

Guidelines for Chaperones

School events are wonderful opportunities for students to enhance what they are learning in the classroom. They also provide parents an opportunity to be directly involved in their child's education. Here are some procedures to help you and the students get the most out of school events:

Save conferences for later: Avoid the temptation to discuss your child's progress with the teacher during a school event. As a chaperone, you have responsibilities and the teacher needs to stay focused on the details of the event. Schedule another time when both you and the teacher can focus on your child.

Leave siblings at home: School events are designed to reinforce what the students have been studying in class. Therefore, the field trip won't be as meaningful to their younger siblings. Besides, other children could distract you from your role as chaperone.

Be a role model: How students behave is a reflection on the school. Therefore, the administrators and teachers expect the students' behavior to be exemplary. Chaperones should model good behavior by listening to and following the rules laid out by the teacher. Let the students see you paying attention when the teacher, principal, or featured speaker is talking. If you're driving, obey the speed limit, wear your seatbelt, and please refrain from smoking. An approved driver's verification form must be on file before a parent can drive students to and from an event.

Be in charge: As a chaperone, you're not along to be the students' buddy. You're the adult in charge. Enforce the rules consistently, right from the beginning. Report inappropriate behavior to a teacher.

Be sincere with the teacher: Don't wait until the end of the field trip to "vent" serious frustrations. Immediately report to the teacher if the children in your group behave in an unsafe or disrespectful manner.

Be consistent with the following:

Prior to leaving on the field trip, both teacher and chaperones should have a plan in place with a ratio of children 1 adult to 8 students. In addition, these children should always stay with the assigned adult. Furthermore, in the event one child gets lost, a discussion prior to leaving should be had about a safe location to meet. In large attendance areas (museums, Shed Aquarium, etc.) it is crucial to have a firm handle on the location of all students and chaperones.

Be discreet: The teacher may need to divulge private information to you about one of the students (e.g., medical condition), or you may overhear private conversations among the staff members. In either case, keep the information to yourself.

Keep to the schedule: Field trips are carefully orchestrated, with set times for arrival, departure, lunch, and events. It's important that all the chaperones follow the schedule precisely and keep the students on time.

Focus on the children: Although chaperoning may be a good opportunity to meet other parents, you need to stay focused on keeping your group of students together and on task.

Pass along compliments: Let the teacher know if you get compliments about your group's or the school's behavior while on the trip. Congratulate the children as well for being excellent ambassadors for the school.