



Caspar Creek Field Trip Driver/Chaperone Guide

A past Field Trip Coordinator at Caspar Creek, Shannon Killilea, worked with founding teachers Joanna Wigginton and Nina Ravitz to develop guidelines for parent drivers and chaperones on school-organized outings. Based on years of experience, they're geared toward providing best overall experience for our students. Though some may seem insignificant, many of these details affect the individuals--and the group--in ways that, though not so obvious, are very powerful.

Before Our Trip

Discuss with your own child that you are privileged to be chaperoning and parenting ALL of the children on the trip. Therefore you are requesting your child understand that you will be equally sharing your attention, assistance and affection with every child on the trip. It is a chance for your own child to forego special considerations and share their great mom/dad/grandparent with others. Additionally, establish ahead of time if your child might be riding in other people's cars on our journey. Either way, toys and personal objects should be removed from your child's area so as not to draw unwanted attention from other little hands.

Plan entertainment for both directions of the trip. You will usually have at least most of the same passengers each way. No movies or electronic devices (including iPods and Game Boys) are allowed. You will experience an amazing opportunity to glimpse the lives of these children, so enjoy the conversation, but be prepared with a book on tape or appropriate music should you want it. Parents often swap CDs with each other before the return trip.

Pack your own lunch and beverages, including coffee/tea! Sometimes we will grab coffee refills as the opportunity presents itself, but it feels unfair to a children if an adult gets to treat themselves to hot, tasty beverages or treats when their own tuna sandwich is lumpy and smells.

- Empty your car of any personal items that might invite tampering.
- Make sure you have a garbage receptacle on board.
- Fuel up and **prepare your car before reporting to the trip.**
- Once at school, report to the Field Trip Coordinator, procure motion sickness kit (if appropriate), passenger list, chaperone cell phone list and partner-driver assignment.
- Attend the Welcome Circle and receive your passengers.
- Reintroduce yourself and identify who your child is to passengers you do not know well.
- Re-prompt bathroom use; then lead your group with belongings to your car.
- Subtly seat passengers according to motion sickness issues as presented by the teachers.
- No individual snacks or drinks allowed in your car-water only. Although unnecessary, if you choose to share a treat with all children in your car, please serve fruit or sugarless item.



On Our Drive

Arrive ON TIME. It is nerve-racking for everyone else in the school community to be wondering if the trip is canceled because one family did not arrive at the appointed time. In the past this inconsiderate action has done damage to group energy and is easily avoided.

In case of an emergency, immediately call Caspar Creek at (707) 964-6234, or the trip coordinator, _____ at _____ as soon as possible. Your prompt call can give us a chance to salvage an entire trip, or just our nerves.

Safety is always our highest priority. Always drive at or below the speed limit. If there is a 'lead' car do not pass it. If we are driving with the intention of pairing cars up, do your best to stay with your partner driver.

- Double-check seat belts are properly fastened.
- Keep vomit bags in reach of the children and lightly reiterate your plan in case a child begins to vomit.
- Slow smooth driving reduces vomiting incidences.
- Pull all children into conversations.
- Control promptly any unacceptable language or discussion topics.
- Try to discuss the upcoming event and evaluate the experience on the return trip.
- At rest stops prompt all to use the restroom, WASH HANDS, and snack or lunch if appropriate.

At Destinations

At destination(s), you may be supervising a group other than your car group. Begin your exploration of venue by making sure each child knows your name and who your own child is. Treat all children the same, whether you are more familiar with some than others. Keep hugs and intimate moments to a minimum with your own child or your child's friends so as to not spark homesickness in our other little travelers. Pull in loners and wanderers. Spark interest in exhibits by prompting children to read placards, estimate size of item, etc. Never allow horseplay or disruptive behavior. Request help from a teacher should you need it. Please NEVER treat your own child to a beverage or treat that the entire group is not being treated to.

Be consistent and constant in your gift of chaperoning. Limit personal discussions with other adults, although it is SOOO tempting! Adults conversing with each other are not fully attentive to the group. If you have another adult in your group, it is often useful to have one adult leading the group through the venue and directing attention and the second adult sweeping at the end, spotting for restless behavior, wanderers, etc. When standing still, always face your group. Your attentiveness will create a safe and priceless learning experience for our children.

Bathroom procedures

- If visiting an outdoor or isolated facility, be sure to have an adult walk through each restroom before releasing the children to use them.
- Prompt hand washing at restrooms and before eating.
- Help sweep for trailing children as we leave the restroom area.