



COURTESY FRIENDLINESS CO-OPERATION

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## School Tours and Trips Policy

### Introduction

To reflect a world which is developing and changing, current educational philosophy recommends that students have first-hand experience wherever possible. School tours and trips allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced educational process. School tours and trips require good preparation and organisation to optimise the learning experience for students.

The Board of Management of Presentation Secondary School Tralee supports and encourages school tours. School tours support the school's mission of encouraging "a lively interest in diverse artistic, creative, cultural and sporting events". The Board of Management concurs with Department of Education guidelines which state that

*"the objective of educational tours for schools should be that they be of benefit in the intellectual, cultural and social development of the pupils taking part in them and any activity, in connection with the tour, which is in conflict with this objective is to be avoided".*

It is school policy to organise outings for the benefit of students when this is deemed appropriate by the teaching staff, in consultation with the Principal. The school recognises the benefits of outings to complement normal school work, for educational or sporting purposes.

Some trips are demanded by the particular curriculum subject, such as field trips. Other outings and trips are additional to the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity though they deepen the student's knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social and physical aspects of the areas or countries visited. Student tours to develop linguistic skills are a good example of the latter.

The lengths of trips may vary from a short local visit to a foreign tour involving staying away for several days.

School trips, outings and tours are a privilege reserved for students who meet minimum standards of behaviour while at school. Students who do not meet minimum standards of behaviour, as decided by the Principal, may be refused permission to participate in a school outing. The Principal reserves the right to disallow a student from participation in a school trip if, in his/her opinion, the health or safety of the student or other students or teachers is at risk.

All school rules and all school policies apply while on school trips. In particular, parents and students should be aware that permission to travel on a school related activity is conditional on strict adherence to the Code of Behaviour. All students selected for sports teams and who travel as part of a class group represent Presentation Secondary School, Tralee. The highest standards of behaviour and conduct are expected as a matter of course. Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the tour with rules, regulations and special requirements of that tour.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **DAY TRIPS**

Permission for day trips should be sought from the Principal. Teaching staff are asked to allow adequate time between making a submission of a proposal and the date of the proposed trip. Insofar as possible a full schedule of events should be known and approved at the beginning of the school year in which they are to take place. In granting approval for a school trip consideration will be given to:

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

In general written permission is required from a parent/guardian of a student before they may go on a trip. Students intent on participating in a school trip must use the transport organised by the school and must return home on the aforementioned transport. On occasion and only with prior written permission from a parent/guardian and agreement with the organising teacher a student may make other transport arrangements. It is understood that students who play as part of a team representing Presentation have on-going parental permission to travel to all away matches.

While every effort will be made to adhere to arranged times on trips, in particular the arrival time back at the school, the school cannot guarantee such times, for example where circumstances arise which are outside the control of staff involved.

Students who have been suspended are not permitted to attend school trips which are not compulsory components of a programme of study nor are they permitted to represent the school. It is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that this regulation is maintained.

### **OVERNIGHT TOURS**

The approval of any school tour must be sought and obtained from the Board of Management. In granting approval consideration will be given to:

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

It is for the Principal to decide which teachers will organize the tour and accompany the pupils. Prior to departure, a teacher/teachers shall be appointed as tour leader(s). It is recognised that the organisation of or participation in any school tour is voluntary on the part of teachers.

Once the Board of Management has been appraised of all the details of a tour and has given its approval, then the tour leader(s) is/are fully empowered to proceed with the tour.

Students who have been suspended are prohibited from participating in the next relevant school tour.

### **TOUR TEAM (SCHOOL TOURS ONLY)**

- A tour team, led by the tour leader will be put in place as soon as possible.
- Teaching staff will be informed of the planned tour and invited to indicate to the tour leader if they are interested in being a member of the tour team that will accompany the students. All members of the team will be expected to share the work load beforehand where necessary and during the trip. The tour leader together with the Principal and /or Deputy Principal will decide on the team composition to meet the needs of the students involved..
- The tour leader will meet the full Tour Team at the outset so as to discuss the tour, duties and responsibilities.

## **SUPERVISION OF TOURS AND TRIPS**

The number of staff which accompanies a group will be influenced by a number of factors including;

- The number of students travelling
- The age and maturity of the students.
- The location of the trip.
- The availability of alternative adult supervision e.g. Special Needs Assistants.
- Additional supervision which may be provided at the trip destination.
- If the group will be dividing into smaller groups, each requiring supervision.
- The type of transport used
- The activities to be engaged in.

Certain tours/trips may facilitate shopping or recreation which may not be directly supervised. This situation will usually be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to parents/guardian. The school expects that all students travelling on a tour/trip will display a level of maturity commensurate with their age.

Students on tours which involve an overnight stay in Ireland or abroad will not be supervised on a 24 hour basis and all extended school tours will involve periods of time without direct supervision. Parents who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should not permit their daughter to take part in such trips.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL TOURS AND TRIPS**

Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, tour/trip rules, regulations and any special requirements of that tour. Parents/guardians shall be given an outline of the purpose, itinerary, dates and costs of the tour/trip before a deposit is sought. Each student and her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be given a form outlining the rules, regulations and special requirements and they shall be required to sign that (i) they understand the rules and (ii) they are willing to abide by them at all times.

The inclusion of particular students in a school tour/trip shall be at the discretion of the school authorities. Students who have been suspended are prohibited from participating in the next relevant school tour, school trips which are not mandatory components of a programme of study nor are they permitted to represent the school.

*The Board of Management specifically wishes to draw attention to the following:*

- Students must obey members of staff at all times and be courteous friendly and co-operative.
- Students must stay with the tour group. A student may not go off by herself or wander off anywhere alone. Doing so consciously is a serious offence
- Showing courtesy and respect to others while on tour
- Pupils are expected to respect property while on tour. This includes all transport (buses, airplanes, subway etc) the hotel and all other facilities. Pupils will be expected to answer for and make good for any damage caused.
- Students must stay in groups at all times and are expected to be punctual.
- In accordance with Code of Behaviour and Substance Use Policy; Students are forbidden from: purchasing, possessing, supplying or consuming alcohol, tobacco or drugs (medically or non-medically prescribed) On such a suspicion, the tour leader may involve the local police to search bags and/or rooms.
- Students are not permitted to have piercings or tattoos applied whilst on tours or trips.
- The use of alcohol, tobacco or other non-medically prescribed drugs by students on a tour is absolutely forbidden.
- 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 alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances either on her person or in her luggage.

- A student may be sent home, at their parents' expense, if in the opinion of the leader, the conduct of the student warrants it. It is the wish of the school that all involved should have an enjoyable experience on the school tour, however sanctions may be applied for misbehaviour. Sanctions may include: restricted participation in tour events. If a pupil misbehaves in a serious manner or in a manner that jeopardises the safety and well – being of the group, it may be necessary to send a pupil home. In such a situation a teacher may accompany the pupil and the parent/guardian will be liable for the potentially substantial costs involved. Sanctions may also be implemented on return to school for such offences.
- In the case of overnight trips
  - i. Students must not give the name of the hotel, their room numbers or mobile phone number to anyone.
  - ii. Students must not enter another guest's hotel room or allow anybody into their room.
  - iii. Once the group has retired at night, no student has permission to be in another student's room, on the corridors or in any other area of the premises.
  - iv. In addition to the Code of Positive Behaviour and school tour/trip rules, 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.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad e.g. passport, identity card are up to date and in order. The School will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result. Students on tours within the European Union shall be required to have a completed E111 form and a valid passport.

### **COSTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FINANCES.**

In general, trips and tours occur in addition to the normal academic and extra-curricular programmes of the school. There is normally an additional charge.

Students who withdraw from a tour/trip after a deposit, or full monies has been paid, may not be entitled to a refund. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or safety reasons will not be entitled to a refund.

The overall cost of a school tour/trip will be agreed in advance and will take into account the ability of students and their parents to pay.

The income and expenditure of funds associated with the tour/trip will conform fully to the accounting practices of the school. A full account of income and expenditure is reported to the Principal and to the Board of Management. In the event that a separate Bank account has been opened for the purpose of the Tour, it should be closed immediately on completion.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Health and safety of students and supervisors is a priority when organising and taking a school trip/tour. Teachers taking any tour/trip will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be requested to inform the tour/trip leader in writing of any special needs, medical needs or medication required by their daughter while on the tour/trip.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to sign a consent form 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 case of an accident, staff will normally apply basic first aid only. Expert medical attention will be sought should this be thought necessary and best practice will be followed. Where a serious accident occurs, staff will seek medical assistance as a first priority and contact the school to inform the office of events. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible by tour leader as well as the school. The Board has full confidence in the staff and their decisions.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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 the 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. The tour leader must ensure to have a copy of the complete contact information and ensure that a copy is left available in the school during the tour for use in the event of an emergency. This should include:

- a listing of all of those taking part together with home contact details.
- the itinerary to be followed and contact details.
- a contact telephone number for the tour leader.

## **INSURANCE AND INDEMNITY**

The school's insurance policy covers students and teachers whilst they are participating in school approved activities however certain activities (as described in the policy document) are excluded from this. Parents/Guardians may request to see the list of exclusions.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to effect Personal Accident Insurance cover for their daughters. This is facilitated in the school at the start of each academic year.

When travelling to providers of physical activities the tour leader will ensure to only use facilities/centres approved by the relevant governing bodies and which can provide their own personal injury and accident insurance.

In the case of school tours outside the island of Ireland the Board of Management will ensure that the leader of the tour ensures that appropriate travel insurance has been taken out to cover those embarking on the tour and that the individual students and teachers involved take out their own travel insurance if necessary.

Tours to Europe with Bonded tour companies have their own insurance to cover personal injury and accident.

## **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad e.g. passport, identity card are up to date and in order. The School will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result. Students on tours within the European Union shall be required to have a completed E111 form and a valid passport

## **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/trip leaders and all members of staff accompanying the tour/trip 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 Positive Behaviour, 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.

The tour/trip leader may be given a sum of money (amount to be decided by the Board) which may be used in the event of an emergency.

## **REPORTING BACK TO PRINCIPAL AND BOARD OF MANAGEMENT.**

The leader of any overnight school tour must submit a summary report from the school tour to the Principal and the Board of Management outlining:

- The achievements of the tour.
- A financial statement.
- Any difficulties or problems which arose during the course of the tour.

The Leader of a day trip may submit a summary report from the school trip to the Principal if any difficulties or problems arose during the course of the trip.

## **NOTICE TO PARENTS.**

Parents of students eligible to participate in a tour/trip are given adequate notice outlining:

- The objectives of the tour/trip.
- The itinerary and duration of the tour/trip.
- The costs involved and method of payment.
- The Code of Positive Behaviour applies to the tour/trip.
- Parents are made aware of their duty to inform the school of any relevant Health or Safety issues which might affect their daughter.

The signed permission of parents is an essential pre-requisite for the participation of their daughter in any school tour/trip.