

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL SPONSORED STUDENT TRAVEL

Determining and Reviewing Travel Safety

School sponsored student travel, including international travel, for mission work or educational purposes can be an important part of a Christian school education. While the need for students to see themselves as global Christians who understand their world is great, the questions about health and travel safety are many and changing. These procedures are intended to specify research, timelines, trip guidelines and deliberate decision-making steps that will maximize travel safety, while allowing the approval of ample opportunities for student learning, spiritual growth and service.

DEFINITION: School-Sponsored Trip For the purposes of this document, a School-Sponsored Trip is any travel planned and chaperoned by school faculty or staff that includes more than one overnight stay.

DEFINITION: Safety Rating Each trip as initially proposed will receive a Safety Rating.

- A rating of **Safe** is a recommendation to proceed through the approval process.
- A rating of **Risks to Address** means that the plan could be rated as Safe if certain variables were changed. Those variables might include parts of the itinerary, means of transportation, accommodations, trip dates or length of stay, types of activities, association with travel or other agencies, and number, age, experience and selection of students and/or chaperones. A trip so rated could be revised and re-submitted.
- A rating of **Dangerous** means the trip cannot be approved due to risk factors that are unavoidable at the present time.

NOTE: A trip will be automatically rated Dangerous and cancelled or postponed if

- a **U.S. State Department Travel Warning** recommending that Americans avoid travel to that country is currently in effect, or
- a **U.S. State Department Public Announcement** warns of short term or transnational conditions that pose significant risks for American travelers in the proposed travel areas, or
- a **Centers for Disease Control Travel Advisory** or **World Health Organization Travel Advisory** recommending that Americans avoid travel to that country is currently in effect.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Initial approval of a program, or of a new destination for an existing program

1. The principal will convene a review committee including two experienced faculty/staff trip leaders and the staff member proposing the trip to review the written

proposal for any new trip or destination. The proposal will include a written list of potential safety issues and questions related to the itinerary, destination and activities along with any available information in response to those issues. Additional information might include responses from medical professionals, school insurers, transportation providers, travel agencies or cooperating agencies at the destination. If the proposal includes travel to any country other than the United States or Canada, it will include relevant reports from the State Department, the Centers for Disease Control and news agencies in that country, as well as an assessment from one or more individuals knowledgeable about that country.

2. The review committee will respond to the proposal in writing, recommend to the principal a Safety Rating for the plan as described, list any specific safety concerns and/or prescribe changes to the plan to improve safety and include any recommendations for further research.
3. When a trip is approved with a Safe rating, the proposal and the committee's written response will be kept on file in the high school office for two years or until updated.

Annual re-approval of plans and itinerary for existing programs

1. The principal will review plans for each recurring trip for safety each year with the trip advisor. Plans for previously approved trips within the U.S. and Canada will be reviewed only for changes in itinerary, activities, accommodations, means of transportation and chaperones. Plans for trips outside of the U.S. and Canada will also be reviewed for any changes in the relevant reports from the State Department, the Centers for Disease Control and news agencies in that country.
2. When the trip has been re-approved with a Safe rating, the current proposal and the principal's response will be used to update the file kept in the high school office.

Review of previously approved plans prior to departure

1. After the initial approval or the annual re-approval of any trip that includes travel to countries other than the United States or Canada, the principal and the trip advisor will review the Safety Rating of the trip again periodically before departure. Conditions will be reviewed again at least once within two weeks of departure. This review will include current relevant reports from the State Department, the Centers for Disease Control and news agencies in that country.
2. If, before departure the Safety Rating of the trip must be downgraded because of new risks, the trip will be postponed or cancelled until or unless those risks can be addressed satisfactorily to again rate the trip as Safe.
3. When or if the trip is re-approved with a Safe rating, the current proposal and the principal's response will be used to update the file kept in the high school office.

Bill Safstrom, M Ed.
Seattle Pacific University Adjunct
Former Principal of Bellevue Christian High School