracurricular activities must provide reasonable modifications and accommodations so that students with disabilities may participate to the fullest extent possible. *Examples of such modifications and accommodations include, but are not limited to:*
 - School Dances, Pep Rallies, and Other Loud Events
 - Providing a quiet location or break area for students who want to participate, but may require breaks
 - Athletic Participation
 - Provide visual cue to alert deaf athletes to the start of a race
 - Assistance with glucose testing and insulin administration for a student with diabetes
 - School Clubs
 - Allow speech to text or predictive text software for students with dyslexia or visual impairments to participate in the school newspaper

● Field Trips

- All field trips must be in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Chapter 42-87 of the General Laws of Rhode Island in that all field trips, sites and transportation arrangements are reviewed in advance for accessibility and all necessary arrangements and/or modifications are made in advance of the field trip. No student shall be denied participation based on a disability.
- Districts should always provide for the inclusion of students with disabilities in field trips.
 - Although there may be individual cases wherein it is determined by IEP/504 team members (which include the student's family) that participation in particular field trips is not in the student's best interest, such cases must be documented.
 - No student should be automatically excluded from participating due to his or her disability. Section 504 requires that a District presume that a student with a disability will participate in a field trip alongside children without disabilities. If an entire grade goes on a trip, just because the student may not attend the general education class, they still need to be considered as participants on the trip. (ie. bowling trips, movie trips, museum trips, etc.)
 - In general, if a student with a disability needs an accommodation or related aids and services to participate in a field trip, those services must be provided.

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- Students who require a wheelchair to participate in the trip must be transported in a vehicle in which the wheelchair can be secured and a lift bus should be available for these students.
- It is against federal law to require parents of children with serious health issues to go on field trips.
- If there are concerns that a student's participation may be unsafe or a risk to the student or others, the District should consider providing accommodations and related services to support the student's participation.
 - If the District still believes the student's participation would be unsafe, the District's decision to exclude the student must be made on an individual basis with consultation from the student's educational team, which includes the parents and/or guardian. The District has the burden of demonstrating that the student should not participate.