



St. Louis Secondary School  
Carrickmacross

# Educational Outings and Out of School Trips Policy

2016

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## **Educational Outings and Out of School Trips Policy**

The Board of Management recognises that school tours play an important role in the education of the student. They provide an opportunity to go beyond the classroom and engage in learning through activity and experience. Some tours are closely related to the curriculum and the specific syllabus requirements in individual subjects. These include Geography and History field trips, Science trips and Career Guidance trips away to various Third Level Colleges. Most of these trips/tours are of one-day duration and because of their nature usually occur on school days.

In addition, there are other tours that may last for a number of days and have broader educational objectives. These tours should normally occur outside of school time unless exceptional circumstances exist. In organising tours, members of staff should bear in mind the financial burden involved especially for some parents and students. Every effort should be made to minimise the costs involved and to communicate the full cost to parents in writing at the earliest opportunity. In every trip/tour the school Health and Safety requirements should be of paramount importance and students must be adequately supervised at all times.

### **Objectives**

That the health, safety and welfare of our students is safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in relation to the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the demands on the physical capabilities of the students having due regard for their age and the dangers to which they may be exposed.

- To assist staff in the planning of tours so that they are aware of all necessary precautions to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.
- To ensure that tours are organised efficiently and that the standard of supervision is within the guidelines and standards set by the Department of Education and Science.
- That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all trips/outings.
- That supervising teachers understand that the degree of care required of them is that of a careful parent and that they understand that this would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student.
- To clarify expectations of behaviour and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.
- To involve all members of the school community in ratifying this policy in order to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of an active, living policy.

**It now a requirement on Boards of Management to implement Department of Education and Science Circular M20/04 regarding school tours.**

The key points are:

- Permission for school tours must be obtained as follows: for inside the State and Northern Ireland from the Principal; for outside the state from the Board of Management.
- A tour authorisation form must be filled out and retained in the school for possible examination in the course of a school inspection
- It is obligatory under the Aviation Act 2001 for schools to use the services of a licensed tour operator or travel agent when bringing any group of students or adults outside the state. The list of approved travel agents and tour operators is available at [www.avationreg.ie](http://www.avationreg.ie)
- Proper financial accounts should be kept for all tours. Payments from students should be made directly to the travel agent or tour operator and not through the school.
- Separate bank accounts should not be opened for school tours

**A. Planning for Day Trips within Ireland and Northern Ireland**

Day trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours

- At least one weeks' notice must be given.
- Seek approval from the principal at the earliest opportunity.
- Forms should include as much relevant information on the tour as possible at that time. A copy of the form is attached (Appendix 1).
- Where possible tours should be planned well in advance of tour dates.
- The full cost of the tour should be communicated as early as practicable. Every effort should be made to allow maximum pupil participation and the maximum amount of time to prepare financially will facilitate this.
- The number of students participating will vary depending on the nature of the tour and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group.
- When booking buses, use the standard *Bus Hire Form*. (Appendix 2).
- Bus Operators will only be paid from the School Refund Account when a corresponding Bus Hire Form has been submitted by the organising teacher.
- Only use Bus Operators that supply buses fitted with seat belts and ensure that students use the belts as required.

- On private coaches there should be at least two members of staff in addition to the driver.
- Give parents/guardians adequate notification and details of the nature and purpose of the tour in writing.
- Obtain written permission from parents/guardians for their daughters' participation in the tour.
- In relation to sports team representing the School, consent to travel to games will be requested at the beginning of the academic year and will subsequently cover all games for that academic year.
- Please leave contact numbers with the School Office (e.g. mobile numbers of accompanying teachers) in case of an emergency.
- Should an emergency arise relating to the tour or individual students or teachers on the tour, please contact the school management at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Names of all students attending the trip must be posted on the staff notice board on the morning of trip.
- For trips that extend beyond normal school hours it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that their daughter arrives on time for departure and that their daughter is collected upon return.
- A member of staff should only travel alone with a student when parental permission has been obtained.

### **B. Planning for an Overnight trip inside or outside the Republic of Ireland**

- Seek approval from the principal at the earliest opportunity.
- Members of staff who wish to take students on an overnight tour must submit a completed Proposal Form to the Board of Management by the end of the previous September.
- Forms should include as much relevant information on the tour as possible at that time. A copy of the form is attached (Appendix 1).
- Where possible tours should be planned well in advance of tour dates.
- The full cost of the tour should be communicated as early as practicable. Every effort should be made to allow maximum pupil participation and the maximum amount of time to prepare financially will facilitate this.
- The number of students participating will vary depending on the nature of the tour and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency.
- Organise a meeting for parents/guardians.

### C. Procedure

- The initial letter to Parents/Guardians should contain:
  1. a draft itinerary.
  2. a deadline for registering and payment of deposit.
  3. details of a parents' information night.
  4. It will also be stated in the letter that a non-refundable deposit of 30% is required.
- Deposits will be accepted within a specified timeframe.
- A copy of the school's tour policy which must be signed and returned.
- If the tour is oversubscribed selection will be by lottery. A waiting list will be created.
- Appropriate insurance cover should be obtained for all overseas tours.
- Full disclosure of all medical, dietary and behavioural issues by parents/guardians is required. This should include any food intolerances, allergies, and a list of any medication required. Information should also be presented on how any medication is to be administered.

Parents, whose daughters have applied and paid a deposit for a place on the tour, must attend the meeting. At the meeting:

Parents will receive all School Tour Application Documents. Application documents will include:

1. School Tour Policy
  2. rules and procedures pertaining to the tour
  3. the proposed itinerary
  4. final detail of cost
- Parents/Guardians should be advised that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary
  - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be required to sign a consent form (Appendix 3) which will allow medical advice to be followed in the event of injury/illness and where it is not possible to contact them in the time available. In the event of accident or injury, medical opinion will be sought immediately and best practice will be followed.
  - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be contacted as soon as is practically possible.
  - The Board has full confidence in the staff and their decisions.

#### **D. Communication**

- A list should be compiled of participants' mobile numbers and students should have the school mobile phone number which will be provided for each trip.
- Emergency contact numbers of Parents/Guardians and all personal information relating to students including copies of passports, EHIC cards etc. should be available to staff at short notice during the trip.
- The tour organiser should have the emergency contact numbers of the Principal and the Deputy Principals.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a twenty-four hour basis for the duration of the tour. A mobile telephone will be supplied to tour leader for school tours. The number of the phone will be given to parent(s)/guardian(s) and students prior to departure for use only in case of emergency.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be requested to inform the tour leader in writing of any special medical needs or medication required by their daughter while on the tour (Appendix 3)

#### **E. Documentation**

- Students must organise their EHIC cards for travel within the EU.
- Passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip and will be photocopied by the organisers.
- The onus is firmly on Parents/Guardians to ensure that their daughter has all necessary, up to date documentation in advance of the tour including visas and inoculations if necessary.
- Incident reports and accident reports should be filed on return.

#### **F. Emergency Procedures**

- In the event of a serious incident/accident as many members of staff as is possible/practical in the circumstances shall come together; they shall agree on an outline of the details of the incident/accident and taking into account all the facts as they are known at that time, shall decide on a course of action. The details and the decision(s) taken shall be put in writing as close to the event as is reasonable. The Board accepts that in cases where there is lack of consensus over the course of action, the tour leader (where available) has the final decision.
- Tour leaders and all members of staff accompanying the tour must ensure that, if it becomes necessary to question a student about a potentially serious matter, another adult be present. In addition to the Code of Discipline, students must adhere to the law of the country which they visit. In the event of a breach of this, due process of law will follow.

### **G. Exclusion from a tour**

- The right to exclude a student from a tour is reserved to a committee comprising of the Principal, the Deputy Principal and appropriate Year Head, and the trip organisers. The Year Head will consult in advance with the relevant tutor and counsellor when appropriate.
- The payment of a deposit does not constitute a contract as any breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour or issues that may emerge relating to our Health and Safety Policy may result in exclusion from the tour.

Criteria for exclusion will include:

1. persistent minor breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour;
  2. suspensions arising from major breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour;
  3. any drugs/alcohol/smoking related suspensions;
  4. Students who have shown themselves to be unwilling or unable to take instruction.
- In all cases the frequency, seriousness and how recently breaches of the Code of Behaviour took place will be factors.
  - Behaviour on previous school trips will also be a factor and a separate file for reports on incidents concerning trips should be kept in the office for ease of reference.
  - Health and safety related criteria will be decided on a case by case basis taking into account supervision issues and the safety of the student and staff body travelling. The committee will also take into account our Health and Safety and Child Protection Policies.

### **H. Behaviour**

The rules and regulations to be observed by pupils during the course of the school tour will be agreed and made known to pupils, parents and teachers in advance. These regulations will be in accordance with the school's ethos.

It is important for parents to realise that the onus is on them to ensure that students understand what is required of them before departing and while on a foreign trip. Students must understand what is required of them and come equipped with their passport if required, the specified clothing, medication if applicable, contact details, departure and arrival times, details of their accommodation, appropriate spending money, contact number for the tour leader etc. It is essential that parents talk to their children with regard to the behaviour expected of them while abroad and also in relation to the procedures to be implemented in the event that a student has to be sent home early due to their misbehaviour

- Mindful of the DES guidelines regarding child protection (3.1.1 & 3.1.2) teachers will observe at all time the code of professional conduct for teachers as laid down by the Teaching Council of Ireland ([www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie)).
- Teachers and other designated adults supervising the trip are in loco parentis and therefore have the responsibilities and rights of a prudent parent.
- Health and Safety, and Child Protection policies also apply to supervision on trips.
- Teachers give up their free time voluntarily to give their students opportunities they might not usually be able to take and Parents/Guardians and students should show their appreciation of this by co-operating fully with those teachers.
- Students are expected to behave in a courteous, co-operative and considerate manner.
- They must abide by the teacher's decisions and directions in all matters.
- Students must stay with the tour group. A student may not go off by herself or wander off anywhere alone: students must stay in groups at all times.  
The school's code of behaviour applies on any school trip in addition to the particular code of behaviour to any trip.
- The full penalties for breaching either code will apply on the trip and/or upon return to school depending on which is most applicable and practical.
- The Board of Management requires Parent(s)/Guardian(s) to guarantee that when their daughter comes to the school to assemble for the start of a school tour, she does so free of illegal substances either on her person or in her luggage.

#### **I. SANCTIONS**

- Decisions regarding sanctions are taken in the light of and reflecting the spirit of the NEWB Developing a Code of Behaviour (Guidelines for Schools).
- The Tour Leader with his/her team will deal with minor breaches of the Code of Behaviour while away.
- Should a teacher suspect a breach of regulations he/she has the right to ask the student to empty pockets/baggage/containers/items of clothing to ascertain if illicit articles/substances are present.
- Staff may carry out an inspection of rooms or personal property with the student present if there are reasonable grounds for concern for safety or use/possession of a banned substance etc.
- Any students possessing, consuming, passing or promoting the use of alcohol, drugs, solvents or other such dangerous substances while on the school tour will be liable to the severe penalties as in the School/Tour Code of Behaviour including suspension, expulsion and reporting of the offence to An Garda Siochana.

- School authorities reserve the right to implement these regulations and by signing the **Acceptance Form** on enrolment, parents/guardians accept this.
- In addition they accept as a responsibility the obligation to ensure that their daughter is fully aware of the consequences should she be found in breach of those regulations.
- Parents may be asked to remove their daughter from the tour at their own expense
- In the event of a breach of the alcohol/illegal substances rule and/or the rule pertaining to the necessity for pupils to remain within specified groups the Tour Leader will inform the Principal.
- The Principal will inform each member of the Board of Management within a set time-frame

### J. **General Guidelines for Extra Curricular Sport Activities**

- Each coach travelling to a match will be given a properly equipped first aid kit.
- Minor accidents will be treated where they occur. In the case of a more serious accident professional medical attention will be sent for i.e. Doctor/Ambulance.
- Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded on an accident report form. A copy of this form is submitted to the school Principal upon return to school.
- The extra-curricular coach will organise transport to and from all matches using a recognised bus company.
- When an away match is organised during school hours the number of staff travelling will be dependent upon the staffing requirements of standard school activities. Generally two teachers will travel with a team.
- The needs of the students in school must take priority when organising such matches.

### K. **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Board of Management:**

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time.
- To approve the policy.
- To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.

#### **Principal and Deputy Principals:**

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.

### **Teachers/Organisers of the School Tour:**

- To implement the policy and to provide feedback to management that may assist the review process.
- To instruct students and parents/guardians as to what is expected of them in relation to preparing and participating in the tour.
- To keep accurate records of the above.

### **Parents:**

- To support the policy in all of its aspects.

### **Students:**

- To accept the policy and abide by the conditions.

### **L. Monitoring Procedures**

- The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the tour organiser after each tour to discuss the effectiveness of the policy.
- As part of the Development Planning Process of St. Louis Secondary School, this policy will be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practice.

**Appendix 1  
Tour Authorisation Form  
St. Louis Secondary School Carrickmacross**

**Tour dates** From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of days** \_\_\_\_\_

**Brief outline of the tour**

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**Number of students participating** \_\_\_\_\_

**Expected benefit to accrue from the tour**

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**Why is the tour deemed to be necessary?**

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**Names of adults accompanying the students**

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**Confirmation** (Answer Yes or No)

Have appropriate arrangements been made for those classes whose teachers are absent with the tour? \_\_\_\_\_

Is adequate insurance in place to cover all risks while on tour? \_\_\_\_\_

Has parental permission been secured for each student who is to participate in the tour?

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Are all payments from students being made **directly** to the travel agent (where applicable)?

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Have you received a risk assessment from the company/travel agent etc?

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**For tours outside of the Republic of Ireland only.**

Is the tour operator a bonded licensed travel agent from the approved list on

[www.avationreg.ie](http://www.avationreg.ie)? \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Tour leader \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Principal \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3 - Medical Information

Dear parent(s)/guardian(s),

As you are aware your daughter is attending a school Educational Trip and while there is great excitement building, there are a few important details we need to check with you before our departure.

We would really appreciate if you took the time to fill in the attachment outlined below, which provides us with important details about any medical needs your daughter may have.

This information is invaluable to us as we want to ensure your daughter has the best experience over the course of her trip and her safety is of our utmost importance.

Thank you for your co-operation to date and we hope this trip provides each student with fond memories that will stay with them for life.

Yours sincerely,

*St. Louis Secondary School*

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Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical issues you wish to disclose: \_\_\_\_\_

Any medication to be administered: \_\_\_\_\_

Can your daughter administer this medication herself? \_\_\_\_\_

Any special Dietary needs (i.e. Coeliac): \_\_\_\_\_

Any allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

Parental/ Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact name & number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I, parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (*student name*), consent to medical advice being followed in the event of injury/illness where it is not possible to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) in the time available. Please note that in the event of accident or injury, medical opinion will be sought immediately, and best practice will be followed.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_