

Fourth Grade Field Trip Information

We love field trips! Participating in field trips helps promote class culture and relationships, provides unique learning experiences, and helps students build background knowledge while reinforcing learning from the classroom.

We're very lucky that part of the fourth grade curriculum is to study Colorado History. In order to enrich our learning about our state's history, the Fourth Grade Team has chosen to plan and facilitate trips to several venues outside of Fort Collins. These include the State Capitol and Governor's Residence in Denver, The History Colorado Center in Denver, and Centennial Village in Greeley.

In the past, we have been able to schedule these trips using the district's buses to get us to/from each venue. This is no longer an option for us when traveling outside of Fort Collins for a few reasons:

- *Personnel. There is a shortage of bus drivers - fewer available people to provide transportation.
- *Scheduling. Drivers are assigned routes to/from schools in addition to extra-curricular activities (generally sports events). Because of the driver shortage, the transportation department does not have flexibility in the schedule to accommodate for trips outside of Fort Collins. It is possible to use district buses to these venues if we leave after 9:00 and return before 2:00. This does not allow us enough time at each venue to have a meaningful experience.
- *Cost. We have explored the option of using chartered buses. It is extremely cost prohibitive.

For these reasons, the Fourth Grade Team requests parents volunteer to be drivers for out of city field trips. There are district guidelines and procedures around these requests. Each driver must submit proof of insurance and a current driver's license in addition to an "application." We assign students to each driver's vehicle based on how many students can be safely transported in that car. Additionally, all parent drivers must be registered volunteers and go through the required PSD background check.

We realize that for many of you ridesharing and carpooling are second nature for your family. Your child often travels with other adults and this is a comfortable experience for you. We also realize that for some of you this is uncomfortable and you have questions about your child's safety. Please know that the Fourth Grade Team takes every possible precaution when planning to use parent drivers as your child's safety is our number one priority. We strictly adhere to district policy and guidelines. Despite this, some of you may still be reluctant to have your child participate in these field trips. All parents have the following options related to our out of city field trips:

- *Send in requested paperwork and we'll assign your child to one of our parent volunteer's cars.
- *Volunteer to drive your child and a small group of other students. We try our best to notify parents well in advance that we're requesting drivers so volunteers can take the day off of work if necessary.
- *Volunteer to drive your child only. This is only an option for some out of city trips as a few venues have limits on how many students/chaperones can tour at any one time. If this is the case, you could drive your own child but not participate in the activity.

*Opt out. You can choose to keep your child home on field trip day, or you can choose to send your child to school to be working on homework, reading, and other academic activities supervised by school personnel.

Our hope is that sharing this information helps to put your minds at ease, helps build context and understanding for why our field trips are planned this way, and answers questions you might have.

If you still have questions, please don't hesitate to contact your child's homeroom teacher.

Thank you in advance for your support. We realize we couldn't provide such rich educational experiences for your children without your partnership.

Sincerely,
The Fourth Grade Team

FAQs:

What happens if I'm transporting students and I'm in an accident?

Your automobile insurance is the primary insurance. Contact emergency personnel if needed, then contact your child's homeroom teacher, and your insurance agency.

How will I know where to go, and when to be there?

Your child's teacher will provide you with the address, directions, and times of arrival and departure.

Will my student be transported other places by their driver?

No, your child's parent driver has been instructed to go directly to the field trip location and then back to Zach once the field trip is over. Stops for snacks and drinks are not allowed.

How do we support students behaviorally while we're driving?

As this is a school trip, students are expected to show ROAR at all times. The rules in your car apply. We expect drivers to be clear about noise level and behavior. Parent drivers will communicate any behavior issues, and discipline problems will be handled by teachers.

If I opt to keep my child home, are there any "penalties?"

No, your child will not be penalized for not attending the field trip.

Does the district automatically insure anyone that is driving?

No, the parent driver's automobile insurance is the primary insurance.

Do other grade levels at Zach utilize parent drivers?

Yes, certain other grade levels do utilize parent drivers if the field trip is outside of the given time frame for district buses.

Will my child be given food, drink, or medication by the parent driver?

No, parent drivers are not allowed to give students in their car (except their own child) any food, drink, or medication in order to protect all with severe food allergies and to align with our health care guidelines.