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A school trip for eighth grade Mentor Public Schools students to Washington D.C was set up and ready to go. Students were enthusiastic, bags were packed, lots of money was paid. But on Tuesday - the day before the trip - Discovery Tours, the company contracted by the school district to handle the trip, canceled. What is 511 students multiplied by \$455 each? That's \$232,505 paid. Discovery Tours told Mentor Public Schools that it had to cancel the trip because the company could not receive final confirmation for the hotel rooms. The school district said it contacted the hotel itself to get more information. We were told by the hotel management that, on the advice of the hotel's counsel, all they could reveal to us is: Discovery Tours was unable to meet the contractual obligations, Superintendent Bill Porter wrote in a letter to the parents. However, the school district said Discovery Tours told them otherwise. But the superintendent said that even if the district was able to secure the hotel rooms itself, it would not feel comfortable entrusting the tour company to its students. I'm sure you're upset when you read this, as all of us have been since we received the news late this afternoon, Porter wrote. We know that this is an educational experience students look forward to for years prior to the 8th grade that is taken from them for no apparent reason. Porter said the high school principals will bring all eighth graders together on Wednesday to discuss the situation, and the school will be in session as usual. Parents dropping their children off at Memorial Middle School are still pretty disappointed. One told us she still wants her daughter to go to D.C. @WEWS pic.twitter.com/6ygfGKLZwk- Sarah Phinney (@sarahphinneytv) May 2, 2018 Mentor Public Schools said it is also working to address the financial impact of the cancellation. Refunds for the trip are undoubtedly on everyone's mind and at this time, we do not yet have a full explanation, but I can assure you, we will work hard to secure restitution, the letter said. Discovery Tours issued the following statement to News 5: Discovery Tours was told late yesterday afternoon by the Hyatt Regency Dulles Hotel that it would not honour its contract with Discovery Tours to provide rooms on May 1 and May 2. Discovery Tours believes Hyatt's behavior is unreasonable and inappropriate because it was paid 100% of the money billed by Hyatt for the Mentor Schools Trip as of April 24, 2018. Hyatt then sent an amended bill demanding additional funds on April 27 that Discovery Tours paid with credit card on April 30. Hyatt then refused to make that credit card payment properly and insisted that it had more than \$34,000.00 of Discovery Travel funds as damages liquidated. Discovery Tours consults with a lawyer to determine whether litigation disputes initiated to address this situation. What time do the students leave and return from DDMS? All students are expected at DDMS on Monday, June 4, no later than 5:45 a.m. We have a very tight schedule in D.C. and should be on the road immediately. Our return time to DDMS on Tuesday, June 5 is more uncertain due to traffic. The goal is to return between 21:00-22:00. We will text students/call parents when we are around. Which meals are covered by the cost of the excursion? The students are expected to bring their own lunch on Monday, June 4. All other meals (Monday dinner, Tuesday breakfast, Tuesday lunch and Tuesday dinner) are covered by the cost of the excursion. Students can bring extra snacks. What are the group sizes for the excursion? We want to make sure that all students are properly monitored and protected. As a result, each student is assigned a group with a total of four to six students. Each group has a WCPSS-approved chaperone or a DDMS employee. For a majority of the excursion, the whole bus travels together and there will be many adult eyes on all students. What is the itinerary for the excursion? There are three separate routes, but all students will travel to the same locations. All students will experience the following: White House (outside); African American History and Smithsonian Museums; Lincoln, Vietnam, Korea, WWII, MLK, Lincoln, FDR and Pentagon Memorials; and Arlington National Cemetery. What details can be shared about the hotel's expectations? When we arrive at the hotel on Monday evening, all students get room keys and get 30-45 minutes to settle in their assigned rooms. While we cannot guarantee that boys and girls will not be on the same floor, we can assure you that they will be on separate parts of the floor. DDMS staff will fill room checks and then tape students in their rooms (tape that is broken from the door before waking up will inform us that students are leaving their rooms). There will be a full-time guard on duty who will patrol the halls. We will not be releasing the name of the hotel before arrival. What behavioral expectations are shared with my child? DDMS staff will meet with all students attending the excursion on Friday, May 25. At this time, we will remind students of the behavioural contract they signed earlier in the year. What should my child pack for the excursion? See the Student Packing List attached here. Students will receive a copy of this at the meeting on Friday 25 May. Students are also receiving their T-shirts at this time. Any unanswered questions? Send mr. Gore emailed jgore@wcpss.net. Good Afternoon DC Trip Wow, I can't believe we are just days away from our big trip to DC. A few questions arose in the last few days and we would like to share them with Pool Access: --As we had explained to the students early last month, there is not much time for the kids to swim and we check to see if access to a lifeguard will present a problem. On Monday we will tell the children to bring a bathing suit in case we have access to the pool. Nightly routine: --When the students return to the hotel for the night, we will ask for light to be turned out half an hour to forty-five minutes after we return to the hotel. This will require students to take medication at night to see the nurse before they go to sleep. Chaperone Rooms: --Chaperone rooms will be spread across every floor. (girls floor & boys floor) --Chaperone rooms will be clearly marked with painter's step with the letter C-Nurse's room will be clearly marked with painter's step in the shape of a cross (like the T.V. show M.A.S.H.) Money --Unlike Tuesday's lunch, students won't have to pay for a meal/food --You send your student with pocket money, but I would warn you over \$40/50 dollars. --The more money the students have, the more likely money can get lost/misplaced! Below is a series of instructions that will help you and your child prepare for our departure on Tuesday, June 5. This direction will also be distributed to the students on Monday afternoon. If you have any questions, email Karen Reed or Kevin Murphy. Checklist Tuesday morning departure Please register at the drop off baggage contract at 05:30 (if you have not already done so). Find out which bus you're driving. Take medication at Sister Reed's. Look for bus group in wooden gym. When buses arrive, all luggage is loaded and placed in the storage compartments below the seating level. Buses leave at 6:00 am water donations If you want to donate a liter of water for the bus trip down and back, leave it in front of the entrance to the high school. A teacher will be stationed outside to collect donations Tuesday morning What to Bring on the Bus Snacks: No foods containing peanuts, nuts, or foods processed in a facility with nuts. Refillable water bottle Sweatshirt or light jacket (for the bus with air conditioning) Small bag or small backpack DVDs Write your name on the DVD cover (or DVD itself) Suggested items Camera Magazine(s) or book(s) Travel board games Deck cards Electronic device that does not connect Makes with the Internet Bracelets and String Bags Students receive a bracelet and a string bag on the bus Bracelets must be worn at all times String Bags will be worn during the day Tuesday Lunch We will stop at a travel plaza to buy lunch Tuesday afternoon Remember to send your students with money if they are for buying their their Lunch. Friday, June 8th We plan to come back to high school around 6:30 am if we get caught up in traffic (which is very likely :) please check your email as Kathy McMahon will be sending travel updates in the late afternoon/early evening. As soon as we get back, don't forget to pick up all the meds for Jen Reed. Thanks for all you support and we look forward to a great trip with a great group of students, Karen Reed and Kevin Murphy Good Afternoon DC Trip Parents, Wow, I can't believe we are just days away from our big trip to DC. In recent days, a few questions have been raised and we would like to share them with you. Pool Access: --As we had explained to the students early last month, there is not much time for the kids to swim and we check to see if access to a lifeguard will present a problem. On Monday we will tell the children to bring a bathing suit in case we have access to the pool. 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Thank you for all you support and we look forward to a great trip with a large group of students, Karen Reed and Kevin Murphy

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