



# **St. Mary's Diocesan School**

## **School Tours Policy**

### **Introduction**

Our school tours policy is formulated within the context of our mission statement, circular M20/40 and in line with our schools' Code of Behaviour. It operates within a legislative framework and adheres to all associated school policies, regulations and Government directives.

In striving for holistic excellence, and aiming to develop all the abilities of our students in a 'happy atmosphere and structured environment' and 'collaborating together in mutual respect' we embrace our mission statement in the policy outlined below.

### **Rationale**

This Policy is designed to ensure that students stay safe and healthy as they enjoy the educational experiences of school tours

- School tours allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced educational process.
- School tours require good preparation and organisation to optimise the learning experience for students.
- The Board would hope that all school trips and tours would have a beneficial effect on pupils, enhancing both their academic prowess and their social skills.
- Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the tour with this policy.

Once a school tour has been approved by the Board as per circular M20/ 04 and on completion of associated Templates the following procedures shall be implemented.

## **Planning and Procedures**

1. Staff involved in organising a school tour, outline the proposal to the senior management team seeking approval in principle. It is preferable that all trips involving more than a two night stay are planned a year in advance. This gives students the opportunity to budget for the tour.
2. Complete Appendix 1 below in consultation with school management and present to the Board of Management for approval.
3. The tour should be offered to students and full details should be supplied in the form of a correspondence to be sent home. This should clearly state the educational benefits of the trip. This correspondence should include how to apply for a place on the trip, the full cost of the trip, timeline and method of payment should a place be secured on the trip. The School Tours policy will also be outlined, read and agreed to upon acceptance of a place on the trip. It should also detail how the places for the trip will be allocated.
4. An expression of interest should be elicited from students. This list should be reviewed with the principal, the deputy principal, year head(s) and form teachers before any offer of a place is made. The inclusion of a particular student in a school tour shall be at the discretion of the school Principal in consultation with the management team. Disciplinary, attendance records and health and safety concerns may be taken into account at this point.
5. In the event of oversubscription students and parents/guardians should be informed of the procedure for selection of students. A lottery for places will be held where the application of places is in excess of the number of places offered. A waiting list will then come into effect as per lottery for students not offered a place.
6. It is preferable that teachers are engaged to chaperone or supervise students. Nevertheless, on occasion personnel other than teachers e.g. Special Needs Assistants, PMEs, past staff members, supervisors or parents will accompany the group if they have received Garda clearance. Non-teaching staff will act in a purely supervisory role. Non-teaching staff, therefore, will not engage with disciplinary actions other than to inform the teacher present of any situation that may arise.
7. There is no ratio recommended by the school insurance for trips and therefore the ultimate decision rests with school management.

8. Parents should be made aware prior to the trip that some specialised activities may require students to work with accredited instructors or guides and without direct school staff supervision.
9. Remote supervision may have to take place on occasion; cafes, down time, shopping etc. Parents/ Guardians will be made aware of this in the itinerary shared at the information evening. Students should be advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 students, as appropriate, and adequate arrangements should be made regarding checking in with supervisors at given times.
10. When accepting a place on a tour It is understood that all students will endeavour to participate fully in all tour activities. Recommendations for particular tours and guidelines for participation in activities will be shared at the information evening and through communications from the tour leaders prior to the trip.
11. A risk assessment must be completed by the tour organiser.

## **Finance**

1. The full cost of the tour should be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity.
2. It is expected that students and parents make every endeavour to meet deadlines for paperwork and payments to facilitate the organisation of the tour.
3. At least two teachers should be involved in the financial administration of a school tour.
4. Separate financial records should be maintained for each school tour and provided to board of management members. The finances pertaining to each tour should be closed off and finalised by the end of the school year. A detailed record of all participating students and the amounts paid should be retained.
5. Students are responsible for their own spending needs and spending money. Advice may be given in specific trip guidelines.
6. Costs of trips may include monies collected for contingencies. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the contingency amount required. All monies and receipts will be accounted for.
7. Refunds can only be given in accordance with the contract made with the travel company. Payments that are made directly through a travel agent via a portal are

subject to terms and conditions specific to the agency. The conditions which are set out as such are outside of the control of the school.

### **Passports/ Travel Documents**

1. All students/staff are responsible for obtaining their own passports for overseas trips. It is the responsibility of the student, parent/guardian, that passports are valid and have adequate time left on them before they expire, well in advance of school tour.
2. For certain destinations, a visa may be required. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa.
3. Students other than Irish nationals holding an Irish passport should be made aware that they may require and in this event take responsibility for a separate passport and/or visa/ESTA and accept that this student may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group. Please visit the following websites for further information.

<https://www.dfa.ie/travel/know-before-you-go/advice-for-school-trips/>

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/>

It is the parents responsibility to secure these visas/waivers if necessary.

4. If a student is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that Social Services consent to any proposed trip. If a student is a Ward of Court, it may be necessary to seek advice from the Court in relation to trips abroad well in advance.
5. Emergency medical facilities are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in EU countries to EU nationals. The European Health Insurance Card from the local Health Service Executive is the means of entitlement and it is highly recommended that this card should be carried by all those travelling.

### **Student Medical History**

1. Any information about a pupil which may be deemed relevant such as allergies, serious medical problems or special needs should be provided by parents / guardians and potential problems and responsibilities highlighted in advance of any school trip.

2. Arrangements regarding a student's attendance on a school trip must be in line with health and safety guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of both student and staff. In some circumstances it may be necessary for a parent to accompany their child.
3. Underlying medical conditions need to be notified to the insurance company by the parent/guardian as supplementary payments may be needed to obtain full insurance.
4. In the event of an emergency, the parents/guardians will always be contacted at the earliest opportunity.
5. In the event of an accident or emergency, where it is not possible to contact parents, guardians or next of kin, tour leaders will act on medical advice presented on the ground and information shared by the parents prior to the tour. Details of emergency contacts are to be included in the student's information form.
6. Any/all medical costs (including transportation and prescription charges) paid by the tour leader are to be repaid by parents/guardians within a period of three weeks after the return of the trip. On occasion it may be necessary to request immediate payment from a parent.

### **Provision for students with Special Additional Needs**

We promote the inclusion of pupils with special needs on trips and we endeavour, when possible, to facilitate all our pupils' needs. We recognise the social as well as the cultural benefits that students derive from such trips.

1. Where students with special educational needs are involved in a group who are going on a school trip, it may be necessary for parents / guardians, management and the organising teacher to discuss arrangements in advance. This is done in order to ensure the enjoyment, health and safety of the student and the whole group whilst being mindful of the specific strengths and vulnerabilities of the student in question.
2. Students who have access or shared access to a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) during the school day will be facilitated with SNA care as far as is practicable.
3. For trips including students requiring an SNA, the group leader should ensure that the SNA becomes a tour leader, should the SNA be unavailable, one of the tour leaders will be assigned the SNA duties. The school is not obliged to provide SNA care on overnight trips. Where a student with access or shared access to SNA care wishes to participate in an overnight trip, the school is willing to consider alternative solutions proposed by parents/guardians. All arrangements for a student with an

SNA will be made prior to the trip by the organising teacher in consultation with the principal and student's care team in school.

### **Conduct of students and discipline**

1. The school code of behaviour will apply at all times throughout any school trip. School sanctions as outlined in the code of behaviour will apply.
2. Students should treat people with respect throughout the trip. This includes peers/ teachers / organisers/ leaders / drivers / tour guides and anybody they may encounter. Students are expected to work together in the spirit of inclusion reflected in our school ethos and for the benefit of all attendees.
3. No smoking, vaping or inhalation of any substance, no alcohol or any other illegal substances are to be carried, purchased or used. This is in accordance with normal school policy. There will be no exceptions. These are deemed as serious breaches of the code of behaviour.
4. Students will be held responsible for the condition of their rooms. Each room will be checked upon entry and students will be liable for any subsequent damage.
5. Students must never leave their group without permission and must observe all curfews.
6. It is expected that students' use of mobile phones will be responsible and in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy. Posting/sharing photos of others (students or staff members) without their consent is expressly forbidden. The tour group leader may have a specific mobile phone use policy depending on the location and nature of the trip.
7. Students should respect any cultural, environmental or social sensitivities or hazards that may be encountered when on tour.
8. Students take personal responsibility for their health and safety by making themselves aware of emergency exits, fire assembly points and fire fighting equipment. Students must also wear seat belts when provided.
9. A meeting with the students, parents/guardians and the staff going on the tour must take place before the tour where expectations for the tour will be outlined. A meeting of the staff going on the tour should take place before the tour so that there is a clear

understanding of the itinerary, expectations and roles. It is an expectation having accepted a place on this trip that parents and students will attend all meetings.

### **Sanctions**

1. Any student who does not follow the rules of the trip as per the school's code of behaviour and specific rules outlined at the information evening will be subject to a level of disciplinary action in line with the school's code of behaviour. Parents of the students in question will be informed at the earliest opportunity and within a reasonable timeframe. Should it be necessary that sanctions be applied by the tour leaders while travelling, the nature of these sanctions will be communicated to students and parents/guardians prior to commencement of the excursion.
2. If additional sanctions are required upon return to school this will be imposed by school management/relevant year head in consultation with the tour leader.
3. Serious breaches of discipline may result in a student being sent home and parents/guardians will have to cover the expense. This will be done in consultation with the tour leader and the principal, the overall decision will rest with the principal.

The following is a list of activities that constitute serious misbehaviour. The list is not exhaustive and other behaviour/incidents may constitute unacceptable or serious misbehaviour.

- Use or possession of alcohol/illegal substances / cigarettes / vapes.
  - Misuse of legal substances (solvents etc).
  - Students in out of bounds areas at night.
  - Serious and consistent disregard for the directions of the tour leaders.
  - Disruptive behaviour on plane, boat, coach or in the hotel/hostel.
  - Theft/criminal damage to property of others.
  - Engagement in sexual activity.
4. Should a student be part of a group or a bystander in the group engaging in the above behaviours or have knowledge of same without sharing with the tour leaders this is also considered a serious violation of the rules and will be dealt with accordingly.

### **Please note:**

**All relevant school policies and Department circulars will apply to all trips and tours undertaken in the school's name.**

[D.E.S. circular M20/04](#)

[FSSU Financial Guideline 2022/2023 - 31](#)

[Code of Behaviour](#)

[Anti Bullying Policy](#)

**AUP**

**Critical Incident Policy**

**Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

**Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment**

***This list is not exhaustive***

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on:**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of board of management)

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

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



**Appendix 1**

<b>Details of School Tour</b>
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Tour Dates		
From:	To:	School Days:
Brief Outline of Tour:		
Number of students Participating by Year Group:	Total Number of students participating:	
Expected Benefit to accrue from the tour:		

<b>Adults accompanying the students</b>		
Class Teacher/Tour Lead	Number of Other Teachers	Number of Other Adults
Tour Leader:		
Contact Details of Tour Leader:		
Deputy Tour Leader:		
Contact Details of Deputy Tour:		

School Tour Company: (if applicable):
Total Cost of Tour (including Contingency & Supervision, where applicable) :

**Sample Risk Assessment: To be completed by Tour leader to address issues specific to Tour**

Inadequate preparedness for school excursion/emergency	Accidents/ incidents, Dangerous occurrences due to Inadequate preparedness	H	<p>Each trip is communicated and approved by the Board of Management</p> <p>Parent/guardian's permission is obtained for each student before any excursions take place</p> <p>Emergency preparedness is addressed (phone numbers, medical arrangements, first-aid)</p> <p>An adequate number of supervising adults are present on the trip</p> <p>A head count is carried out before departure, routinely throughout the trip and in the event of an emergency, and before return journey by trip supervisor</p>
	Student separated from group	H	Supervisor(s) has a fully charged mobile phone
		H	Students are made aware of action to take if they become separated from group
		H	<p>Emergency phone numbers must be held by trip supervisors for each trip and available to all supervisors and students where the need arises</p> <p>Fire exits and evacuation routes are observed and noted on arrival</p> <p>Information on medical conditions has been received and recorded and considerations for some have been incorporated into the overall trip/plan.</p>
		H	Safety instructions are provided to students including information on correct clothing and equipment required, code of behaviour, etc.
		H	The Senior Leadership team is aware of the location of the group and duration of visit
		H	Safety briefing provided for non-teaching staff assisting in supervision

risks and controls particular to your school using Template no. 74)

Road Collision Unsafe road travel arrangements		Serious injury/ death	H	Weather conditions are assessed prior to trip  Safety belts must be worn where students are being transported by road  Safety belts must not be shared
Defective road vehicles		Serious injury/ death	H	All modes of transportation used must be compliant with the Road Traffic Act. By choosing to go with a recognised travel agent/bus company, they have checked that vehicles are compliant.
Extreme weather conditions		Hypothermia/ Heat stroke	H	Weather conditions are assessed on the day and considered suitable for trip

If there is one or more **High Risk (H)** actions needed, then the risk of injury could be high and immediate action should be taken.

**Medium Risk (M)** actions should be dealt with as soon as possible.

**Low Risk (L)** actions should be dealt with as soon as practicable.

Risk Assessment carried out by: Date: / /