GULL LAKE
Community Schools

Overnight Student Trip Request and Guidelines

Trip Name	FTC State Championships Dec 11-12		
School	GLMS & GLHS	Grade Level(s)	6-12
Destination Location	Midland MI	School Days Missed	1 (Friday, Dec 11)
Departure Date and Time	Dec 11, 2026/ TBD	Return Date and Time	Dec 12, 2026 / TBD
Trip Leader Name	Cheryl Thornton	Trip Leader Position	FTC Head Coach
# Students	Up to 46 (32 MS + 14 HS)	# Chaperones including Trip Leader	10 minimum if 4 teams
How does this trip support district goals, and how will students benefit?	FTC STEM competition; see attached trip details.		
Describe the planned Chaperone team, including staff positions and relationships to participating students.	Parents and approved adult coaches/mentors; 2-3 coaches per team. See attachment.		
Describe planned lodging and transportation, including lodging contact numbers and carrier or tour guide liability insurance, if applicable.	MS with parents; HS with parents or separate student rooms. See attachment.		
Summarize emergency arrangements and the lodging, curfew, and overnight supervision plan.	Parent/coach oversight, room checks and emergency plan; see attachment.		
Provide the estimated costs (total and per-student), funding sources, collection and safeguarding procedures, and plans for financial assistance.	Gull Lake Area Robotics will pay for hotel rooms for high school junior mentors and lunch for participating students on Friday and Saturday. Parents/guardians of middle school students will pay for their family's hotel room and transportation. GLAR will assist families expressing financial needs on a case by case basis.		
How will you communicate with families before, during, and after the trip and notify teachers of student absences?	We will use Slack to communicate with parents and high school students. Parents will notify school of their students absence.		
Planned pre-trip review date	Nov 23, 2026		
Additional Notes			

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These guidelines apply to all overnight trips sponsored by Gull Lake Community Schools, including academics, athletics, fine arts, clubs, competitions, and camps, and must be followed in conjunction with Board Policies 3105 (Visitors and Volunteers), 5506 (Field Trips), and 5508 (Extracurricular and Athletic Trips).

The **Trip Leader** must submit this completed packet, including the request form and signed acknowledgments, and obtain all required approvals before travel. Administrative approval means documented authorization under district policy.

Defined Terms

- **Trip Leader:** The district staff member designated by the principal, athletic director, or authorized designee as the district's responsible representative for the trip.
- **Chaperone:** A district-approved adult assigned to supervise students. The Trip Leader also fulfills Chaperone responsibilities when supervising students.
- **Approving Administrator:** The administrator authorized under district policy to approve the trip or a trip-related decision.
- **Handbooks:** All applicable district, building-level student, athletic, and program handbooks, including their Codes of Conduct. These expectations apply throughout the trip.

1. Purpose & Responsibility

- ☑ Overnight trips must support district educational, extracurricular, athletic, or developmental goals and reflect District policies and expectations established in the Handbooks.
- ☑ The Trip Leader is responsible for required approvals, approved Chaperones, permission forms, and implementation of the supervision, communication, and safety procedures in these guidelines.
- ☑ Chaperones must be at least 18 years old and may not be currently enrolled as high school students. Student participants, including those age 18 or older, may not serve as Chaperones or count toward the supervision ratio.
- ☑ Exceptions to these guidelines require advance written approval from the Approving Administrator. Exceptions may not waive applicable law or Board policy. When an immediate emergency requires action, the Trip Leader must take appropriate steps to protect students and notify administration as soon as practicable.

2. Supervision

- ☑ Students must be supervised by approved Chaperones throughout the trip, with at least one Chaperone for every eight students, minimum of two adults required for all overnight trips. Administration may require additional supervision based on student age, needs, activities, location, or level of risk.
- ☑ All Chaperones must complete district-required background checks and approvals. Only approved participants and Chaperones may accompany the group or stay in student lodging areas unless administration approves an exception in advance.
- ☑ The Trip Leader must assign students to specific Chaperones, maintain an accurate roster, and establish attendance checks. Chaperones must account for assigned students, monitor their whereabouts, enforce expectations, and promptly report concerns to the Trip Leader.
- ☑ The Trip Leader must maintain required emergency contacts and medical information and plan for medical, accessibility, dietary, and other student needs. Medications must be handled according to district policy. Chaperones must receive the information necessary to fulfill their assigned responsibilities while protecting student confidentiality.
- ☑ The Trip Leader must review emergency procedures with Chaperones, including obtaining assistance, accounting for students, and maintaining supervision. Significant injuries, illnesses, accidents, missing students, safety concerns, and serious disciplinary matters must be promptly reported to administration and parents/guardians as appropriate. Emergency assistance must not be delayed while awaiting administrative direction.

3. Transportation

- ☑ Transportation must follow district policy and approved procedures. Students must use district-approved transportation unless an authorized administrator approves an exception in advance.
- ☑ Student drivers may not transport other student participants unless expressly permitted by district policy and approved by administration, with required parent/guardian authorization.
- ☑ The Trip Leader must maintain attendance, approved pickup, and authorized release procedures. Transportation changes must receive required administrative approval, be documented, and be communicated to affected families and Chaperones.

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4. Lodging, Curfew & Overnight Supervision

- [x] Sleeping arrangements must provide appropriate privacy and account for student age, developmental level, individual needs, and required accommodations.
- [x] The Trip Leader must establish sleeping assignments before occupancy. Students may not change assignments or enter other sleeping areas or undesignated common areas without permission from the Trip Leader or designated Chaperone.
- [x] The Trip Leader must establish, communicate, and enforce a curfew.
- [x] The lodging plan must place the Trip Leader and Chaperones close enough to students to provide effective supervision.
- [x] The Trip Leader must assign Chaperones to specific rooms or groups, establish and document evening attendance checks, and explain how students can contact a Chaperone overnight. Checks must respect student privacy.
- [x] Student rooms should generally be limited to four students and remain within occupancy limits. Cabins, dormitories, and other group lodging require an approved supervision and privacy plan appropriate to student ages and needs.

5. Student Conduct & Safety

- [x] Handbook and District policy expectations apply throughout the trip. The Trip Leader must review applicable provisions and trip-specific expectations with students, address violations, and promptly report concerns to administration.
- [x] Students shall be informed they are expected to report unsafe or inappropriate behavior to the Trip Leader or a Chaperone.
- [x] Prohibited conduct includes violations of the Handbooks and district policies concerning substances, weapons, hazing, bullying, harassment, intimidation, and other unsafe behavior. Students may not leave approved areas without permission.
- [x] Misconduct may result in removal from activities, early return, exclusion from future trips, and school disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion when warranted under district policy and applicable law. The Trip Leader must consult the administration regarding serious disciplinary decisions.
- [x] When early return is necessary, administration and the Trip Leader must coordinate a safe return plan with the parent/guardian. The student must remain appropriately supervised until released to an authorized person.
- [x] Any planned bag checks must follow district policy, applicable law, and administration-approved procedures, with advance notice provided to students and families. A bag search based on reasonable suspicion requires prior approval from the Approving Administrator.

6. Technology & Privacy

- [x] Before departure, the Trip Leader must communicate phone and technology expectations to students and parents/guardians, including district technology, acceptable-use, and digital citizenship requirements.
- [x] Students, the Trip Leader, and Chaperones may not photograph, film, or otherwise record others in bathrooms, changing areas, sleeping areas, or other settings where privacy is reasonably expected.
- [x] The Trip Leader and Chaperones must promptly address and report suspected privacy violations.

7. Parent/Guardian Communication

- [x] Before departure, families must receive the itinerary; departure and return times; transportation and lodging details; trip and emergency contacts; packing needs; student expectations; relevant medical and emergency procedures; and costs, payment deadlines, refund terms, and significant anticipated expenses.
- [x] The Trip Leader must obtain a completed permission form signed by each student's parent/guardian before participation, subject to district procedures for students legally authorized to provide their own consent.
- [x] Administration may require a parent/guardian meeting based on student age, trip length, activities, or other circumstances. Families must receive required information regardless of meeting attendance.
- [x] The Trip Leader must communicate significant itinerary changes, delays, or other developments affecting students or families.

8. Pre-Trip Review

- [x] The Trip Leader must conduct a documented pre-trip review with students, parents and Chaperones covering behavior expectations; supervision and attendance procedures; lodging and curfew; boundaries and privacy; transportation; technology; emergency procedures; how to reach a Chaperone; and reporting unsafe or inappropriate behavior.

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☑ The Trip Leader must document the review date, participants, materials provided, and required follow-up. Students or Chaperones who miss the review must complete a documented alternative before participating.

9. Adult Conduct & Professional Boundaries

☑ The Trip Leader and Chaperones must model professional behavior, maintain appropriate boundaries, and follow District policies.

☑ The Trip Leader and Chaperones must avoid being alone with an individual student in a private sleeping area whenever reasonably possible. When individual assistance is necessary, use an observable setting or involve a second approved Chaperone when practicable.

☑ If an emergency requires an individual interaction in a private setting, the student's immediate safety takes priority. The circumstances must be reported and documented afterward.

☑ The Trip Leader and Chaperones may not consume alcohol, use marijuana or illegal drugs, misuse controlled substances, or be impaired by any substance during the trip. District tobacco and nicotine restrictions also apply.

☑ The Trip Leader and Chaperones must follow required reporting procedures. Reporting a concern to the Trip Leader does not replace an individual's separate reporting obligations under law or district policy.

10. Financial Expectations

☑ District and group funds, purchases, reimbursements, and financial records must be handled according to district policies and procedures.

☑ Significant changes in costs must receive required approval and be communicated to affected families before additional commitments are made.

Trip Name	FTC State Championship

Overnight Trip Leader Acknowledgment

Initials: CT	I have reviewed and understand the K–12 Overnight Student Trip Guidelines, applicable district policies, and relevant Handbooks. I agree to fulfill the Trip Leader responsibilities, maintain appropriate student supervision and professional boundaries, and seek administrative clarification as needed.
Initials: CT	I understand that I must submit a signed copy of these guidelines with my Overnight Trip Request Form for administrative review and School Board approval.
Signature/Date	10/28/2026

Approving Administrator Acknowledgment

Initials: BCJ	I have reviewed the Overnight Trip Request Form and Overnight Trip Guidelines with the Trip Leader.
Initials: BCJ	I accept responsibility for verifying, before departure, that the required pre-trip review with students and parents/guardians has been completed and documented by the Trip Leader.
Signature/Date	Bobbi Jo Jones 11/4/2026

☐ Trip Approved Board of Education Signature _____ Date: _____

☐ Trip Not Approved Board of Education Signature _____ Date: _____

FTC State Championship | Trip Details

Supplement to Gull Lake Community Schools Overnight Student Trip Request • December 11-12, 2026

Trip overview

Event: FIRST Tech Challenge Michigan State Championship, Midland, Michigan. Exact venue to be confirmed.

Dates: Friday, December 11–Saturday, December 12, 2026. Competition schedule, travel times, and any school absence will be confirmed when event details are released.

Trip leader: Cheryl Thornton, FTC Head Coach.

Participants: Up to four middle school FTC teams (up to 32 middle school students) and up to 14 high school junior mentors, subject to qualification and final participation (46 students maximum). Teams must qualify to attend; in past seasons, all four Gull Lake FTC teams have qualified.

Educational purpose

Students who qualify will compete at the Michigan FTC State Championship, applying STEM concepts through engineering design, programming, problem-solving, teamwork, communication and gracious professionalism. High school junior mentors will strengthen leadership and mentoring skills by supporting middle school teams.

Adult supervision

At least two adult coaches/mentors will accompany each participating team. Parents will also accompany and supervise their own middle school children. A final roster of district-approved adult chaperones and assigned student groups will be prepared after qualification and before travel. The district requires at least one approved chaperone for every eight students (minimum two adults); for the maximum 46 students, at least ten approved chaperones would be required, with the team-coach plan providing additional coverage. High school students are participants, not chaperones. District approval of adults and supervision arrangements is required.

Lodging and overnight supervision

Middle school: Students will stay in hotel rooms with their own parents/guardians, who will be responsible for overnight supervision.

High school: Junior mentors will stay with their parents or in designated student hotel rooms. Boys and girls will be housed in separate rooms, with room assignments and nearby approved adult supervision arranged in advance. Gull Lake Area Robotics will pay for hotel rooms used by high school junior mentors.

The Trip Leader will establish curfew, room assignments, evening check-ins and an overnight contact procedure. Hotel name, address, telephone number and final room assignments will be supplied once confirmed.

Transportation

Middle school: Each parent/guardian will transport their own child to and from Midland and between trip activities.

High school: Students will be transported by their own parents/guardians or an approved adult mentor, with required parent permission and district authorization. Parents and mentors will cover transportation costs. Approved drivers, vehicles, pickup/release arrangements and any applicable insurance documentation will be confirmed before departure. No student will transport other participating students without specific district authorization.

Meals and funding

Gull Lake Area Robotics will cover hotel rooms for high school junior mentors and lunch for participating students on the competition days. Parents/guardians and mentors will cover their other meals and transportation. Middle school families will pay for their own hotel rooms. Total and per-student costs will be finalized after qualification, room arrangements, and participation counts are confirmed. Program expenditures will be documented under applicable financial procedures; any financial-assistance needs will be handled confidentially.

Emergency arrangements and conduct

Cheryl Thornton and the approved coaches/mentors will maintain student rosters, emergency contacts, medical information and signed permissions as required. Parents are responsible for their children during family lodging and transport; approved chaperones will coordinate supervision at competition activities and for high school students in designated student rooms.

Attendance checks will be made at agreed transitions and before curfew. In an emergency, adults will seek immediate assistance, account for students and notify families and district administration as appropriate. District conduct, privacy and medication policies apply.

Family communication and school absences

Slack will be used to communicate with parents and high school students before and during the trip, including itineraries, lodging and travel details, expectations, contact information and any changes. Parents will notify the school of their students' Friday, December 11th absence. A pre-trip review with students, parents and chaperones will be documented before departure; date to be confirmed.

Items to confirm before travel

Hotel contact information and room assignments; departure/return times; final student and approved adult rosters; high school mentor-driver permissions and district transportation approval; estimated costs; pre-trip review date; and required administrative/Board approvals. This attachment supplements, but does not replace, the completed district request and signed acknowledgment pages.