

# School Tour Policy



## 1. Scope of policy

This Policy applies to all members of the staff of the Gaelcholáiste Charrraig Uí Leighin who take students off Campus. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity, to their Parents/Guardians and to staff who are involved with the organisation of and participation in school outings.

It was drafted in the context of the health and safety at work acts 1989 and 2005, and circular M20/04, which states 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, relating to the tour, which conflicts with this objective is to be avoided.”

School tours are categorised under two headings; those which are demanded by the curriculum subject, such as field trips and those which 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.

To reflect a world that is developing and changing, current educational philosophy recommends that students have first-hand experience wherever possible. 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 hope that all school trips and tours would have a beneficial effect on pupils, enhancing both their academic prowess and their social skills.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school’s Child protection Policy, Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Code of Behaviour and with the CETB Policy on School Trips. Gaelcholáiste Charrraig Uí Leighin’s core values of respect, fairness and integrity are central to this and each of the school policies named above.

## **2. Rationale for school trips**

1. Some trips are organised as part of the course to be followed in a subject area and as such may be compulsory. Other outings and trips are additional to the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity.
2. A great deal of educational benefit can be gained from participating in school trips. Such activities give students the opportunity to engage in experiences not available in the classroom, help develop a student's imaginative skills, encourage greater independence and enhance the student's social and cultural development. Trips assist in bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know the students in a non-classroom environment.
3. Educational trips (including day, overnight, overseas and field trips) should:
  - a) Extend and reinforce classroom activities and enhance the learning process of as many students as possible by providing educational experiences which the classroom alone cannot provide;
  - b) Support the curriculum content of some of the subjects through field trips, tours, outings or other recreational activities;
  - c) Develop interpersonal skills of the students.

## **3. Planning and organising of school trips**

1. There should be a balanced programme of outings and trips for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.
2. Field trips and day trips are organised by teaching staff in consultation with the Principal. Members of staff planning to organise a day trip or any non-sporting outing during class time must first inform the Principal of the intended date, no later than one month in advance of the proposed trip. (It is accepted that there may be some circumstances, where information about worthwhile events is not received in time to meet this deadline). The trip, including all information and documentation to be provided to parents, must be approved in advance by the Principal.
3. In general, written permission is required from a Parent/Guardian of a student before they may go on a trip. Parental consent may not be required for local outings, sanctioned by the Principal, which take place during the school day. It is understood

that students who play as part of a team representing the school have on-going parental permission to travel to all away matches.

4. Some trip activities, (following risk assessment) will need prior consultation with the school's insurers before approval for participation can be granted. As part of the planning process, trip organisers should consider any potential hazards that may arise and allow sufficient time for communication and discussion with the school's insurers.
5. Where appropriate (e.g. where a proposed activity is considered potentially hazardous) trip organisers must obtain written confirmation from any venue that it holds the appropriate insurance cover. This confirmation (normally a statement from the insurance company of the level of public liability held) should be provided to the principal.
6. School trips of a longer duration are sanctioned by the Board of Management in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills guidelines (Circular letter M20/04). Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip must submit their request for approval to the Principal for consideration by the Board of Management at least 12 months in advance of the proposed departure date. Included in the proposal, should be the year group(s) for which the trip is intended and the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip. An overseas trip must be organised through a bonded travel company.
7. Parents and students are advised that if demand exceeds places, then once application forms are received by the advised deadlines, places will be allocated by drawing names from a hat (provided all conditions are satisfied).
8. Adequate arrangements for the supervision of all students should be arranged as well as appropriate insurance. The ratio of members of staff to students shall be one to ten, for trips or tours in Ireland or to Great Britain and one to eight for tours to the rest of Europe or further afield. This ratio may be increased at the discretion of the Principal. Parents may be invited to participate in/supervise on school outings. CETB guidelines on parental participation and the requirements of the Garda Vetting Act shall be observed.

9. Students and Parents/Guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the tour with rules, regulations and special requirements of that tour. Parents/Guardians shall be given an outline of the purpose, itinerary, dates and costs of the tour before a deposit is sought. Each student and his/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 always. Students and Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall acquaint themselves with the school's Code of Behaviour and agree to abide by it. Each student and his or her Parent(s)/Guardian(s) shall be given a form outlining any additional rules, regulations and special requirements and shall be required to sign this.
10. A list of all students intending to travel must be submitted to the Principal prior to booking. The inclusion of students in a school tour shall be at the discretion of the school authorities.

#### **4. Financial aspects of school trip planning**

1. In general, day and overnight trips occur in addition to the normal academic and extra-curricular programmes of the school. There is normally an additional charge.
2. The school accounts office must be notified when a trip, which involves a cost to Parents/Guardians is being planned and must be done in advance of any notification being sent out to Parents/Guardians. This is to ensure advance discussion of the method of payment, agree on the amount (including transport costs etc.) and ensure that the accounts office has a list of students taking part.
3. The full cost of the tour and the method of payment required, should be communicated to Parents/Guardians at the planning stage. This will have the added advantage of facilitating the financial preparation with a view to allowing maximum pupils participation.
4. The income and expenditure must conform fully with the accounting practices of Cork ETB.
5. Students who withdraw from a tour after a deposit, or full monies has/have been paid, may not be entitled to a refund. Likewise, a pupil may not be refunded on any

payments made should the pupil be prevented from travelling on a school trip due to disciplinary, health or safety reasons. A full written account of income and expenditure shall be submitted to the Principal on the conclusion of each trip.

## **5. Documentation required for overseas trips**

1. 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. If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's valid passport must be included with the deposit. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip. A list of required documents shall be communicated to Parents/Guardians at the planning stage.
2. Visas may be necessary for some countries. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries. Students must have their European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.
3. The school cannot take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result. Refusal of entry at a border/ entry point which results in the student having to return home may result in extra cost to be borne by the student/parent/guardian for the unforeseen transport or accommodation. The school shall not be liable for such extra costs.
4. Costs incurred due to the removal of a student while the trip is in progress, e.g. for the disciplinary or health and safety reasons, shall be borne by the Parents/Guardians.
5. Students must carry their own passports through security at airport and ferry terminals.
6. For overnight trips the trip organiser must ensure that at least one week prior to the departure a trip information pack is lodged with the school office (for the attention of the Principal/Deputy Principal) confirming:

- a) Full itinerary showing all relevant dates and times;
- b) Name and contact details for the travel company (if overseas);
- c) Transport information e.g. flight numbers (if overseas), bus company details, etc.;
- d) Names and classes of the students travelling;
- e) Names and contact numbers of the accompanying staff;
- f) Address and contact details for all accommodation;
- g) Any other information considered relevant.

## **6. Behavioural expectations on school trips**

1. If a student, while on a school trip is found to be in serious breach of the Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.
2. Where there are reasonable grounds for concern about suspected possession/use of a banned substance or other physical safety concerns, staff will carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc) with the student(s) present.
3. Punctuality is to be observed always and students are expected to meet all time deadlines set for the trip.
4. Students may not absent themselves from the school group at any time without prior consent of the group leaders.
5. Students are permitted to bring digital entertainment items including a camera phone on overnight school trips, and can only use them with teacher's permission. The taking or sharing of images considered inappropriate is not permitted. Personal devices are generally not permitted on day trips.
6. Unauthorised recordings of staff or pupils, transfer of images of staff or students, or using the phone to harass others will be considered a serious breach of discipline. Students are prohibited from posting images of staff/ students on social networking sites.
7. It should be noted that it is not advisable to bring valuable personal property e.g. jewellery etc. on trips where the loss of same is likely to cause upset. Insurance cover for such items, where such exists, may be limited.

8. An Accident/ Incident Report form must be completed by teaching staff immediately on return (or sooner if requested by the Principal) for any accidents or incidents which pose a health and safety, disciplinary, or other legitimate concern.
9. Two members of staff, gender appropriate, may carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc) with the student present. This will only be done when based on reasonable grounds i.e. concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns. Students and parents will be made aware of this prior to application to participate on a trip.

## **7. Health and safety Issues**

1. The number of staff which accompanies a group on a school trip will be influenced by a number of factors including:
  - a) The number of students travelling;
  - b) The age and gender of the students;
  - c) The location of the trip;
  - d) Additional supervision which may be provided at the trip destination;
  - e) If the group will be dividing into smaller groups, each requiring supervision;
  - f) The type of transport used.
2. On overseas trips the number of staff accompanying students is often determined by the allocation provided for by the travel company (normally 1 teacher with every 10 students). Notwithstanding this the Board of Management reserves the right to stipulate the number of supervisors accompanying a trip entirely at its own discretion.
3. Health and safety of students and supervisors is a priority when organising and taking a school tour. Staff taking any tour will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise.
4. Staff are aware that in general the degree of care required of them should be that of a "careful parent" which would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student. However, should a student infringe any of the conditions laid down, staff cannot be held responsible. Certain trips may facilitate shopping or recreation which may not be directly supervised. The situation will be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to Parents/Guardians.
5. Parents/Guardians receive a written itinerary of overnight trips and are required to give written consent to their son/daughter taking part in the trip. When doing so

cognisance should be taken of any dangers associated with activities mentioned in the itinerary (skiing, go karting etc). It is the responsibilities of the Parents/Guardians to ensure that the organiser of a tour is aware of any special needs, medical or dietary issues, or any activities in which they do not wish their son/daughter to participate. Parents/Guardians must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

6. Teachers accompanying students on a trip have access to all information regarding the students on the school MIS.
7. Medical consent will form part of the parental consent form for foreign and residential trips. Parents/Guardians will be asked to agree in writing to the pupil receiving emergency treatment. If the Parents/Guardians do not agree to this, the pupil will not be permitted on the trip- given the additional responsibility this would entail for the school.
8. Parents will be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their child to receive all necessary inoculations.
9. Parents/Guardians are required to guarantee that when their child comes to the school to assemble for the start of the school tour, he/she does so free of illegal substances on his/her person or in his/her luggage.
10. Students may not purchase or bring medication (prescription or other) unless the group leader is fully informed and that such medication may be held by that member of staff. Students are required to have a note of explanation signed by their Doctor should they need to have medicine/needles on their person on the plane.
11. Students should not share medication. Students who use an inhaler must carry it with them always.
12. Basic first aid kits are available from the school office and where deemed appropriate staff should carry same on trips. Expert medical attention is sought should this be thought necessary. On return from, or during, any tour staff may advise a Parent/Guardian to seek medical advice, should they deem this appropriate.
13. In the event of a serious accident occurring during a school trip of any duration the following will be the standard arrangements:



- a) The staff member(s) involved will immediately seek the appropriate medical/emergency assistance. Once that has been done contact will be made with the school office (or Principal/Deputy Principal outside of school hours) and hence or otherwise Parents/Guardians of those involved. (On overseas trips, a list of contact numbers of Parents/Guardians will be carried by staff for this purpose);
- b) Parents/Guardians shall be required to provide the organisers with all phone numbers at which they can be contacted during the trip, and are expected to be available on a 24-hour basis for the duration of the trip. If a student requires hospitalisation then they will be accompanied by a member of staff who will remain with them as appropriate or until a parent (or another adult nominated by a parent) can replace them. The school accident report form must be completed as soon as possible after the event.

14. All students are covered under the school insurance policy. Specific activities are excluded from this policy and Parents/Guardians may request to see these. Additional insurance for activities not covered or for longer trips will be organised by the school where considered appropriate in such cases. Parents/Guardians must sign that they have read and understood the conditions under which their son/daughter is insured.

## **8. Emergency Procedures**

1. 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 considering 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 a lack of consensus over the course of action, the tour leader (where available) has the final decision.
2. 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 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.

3. The tour leader shall be given a sum of money (amount decided by the board) which may be used in the event of an emergency.

## **9. Uniform and Dress Code**

1. Pupils will be required to wear the official school uniform on all trips unless otherwise decided in advance by School Management.

## **10. Post Trip Review**

1. Following any trip, and where there is an obvious need to do so, staff should relay both verbally and in writing any comments/concerns pertaining to venue, organisation, tour operator, suitability of itinerary etc. to school management to inform subsequent trip preparation. Similarly, Parents/Guardians may relay any feedback, positive or negative, to the school for the attention of the staff member in charge and/or school management.
2. A post-trip report should include:
  - a) A review of the educational benefit to the students;
  - b) A financial statement;
  - c) Achievements and highlights;
  - d) Any difficulties/ problems encountered during the tour.

## **11. Role of the Board of Management**

1. To approve any trip outside the state.
2. To ensure that the trip offers a worthwhile educational experience for the students.
3. To ensure that pupils who are not participating in the event are adequately catered for while their teachers are away, in accordance with Circular PPT-1/03.
4. To consider the timing of the event so that there is minimum impact on the normal work of the school.
5. To consider the number of proposed events to take place during the year.

This policy was adopted by the board of management on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

It was reviewed on November 28th 2023.

It shall be made available to all school stakeholders and posted on the school's website.