

POLICY ON TRIPS/ OUTINGS/ ACTIVITIES

Rationale:

The Board of Management supports the active involvement of staff in organising trips/ outings / activities for the pupils, viewing this as an enriching part of the school experience. The following information is provided to assist staff in the planning and conduct of such activities and ensure that such activities meet the necessary requirements of health, safety and welfare for all involved.

General information RE: OUT of SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

The organisation, conduct and supervision of games, cultural activities, field trips and educational tours (domestic & overseas) must be of a high standard. The school has an “*in loco parentis*” responsibility for the students for the duration of the outing. The following considerations must be borne in mind:-

The appropriateness of the activity:

A reasonable student/pupil ratio should be maintained:

The ratio for skilled people to pupils should be increased as the degree of difficulty or danger increases:

Early approval must be sought from the Board and the Department of Education for overseas tours:

Overseas tour leaders must have contact numbers for all parents/guardians of pupils on the trip. Each pupil should have a card/form detailing their personal details, health details and itinerary details in the event that they become separated from the group.

Organisers should ensure that the insurance should indemnify the organisers of outings as well as the suppliers of service to the outings.

Approval should be sought in advance from the Board for any significant activity which involves the pupils travelling from the school:

No teacher(s) should take any student/group of students from the school without prior notification and authorisation: A complete list of pupils and the teachers taking them must be left with the management of the school prior to departure:

Students leaving on a day activity must go to their first class and have their attendance recorded on the Roll prior to departure:

Parents should be made aware of all outings and a parental consent form should be completed authorising the pupil to travel and adhere to any rules and conditions:

Before any student is brought on an overnight trip or on any trip which involves travel of a considerable distance, written parental authorisation to get medical care should be sought. When seeking such permission, details of any ailments from which the student suffers or medication they may be taking must be requested. E111 Forms/Cards should be available for all travelling.

Mobile phone number(s) of teachers taking pupils on outings/tours must be left with the school to ensure possibility of contact should the need arise:

Parents must be informed of the details of the itinerary and proposed activities, and any requirements – clothing, finance, delivery and collection of pupil – particular to the Tour. Parents must also be informed of the behaviour expected of pupils. Pupils must be informed at the registration stage that final approval to travel rests with the School Management and that the School Management having consulted with the Tour Leader may, at any stage, revoke permission for a pupil to travel on the Tour. The Tour Leader and teachers travelling on the Tour must assess the suitability of pupils applying to travel on the Tour. Where there is uncertainty as to the behaviour/co-operation of a pupil, that pupil shall not be permitted to travel. It is the task of the Tour Leader to ascertain particular pupil requirements including food, health, special needs.

Safety is the single governing factor in considering, planning and conducting outings. Proper analysis of risk and the avoidance of any unnecessary risks is therefore essential.

RE: IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES:

Any teacher wishing to work with students after school hours or at week-end in the school must seek written permission and provide a list of the pupils participating in the activity.

Teachers who arrange activities in school with pupils which cause them to miss buses must inform the parents in advance of the activity, seek permission and confirmation that the pupil will be collected at stated time and brought home:

Procedures for Educational Tours and Out of School Group Activities:

Teachers wishing to organise a trip, tour involving students must submit a formal written request to the Board of Management outlining the proposed trip, details etc. The nature of the trip/tour will determine the notice required by the Board.* The optimum notice for a school trip taking pupils abroad should be 9 months to one year to allow the broadest range of pupils participate. Notice should also be posted for the attention of pupils and parents e.g. via Zodiac / School Website / Notice Boards. The school management will always seek to include significant out of school activities on the school calendar and thus require adequate notice.

Approval of proposals:

The approval of proposals is a matter for the Board of Management subject to the recommendation of the Principal and appropriate senior management. Approval may be granted subject to :

- Conformity with the criteria in CL M20/04.
- The number of other proposed events to take place during the course of the school year.
- The timing of the event and its effect on other school activities.
- The implications for the normal teaching routine of the school.
- The suitability of travel & accommodation arrangements.

The Tour Leader:

One teacher will be nominated as the tour Leader/Director and will be expected to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with agreed standards.

Pupil/Teacher ratio:

The ratio of pupils to teachers should be in accordance with the criteria** agreed by the Board of Management and must take account of :

- The age and maturity of the pupils involved:
- The availability of alternative / additional adult supervision e.g. parents, Special Needs Assistants, Specialist Instructors:
- The length of the tour.
- The activities to be engaged in.

Costs and accountability for Finance.

The overall cost of the tour should be agreed in advance and should be such as to take into account the ability of pupils and their parents to pay. The income and expenditure of funds associated with the Tour should conform fully to the accounting practice of the school. A full account of income and expenditure should be reported to the Principal and the Board of Management. Permission to open a separate bank account associated with the school name must be requested and approved. The name of this account (to be used solely for the purpose of the Tour) and signatories must be identified and approved by the Board and the account closed immediately on completion of the Tour.

Rules of Behaviour during the Tour.

The Code of Behaviour to be observed during the course of the school tour should be agreed and made clear to pupils, parents and teachers in advance. These rules must be consistent with the school's Code of Behaviour and Pupils and Parents must be asked to confirm acceptance of and adherence to the rules. The rules should deal explicitly with:

- The use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs.
- The full participation by pupils in the activities of the Tour.
- Behaviour during leisure time if and when pupils are not under the direct supervision of teachers.
- Travelling on private or public transport.
- Respect for and compliance with local customs and laws, particularly when travelling abroad.
- Behaviour of pupils in hotels and other overnight accommodation.

Contact information:

The Tour Leader/Director must ensure that complete contact information is left available in the school during the tour for use in the event of an emergency. This should include:

- ✓ A list of all those taking part together with home contact details
- ✓ The itinerary to be followed and contact details
- ✓ Mobile contact number for Tour Leader and teachers

The Tour Leader must ensure that s/he has contact details for school management personnel in the event of an emergency.

The Tour Leader must ensure that s/he carries all relevant personal details regarding each member of the Tour i.e. health information, home contact details, approval for medical attention etc. It is advisable that one member of staff should have a qualification in First Aid.

Professional Responsibilities of Staff:

A statement of the professional responsibilities and duties of staff for the duration of the tour should be agreed and submitted to the Board along with the application for approval.

Insurance and Indemnity:

School tours within Ireland (Incl. Northern Ireland) by pupils and teachers from C & C schools are normally covered by the State Indemnity provided the Board of Management properly approved the tour.

Where however the Tour is involved in an activity of a specialist nature, such as an outdoor Education Centre that requires supervision by trained professionals, the Board of Management may not rely entirely on the State Indemnity for insurance purposes.

In considering applications/requests from teachers to bring pupils on an outdoor activities type tour e.g. Transition Year Group for orienteering, canoeing, hill walking etc. activities the Board will require:

- I. Written applications including **Appendix 1. Tour Template as per Circular Letter M20/04** giving full details of the proposed tour.
- II. ***That the organiser satisfies the Board regarding the*** Outdoor Activity/Pursuits Centre Public Liability Insurance Certificate noting any limitations specified in the policy.
- III. ***That the organiser satisfies the Board regarding the*** professional qualifications of the Outdoor Activity/Pursuits Centre staff who will be leading/guiding the student in the specialist outdoor activities.

- IV. That Parents/Guardians are advised where there is a requirement to effect Personal Accident Insurance cover for their child. The organiser should verify with the insurance company that students are covered for these specialist outdoor activities under the Personal Accident policy
- V. That the State Indemnity still applies to the teachers who accompany the students to the Outdoor Activity/Pursuits Centre in the performance of their normal supervisory and pastoral role.
- VI. Where doubts remain the Board of Management should seek and acquire appropriate insurance protection for the Board of management, teachers and pupils.
- VII. The Board of Management may not approve the release of teachers to supervise or the attendance of pupils on specialist tours to Outdoor Activity/ Pursuits Centres unless all aspects of supervision, training and insurance are clarified with all interests and noted.

In the case of school tours outside the island of Ireland the Board can not rely on the State Indemnity and appropriate insurance should be taken out to cover those embarking on the tour. Final approval by the Board to travel is conditional upon a copy of the Insurance cover being submitted to and accepted by the Board.

Reporting back to the Principal and the Board of Management.

Upon completion of the Tour, the Leader/Director must submit a summary report to the Principal and The Board of Management outlining ;

The achievements of the Tour

A financial statement

Any difficulties which arose during the Tour.

Notice to Parents/Guardians.

In providing adequate notice of a proposed Tour to pupils and parents the notice should include:

- ❖ The objectives of the Tour
- ❖ The itinerary and duration of the tour
- ❖ The costs and payment system
- ❖ Criteria for inclusion on the Tour and reference to the rules of behaviour including discretion to exclude a pupil due to concerns about behaviour, risks to health, safety or welfare of self or others and/or possible disruption to the management of the activity/activities.
- ❖ Obligation on Parent/Guardian to provide essential information required for the participation of their child in any school tour.
- ❖ A brief acknowledgement report should be sent to Parent/Guardian after the Tour

*** Notice to Board**

The Notice to the Board should be as much in advance as is reasonable to allow full participation by pupils, adequate notice to parents and appropriate planning. For an 'local' activity during the school day the notice should be such as to allow arrangements for supervision, booking of buses and should conform to the practice of notifying Principal/Deputy Principal and posting notice on weekly calendar. For Field trips, TYO outings, LCA outings, Young Scientist etc. one months notice is required. The Principal may approve an outing in advance of the Board meeting if he is satisfied that all necessary obligations have been met. Tours abroad or Residential trips must be formally approved by the Board of Management and full details must be

submitted before final approval is granted. No group may leave the school without authorisation.

****Criteria For Supervision:**

The ratio of teachers/supervisors to pupils must be in direct proportion to the level of risk of the activity and must ensure reasonable care for the safety of the pupils. The Tour Leader should assess the risk, level of difficulty/danger of the activity/activities, the venue(s). There should be enough supervisors for all aspects of the trip.

For trips abroad the maximum is for one teacher per 8 pupils. The Board will always consider each application in the context of the number of pupils and the number of teachers accompanying them and recommend accordingly.

In presenting an application to the Board the Tour Leader should submit an outline of the supervision arrangements associated with the activities planned and indicate if there will be specialist supervision personnel e.g. ski instructors, activity centre instructors etc. working with the pupils.

PUPILS WILL BE PERMITTED TO BRING DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT ITEMS INCLUDING A CAMERA PHONE ON SCHOOL TRIPS. HOWEVER TAKING OR SENDING INAPPROPRIATE IMAGES, *UNAUTHORISED RECORDING OF STAFF OR PUPILS, TRANSFER OF IMAGES OF STAFF OR PUPILS,* OR USING THE PHONE TO HARRASS – WILL BE CONSIDERED AS A SERIOUS DISCIPLINE OFFENCE. PUPILS ARE PROHIBITED FROM RECORDING STAFF OR PUPILS ON MOBILE PHONES WHILST ON SCHOOL TRIPS. PUPILS ARE PROHIBITED FROM POSTING IMAGES OF STAFF AND PUPILS ONTO SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES. THE SCHOOL WEBSITE WILL BE THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF SCHOOL TRIPS AND PUPILS WILL HAVE THE FACILITY OF SUBMITTING CAMERA IMAGES FOR INCLUSION ON THE OFFICIAL RECORD. THE BOARD WILL RESPOND APPROPRIATELY IN CASES OF UNAUTHORISED RECORDING OR MISUSE OF CAMERA PHONE AND WILL HAVE THE FULL RANGE OF SANCTIONS – INCLUDING EXPULSION - OPEN TO THEM. IN SUCH CASES THE PHONE WILL NOT BE RETURNED UNTIL THE INCIDENT HAS BEEN DEALT WITH TO THE BOARD'S SATISFACTION. THE PUPIL WILL LOSE THE PRIVILEGE OF HAVING A MOBILE PHONE IN SCHOOL.

School Trips/Outings: Amendment:

That adequate notice of outing/trip be provided to pupils and parents to allow maximum participation. The organiser(s) must stipulate the terms and conditions under which pupils will be entitled to participate in the Trip/Outing. Similarly if the organiser(s) consider that it is not appropriate or permissible for a pupil to participate and he/she must be excluded, then the pupil and the parent of the pupil must be informed of the reasons for withdrawal of inclusion. In all instances where outings/trips are being organised for a Year Group the Year Head must be informed of all details regarding the outing/trip and must be consulted on proposed decisions to exclude a pupil from participation.

BOM Approved: 20th January 2006

Pupils and parents are advised that deadlines for booking a place on a Tour/Trip may have to be adjusted if demand exceeds places. The organiser(s) reserve the right to refuse permission to participate on a school trip. In such cases the reason will be given.

A condition of eligibility to participate on a school trip/outing is agreement to observe all rules and conditions.

Pupils should always assume that places will be allocated on a first come first served basis (provided all conditions are satisfied) and to avoid disappointment it is best to register an interest early. Booking will therefore close before the deadline once all places are filled.

Amended and approved by the Board of Management 13th Mar. 2008