



Lexington Public Schools Meal and Travel Reimbursement Administrative Directive

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Approved by:

-original signature on file-

**Dr. Mary Czajkowski,
Superintendent**

Administrative Directive #2

**This policy is applicable to all employees of the Lexington Public Schools. For those employees covered by Collective Bargaining Agreements, the provisions of the CBA, which are subject to negotiations, prevail over the language in this policy (i.e., discipline). Any changes made to this policy that apply to sections subject to collective bargaining will be sent to the appropriate union prior to implementation.*

***This directive is constructed based upon the practices, procedures, and principles set forth in Town of Lexington Administrative Directive #7 Meal and Travel Reimbursement Policy*

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this administrative directive is to outline the Lexington Public Schools' payment and reimbursement policy for school business travel.

In practice the District encourages employees to follow the State guideline "Economy of Travel Expenses" which basically states.....In every case the means of transportation / travel costs which is least expensive to the community and which is in the interest of economy, with proper consideration to the circumstances, should be used. So for example, the District would expect employees to select reasonable accommodations and ask for the government rate. To dine for reasonable costs, etc.

2.0 Organization(s) Affected

All departments and programs under the authority of the Lexington Public Schools, School Committee, and Superintendent of Schools shall follow this directive.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Travel – Travel is defined as temporary assignment to duty outside of the Town of Lexington.

3.2 Mileage – Mileage resulting from travel (as defined in 3.1 above) using an employee's personal vehicle shall be calculated as the distance from the regular work location to the destination and return to the regular work location. The basic principle to be applied here is that an employee should not gain or lose by using a personal vehicle for official business. If an employee travels less than they would normally travel on a work day, the mileage will not be compensated.

Therefore, if the travel begins and/or ends at the employee's home, standard rates are payable for the mileage incurred less the distance of travel normally incurred in travelling to normal place of work and return home, assuming the travel takes place on a work day.

- 3.3 Unallowable Travel Expenses – Travel expenses incurred for the sole benefit of the employee, such as valet service, room service, entertainment, laundry service, etc., shall not be reimbursed. Finance charges associated with credit card purchases for travel arrangements or other travel-related expenses are not reimbursable. Additionally, reimbursement for alcoholic beverages and tobacco products is prohibited by M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 58.
- 3.4 Frequent Flier Miles – As outlined in the [State Ethics Advisory Opinion EC-COI-88-22](#), public employees may not accept frequent flier miles which may be awarded for travel funded by the district, since state ethics law prevents receipt of items of substantial value to public employees. This applies regardless of whether the travel is funded directly by the district or by the employee and then reimbursed.

4.0 Meal and Travel Guidelines

4.1 Reimbursement

- 4.1.1 It is the policy of the District to reimburse employees for reasonable expenses. Employees are expected to use transportation and travel costs that are least expensive to the District and which are in the interest of economy.
- 4.1.2 The District prefers to pay for travel directly wherever possible, either through a purchase order or district credit card. Employees who have been assigned a procurement card may pay vendors directly for travel-related costs using the procurement card process. Employees may also request a “ghost” card to be issued for a particular vendor, time period and spending limit. In the event there is not an appropriate mechanism for the District to be billed directly, employees may use a personal credit card issued in their name for acceptable travel costs.
- 4.1.3 All employee business travel must be pre-approved by the Superintendent's designee on a Request to Attend form. In the case of Senior Administrators, travel must be pre-approved by the Superintendent on a Request to Attend form.
- 4.1.4 Original detailed receipts are required for all travel transactions and must be submitted to the Finance Office on a Request for Reimbursement of School-Related Expenses form (Appendix A). Receipts must indicate the date and time, location, and amount paid. Credit card receipts are not acceptable without the back-up detailed receipts. The reimbursement amount for each receipt must be clearly stated.
- 4.1.5 Travel expenses incurred in a prior fiscal year shall not be eligible for reimbursement unless funds were encumbered to cover such costs.
- 4.1.6 As a general practice, employees should submit travel reimbursements within a week of returning from a trip.

4.2 Personal Vehicles

The District will reimburse for mileage, tolls and parking fees for employees who drive their personal vehicles while on approved school business. Reimbursement is paid once the employee has submitted the Mileage Reimbursement form (Appendix B) along with the

original receipts for tolls and parking. Mileage should be submitted monthly to ensure prompt payment.

Mileage shall be reimbursed at the applicable IRS rate as published by the Finance Office for trips defined in 3.2 above, but will also include trips within the Town of Lexington for the purpose of conducting daily School business.

4.3 Meals

The school department reimbursement shall be limited to \$66 per day for all food and beverage purchases, inclusive of taxes and tip. Any amount in excess of \$66 per day shall not be reimbursed. Partial travel days (first and last day of travel) will be reimbursed at 75% of the \$66 per day rate (\$49.50).

Original dated receipts showing a detailed breakdown of items purchased must be provided to the Finance Office along with the credit card receipts as proof of payment.

4.3.1 If dining with a group of coworkers, it is strongly encouraged that you ask the server for separate checks ahead of time so that each employee may pay individually. If someone is paying for a group of co-workers, then the individual must submit the receipts along with a spreadsheet detailing a list of names and dated expenses by individual covered by the receipts. The group of co-workers needs to make sure that the individual who paid is made whole for any difference not paid by the district. If an employee is seeking a reimbursement other than the amount on the receipt, this must be clearly marked on the individual receipts when submitting for reimbursement.

4.3.2 Ancillary events directly related to School business travel, such as banquets, special luncheons, etc., not included in the program registration will be reimbursed with proper documentation.

4.3.3 Conference sponsored events for the sole purpose of entertainment shall not be reimbursed.

4.4 Accommodations

If an employee is required to obtain overnight accommodations while on business travel, reimbursement will cover only the employee's cost of lodging. Ancillary costs for additional travel companions are not eligible for reimbursement.

5.0 Violation of this Policy

Employees who violate travel policies will be held responsible for their actions. Consequences of disregarding the School travel regulations may include revocation of travel privileges, reparation of reimbursement payments, suspension or termination. Moreover, improper documentation of otherwise valid travel expenditures creates the appearance of fraud, waste or abuse and may result in similar consequences. Misrepresenting expenses and intentionally submitting false claims is fraudulent and could result in criminal penalties.