

STUDENT-MISCELLANEOUS
*Residential Treatment Center/Residential Non-Public
School Travel Reimbursement for Student and
Parent/Legal Guardian*

Second Revision: 10/23/2024
First Revision: 6/6/2023
Adopted: 6/23/2022

The Governing Board of the Tuolumne County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) recognizes that students with exceptional needs who have been placed in or referred to Residential Treatment Centers (RTC) or Residential Non-Public Schools (RNPS) by a local education agency (LEA) as a means of providing a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

LEA for this policy refers to the LEA of accountability.

Student and parent/legal guardian (as defined by CA Education Code) travel during initial placement, student travel for home visits as deemed necessary by the IEP team and/or RTC/RNPS, and travel related to student discharge are subject to the following guidelines:

Types of Approved Travel

- LEA is responsible for determining the number of single travel reimbursable therapeutic visits per year (and who is allowed to make those visits). Unless the IEP team determines that special circumstances warrant additional therapeutic visits, the LEA will limit the number of single travel reimbursable therapeutic visits to two trips per fiscal year (July 1-June 30). The final number of visits may be more or fewer based on the therapeutic needs of the student. Any additional recommended counseling visits should be arranged using video conferencing.
- All travel for family therapy/counseling, and therapeutic home visits must be submitted to the LEA Superintendent/Executive Director no less than thirty (30) business days prior to the requested date of travel on the Parent/Legal Guardian Travel Authorization Form. The LEA's Superintendent/Executive Director is responsible for reviewing the travel request and making a determination as to whether to approve or deny the request.
- Allowable travel related to the admission and discharge of the student may be provided when the travel meets the requirements as outlined in this policy.
- If discharge of the student is against the educational recommendation, the LEA will not be responsible for the student's transport home or for the parent/legal guardian's travel to pick up the student or for any other travel-related expenses.
- If a parent/legal guardian removes the student from the RTC or RNPS for any reason against the RTC, RNPS, or educational recommendation, or for a duration that has not

been approved in advance in its entirety, the LEA will not be responsible for any travel-related expenditures.

Pre-Authorization for Parent/Legal Guardian/Family/Student Travel

All student and parent/legal guardian travel, when seeking reimbursement from the LEA, must be planned and approved by the LEA at least 30 days in advance of the first day of travel (exceptions may be made during initial placement). The parent/legal guardian must complete a Parent/Legal Guardian Travel Authorization Form and obtain approval from the LEA which will include the RTC or RNPS agreeing that the dates can be accommodated and the visit is therapeutically necessary.

Travel and Accommodations Arrangements

All approved travel arrangements will adhere to the following:

- The Parent/Legal Guardian is responsible for making all travel arrangements (unless the LEA reserves the right to do so) to include
 - Air/Bus/Train travel.
 - Hotel/Lodging arrangements.
 - Travel requirements from hotel/lodging to and from counseling sessions provided by the RTC or RNPS.
 - Student travel for therapeutic home visits.
 - Student travel for the purposes of educational reintegration to a Lesser Restrictive Environment (LRE) as deemed appropriate by the IEP team.
- A maximum of three days and two nights of travel expenditures will be eligible for reimbursement.

Allowable Expenditures for Reimbursement

Any expenditure limit or timeline listed below may be adjusted during the authorization process at the discretion of the LEA Superintendent/SELPA Administrator if no other option is available.

- Airfare:
 - Economy or lowest available fare only. Optional fees for preferred cabin location, pre-boarding, or extra legroom will not be reimbursed.
 - Parent/legal guardian shall book only the least expensive tickets, 21 calendar days in advance, and fly the most direct and economical route possible for the location being visited.
 - LEA will not allow auto or other ground transportation in lieu of flying if it is determined that this would increase the costs significantly.
 - Airfare will be reimbursed at an amount not to exceed \$500.00 per ticket, round trip.
- Lodging:
 - A total of two nights lodging will be reimbursed at an amount not to exceed \$200 per room per night.

- On site parking will be reimbursed at the lowest available rate.
- Meals
 - Reimbursed at the IRS meal allowance for the local area.
- Car Rental:
 - Compact/Economy car rental to and from the airport/bus terminal/train terminal, related to Parent/Legal Guardian travel to the RTC or RNPS.
 - Fuel will be reimbursed based on submitted receipts for actual mileage travel to/from airport/bus terminal/train terminal, lodging, and RTC or RNPS. Fuel purchased through the car rental company will not be reimbursed (prepay programs, missing fuel penalties, etc).
 - Parent/Legal Guardian will be given a maximum reimbursement of \$150.00 per day, for up to two days.
- Shared rides (i.e., Uber, Lyft, etc.):
 - Expenses related to shared rides between transportation terminals, lodging location, and the RTC or RNPS.
 - Carpool/Economy rides only.
- Automobile Mileage:
 - Parent/legal guardian will be reimbursed at the IRS approved rate. Total miles will be calculated from parent/legal guardian's home address directly to the RTC or RNPS or to the airport as determined by the shortest round trip route with verification provided by a route application such as Google Maps or Mapquest.
- Airport Parking in the economy lot.

Non-Allowable Expenditures for Reimbursement

- First Class/Business Class airfare.
- Expenses related to itinerary changes or cancellation fees.
- Cost of checked baggage or excess baggage fees.
- Travel insurance.
- Travel expenses for siblings, extended family, friends, or advocates.
- Luxury hotel/accommodations.
- Incidentals billed to the hotel room (e.g., room service, in room movies, snacks, meals, personal items, toiletries, phone call charges, tobacco, alcohol, and/or other expenses not related solely to the expense of the accommodation, etc.)
- Accommodations and expenses accrued while en route to the RTC or RNPS.
- Mid-size, intermediate, or luxury class car rentals.
- Shared rides at a level beyond the most economical (e.g., Uber X, Uber Comfort, Lyft XL, etc.).

- Ground transportation is not reimbursable if the RTC/RNPS provides transportation to and from the airport to their facility.
- Any additional car rental fees such as insurance coverage, damage waiver, navigation system or other add-on systems, or pre-paid or post-paid fuel.
- Entertainment related expenses (i.e., amusement park, sporting events, movies, etc.).
- Alcoholic beverages, snacks, and tips/gratuities.
- If breakfast is provided at lodging, not reimbursed
- Visitation to RTC or RNPS prior to placement.
- Expenses made against educational recommendation.
- Altered or falsified receipts constitute fraud, and, therefore, all request for trip expense reimbursements will be made null and void.

Reimbursement for Travel

To obtain reimbursement for pre-approved travel, the parent/legal guardian must submit as follows:

- Submit itemized passenger ticket receipts.
- Hotel folios.
- Itemized, original dated receipts for all reimbursable items.
- Receipts must specify date and exact cost of item for which reimbursement is required.
- Organize receipts by date and submit no later than thirty (30) days after last day of travel.

All travel, when submitted as outlined above will be reimbursed within sixty (60) days of complete submission.