

5th Grade Camp PTA Guidelines

Fifth grade camp is often one of the most memorable experiences of a student's elementary school years. However, making this opportunity possible requires careful planning, coordination, and collaboration among multiple parties. These guidelines are intended to help elementary PTA leaders understand the big picture and clarify the PTA's role in supporting 5th grade camp.

1. School Decision-Making

Fifth grade camp is part of the school's **Environmental Education program** and is considered an official field trip. The **school administration and staff determine** whether the experience will be a one-day trip or a multi-day overnight camp. This decision is made solely by the school.

Cost is one of the primary factors in this decision. Overnight camps can cost approximately **\$425 per student** without additional funding support. Schools must also consider transportation costs, as well as staffing expenses such as nurse and staff coverage.

In previous years, some schools received state funding through the **Outdoor Learning Grant Program**, which provided up to \$10,000 to support 5th grade camp. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints, this grant has been discontinued. The loss of this funding directly impacts schools' ability to offer multi-day camps.

Other factors influencing camp length include each school's culture, teacher capacity, and whether established systems are in place to manage logistics and supervision.

If parents have concerns about why their school is offering a one-day camp instead of a multi-day experience, PTA leaders should encourage them to **reach out directly to the school principal**. While PTAs may advocate by sharing community feedback, direct communication between families and school leadership is the most effective approach.

2. PTA Funding & Fundraising

Some PTAs allocate funds for 5th grade camp directly within their annual budget. This is an acceptable and effective way to support students.

If a PTA chooses to fundraise specifically for 5th grade camp, the following best practices are recommended:

- Create a **restricted budget line item** for 5th grade camp.
- Obtain approval from membership during a **General Membership Meeting**.
- Any unused funds must **roll over to the following school year** until fully spent.
- Include these policies in your **standing rules** to ensure continuity and transparency.

When providing financial support, PTAs should issue funds to the school as a **gift** rather than paying transportation or staff costs directly.

3. Teacher-Led Fundraising (Outside PTA)

In some cases, the 5th grade teacher leading the trip may independently organize fundraising efforts with families. (This is not the preferred option.) If this occurs:

- All fundraising must be coordinated **directly with the school office and proper finance paperwork must be established**.
- The school will use an online payment platform created by the finance department.
- Funds raised go into the school's **5th grade ASB account**, managed by the school.
- Parent volunteers who help must be **ISD-approved**.
- Parents report directly to the teacher leader.
- This fundraising is **not affiliated with PTA**, though PTAs may still choose to provide additional support at their discretion.

4. Final Thoughts

Fifth grade camp requires significant time, effort, and collaboration from many stakeholders. As PTA leaders, our role is to **support schools and teachers** while following district and PTA guidelines.

Our mission is to collaborate, communicate, and advocate thoughtfully to ensure students have a meaningful experience—regardless of the number of days they attend camp.

Thank you for your dedication and partnership. We hope every 5th grade student has a wonderful and memorable camp experience.

Issaquah PTSA Council Board

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