



TRAVEL AND SCHOOL EXPENSE POLICY

Introduction

It is district policy to reimburse employees for ordinary, necessary and reasonable travel expenses when directly connected with or pertaining to approved school business. Virtual Preparatory of Oklahoma will use the current local [government per diem rates](#) to reimburse hotel, milage and meal expenses for employees when travel is necessary.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed if expenses are:

- Reasonable
- Appropriately documented
- Properly authorized and
- Within the guidelines of this policy

Employees should make every effort to plan your travel within a reasonable period of time in advance of the planned departure date, preferably at a minimum of 14 days in advance.

All travel that is overnight must be approved by the traveler's manager in writing prior to booking a trip. Any deviations from the policies detailed herein must be explained on the employee's [expense report](#) with the approval of the reviewer noted to the Head of Schools. The Head of Schools is responsible for ensuring that any expenses reimbursed or paid for by the district are in compliance with this Policy. Reimbursements for expenses that are not in compliance with this policy require the written approval of the Head of Schools.

This policy will be administered in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Should a travel accommodation be required, employees are encouraged to work with the employee's manager to identify the necessary accommodations.

Saturday Night Stays: The district will only pay for Saturday night stays when the total travel expense (including all travel-related charges) for a Saturday night stay is less than the total expense for a shorter-duration trip. Extending travel for Saturday-night stays must be prior approved, in writing, by the traveler's manager. It is the traveler's responsibility to document the cost differential of a Saturday-night stay prior to the trip. Applicable documentation must be included in the Expense Report submission.

Travel Delays and Emergencies: Should there be a weather related or other emergency that requires an unplanned overnight stay, the employee should notify their supervisor immediately. Once approved, overnight stay expenses will be reimbursed following the usual per diem process. However, no costs (i.e. meals, lodging, etc.) will be reimbursed when a traveler voluntarily chooses to stay an additional night.

Spouse/Personal Travel Combined with Business: Travel expenses for a spouse or other family members who are not employees are not eligible to receive reimbursement. However, a spouse or other family members may share accommodations with the employee as long as the presence of the spouse or other family member does not impact completion of work responsibilities during work hours.



Employees Traveling Together: For employees traveling together on a school related trip, one team member shall report any shared expenses (such as shared car, group dinner, etc).

Non-Allowable Expenses: The following expenses are NOT reimbursable:

- Airline headsets
- Airline, auto or hotel memberships
- ATM fees
- Barbers and hairdressers
- Child care
- Clothing
- Computer accessories
- Delinquent credit card fees
- Extravagant gratuities Flight or luggage insurance
- Gum, candy, cigarettes
- Exercise class fees
- Hotel mini-bar
- Hotel or rental car no-show charges
- In room movies
- Laundry or dry cleaning unless staying longer than 5 days
- Magazines, books, newspapers for personal use
- Personal entertainment (including, but not limited to sporting events or movies) Personal toiletries
- Rental car insurance
- Replacement luggage
- Room service, if the maximum daily meal allowance is overspent
- Traffic violations
- Valet luggage delivery
- Valet parking
- Utilities, phone bills, and internet services
- Leases, licenses, insurance, and taxes
- Large purchases (>\$2,500) which require additional approval
- Gift cards
- Lost personal property
- Fuel for general commuting purposes
- Unauthorized meals/entertainment
- Unauthorized travel expenses

Lodging

For those travelling via car, an overnight stay is permissible when round trip mileage is equal to or exceeds 120 miles. Those travelling lesser distances for several days in a row should speak with their supervisor about approval to obtain overnight lodging.



Hotel Selection: Travelers are responsible for booking their own lodging. The per diem lodging rate will be reimbursed to the employee with approved overnight stays.

Cancellation: It is the traveler's responsibility to notify the hotel to cancel a room reservation prior to the cancellation time. Most hotels require a cancellation 24 hours before 6 p.m. of the first night of the reservation. Peak times or hotels in major cities or resort areas require 24 - 72 hours cancellation period. Travelers are responsible for reviewing and adhering to the property's cancellation deadlines in order to avoid no-show charges. Cancellation times are generally based on local time of the destination hotel. Reimbursement of no-show charges will not be processed unless approved by the Head of Schools.

Air Travel

Class of Service: All employees should travel in coach class unless they receive a free upgrade. If the traveler chooses a business or first-class airfare on a flight, he/she must absorb the additional cost, and the rate differential must be clearly documented for reimbursement purposes. Only the coach class rate will be reimbursed unless pre-approved in writing by the Head of School or ACCEL Senior Director of Operations, Online Schools.

Lowest Available Airfare: All airline tickets must be booked at the lowest available airfare. The following criteria will be utilized to determine lowest available airfare.

- The flight's departure or arrival time is within two hours before or after the requested departure or arrival time;
- One stop or connecting flights as well as flights out of alternate airports should be considered if savings of \$100 or more can be achieved;
- Travelers may not specify a preferred carrier.

Reservations should be made as early as possible (at least 14 days in advance) to receive the maximum advance purchase discounts.

Electronic Tickets (e-tickets): Electronic tickets (e-Tickets) must be used for all travel unless the electronic ticketing service is not available. Electronic ticketing is more cost effective due to multiple airlines charging additional fees for paper tickets.

Non-Refundable Tickets: To reduce overall cost, employees are required to travel on non-refundable penalty fare tickets whenever their travel schedule permits. Non-refundable tickets are generally less expensive and are reusable. While these tickets are non-transferable, they are re-useable for one year and can be applied to the traveler's next trip as long as he or she flies on the same airline. The airlines typically assess a conversion fee when using these tickets, but the conversion fee is almost always lower than the difference between a refundable and a non-refundable ticket. Tickets that weren't cancelled will not be reimbursed without approval from the employee's manager.

Lost Tickets: In rare instances in which an airline does not provide electronic tickets and the



traveler loses the paper ticket, immediately report lost or stolen ticket to the agency or airline from whom the ticket was purchased. Any fees associated with issuing a new ticket will be the responsibility of the traveler. This fee will need to be deducted from the expenses reimbursement form.

Frequent Flyer Programs: Travelers are permitted to join frequent flyer programs, and the benefits earned may be used by the traveler for personal use. Frequent flyer memberships should not influence travelers to select a flight that is not the lowest-priced flight available. Staff may use personal frequent flyer miles to upgrade their ticket only if there is no additional cost to the Company. The selection of circuitous routes on particular carriers to accrue frequent flyer credits is not allowed.

Car Rentals

Cars should be rented by employees when other means of transportation are unavailable, more costly, or impractical. In large cities, high rental and parking rates generally make vehicle rental impractical. Alternative modes of transportation such as taxis, subways, and airport or hotel shuttles should be given first consideration.

Size Limit: All rentals should be for economy size cars or smaller, unless an upgrade is provided by the rental company at no cost. If three (3) or more people are traveling together, a full-sized rental is acceptable.

Car Rental Insurance: When signing a rental agreement, you should decline all insurance, including collision damage waiver and personal accident coverage, provided you carry your own auto insurance. The company has several relevant insurance lines that cover general liability and physical damage. However, in the case that the accident is due to the driver's neglect, the driver's individual coverage would be applicable. In the event of an accident resulting in damage to the rental car, notify the rental car company and the insurance representative in the Finance department, and submit a written report including back-up documentation (police report, if applicable) to the representative as soon as possible. Should the driver not have insurance in force, please contact your manager and elect the rental insurance coverage.

Consultants / contractors are not covered under Company insurance.

Refueling: Employees are expected to refuel cars prior to returning them to the rental company. This practice can save as much as 50% of the gasoline cost.

Other Transportation

Personal Car: Employees may utilize personal cars for business travel. Mileage, parking, and tolls will be reimbursed. Travelers will be reimbursed for business usage of personal cars at the Federal Government's prevailing rate per mile. Employees should use rental cars when the total cost (including fuel) of a rental car for the trip's duration will be less expensive than using a personal car.

Employees will not be reimbursed for any of the following, even if these costs were incurred



during business travel.

- Car repairs
- Tickets, fines, or traffic violations
- Damage to personal vehicles
- Theft of personal vehicle or vehicle content

Ride Sharing: If two or more individuals are traveling from the same city to the same location, the employees must share a ride unless written approval is obtained in advance by Head of School.

Rail: All rail transportation must be in economy class in North America.

Taxi and Other Local Transportation: The cost of taxis to and from places of business, hotels, airports or railroad stations in connection with business activities is reimbursable. Use of taxis is authorized only when more economical services (hotel vans, shuttles, etc.) are not available. Employees are encouraged to utilize public transportation whenever feasible. Receipts are required for all transportation expenses of \$10 or greater.

Meals and Entertainment

Personal Meal expenses are those incurred by employees when dining alone on an out-of-town business trip. Travelers will be reimbursed for meals using the government per diem rates for the local area in which they are traveling.

Meal expenses on partial days of travel are reimbursed at 75% of the daily meal per diem. A partial day is a day on which the employee starts or ends the day at home. It will be the employee's discretion on how the allowance is allocated between breakfast, lunch and dinner. Amounts incurred in excess of the daily allowance will be the obligation of the employee. There is no reimbursement for alcoholic beverages.

Group Meals: Supervisors or other staff who pay for a group meal must have express approval from their respective Departmental Director and must include the names of each individual in attendance with the receipt submitted for reimbursement.

Expense Reimbursement Process

Employees requesting reimbursement must use the school's expense report form. Expense reports must comply with the following procedures:

- Employees are eligible to receive per diem for lodging, mileage, and meals when round trip mileage is equal to or exceeds 120 miles. Those travelling lesser distances for several days in a row should speak with their supervisor about approval to obtain overnight lodging.
- If an employee is eligible for per diem, the travel request must be submitted at least 15 days prior to the travel date. Expense reports submitted less than 15 days prior to travel will not be reimbursed unless exceptional approval is provided by the Head of School.
- Each report needs to be prepared by the individual incurring the expense and should include



the employee's name, expense report date, school name and home address to which the check will be mailed.

- Each report should comply with the above policy.
- Hotel and meal receipts should be kept by the employee for their records.
- The employee will book their own hotel accommodations using the guidelines in the above policy
- A PDF map showing round trip mileage should be uploaded to the expense report form linked above.
- Employees should provide all necessary notes explaining anything unusual or other information for approval in the "additional note" section.
 - Purchases made under a spending GRANT should be clearly labeled.