



St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow

School Tour Policy

Review dates

Staff	May 2017	Reviewed
Parents	May 2017	Reviewed
Student Council	May 2017	Reviewed
Board of Management	May 2017	Ratified 15-5-2017

Due for next review _____

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School Tour Policy 2017

1 General Policy:

Purpose of this policy: To support teachers in the organisation and running of school trips and tours which will ensure a safe, enjoyable and educational experience for all travelling students and staff members.

School tours are categorised under four headings:

- Those which are determined by the particular curriculum subject (such as field trips).
- Those which inform and help build awareness of possible career and educational opportunities.
- Those that enhance the student's participation in or at sporting events
- 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).

This policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states:

St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow is a voluntary Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of the CEIST.

- In co-operation with the Department of Education, with parental and community support and within the available resources our mission is:
- To develop a community of learning which is geared towards the holistic development of each student;
- To foster the pursuit of academic excellence, respecting the specific potential and talents of each student;
- To promote within the school community the values of a Christian, caring society;
- To value, within the total school community, self-respect, respect for others and for the environment;
- To recognise and affirm the unique value and contribution of each individual.

2 Scope of Educational Outings and Trips Policy:

This policy applies to all members of the staff of St Mary's who take students off site. It also applies to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

The Code of Behaviour of St Mary's applies to all students of St Mary's and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off school grounds.

The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to trips, whether or not they involve an overnight stay.

- Before a student is accepted for a trip, her previous behaviour will be taken into consideration.
- Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance with the school's Code of Behaviour and with the rules, regulations and special requirements of that tour.

3 Aims:

The Board of Management of St Mary's Secondary School Mallow supports and encourages school tours.

It concurs with Department of Education & Science guidelines which state that:

“the objectives 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”

Circular letter 20/04

To reflect a world which 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 has an expectation that all school trips and tours would have a beneficial effect on pupils, enhancing both their academic prowess and their social and/or sporting skills.

4 Objectives:

- That the health, safety and welfare of our students is safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the demands on the physical resources of the students, having regard to their age and capacity, and the dangers to which they may be exposed.
- That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all trips/outings.
- That staff are aware that 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.

5 Rationale for having trips/outings and the need for a relevant policy:

- All educational trips must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Science in Circular Letter M 20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria contained in this circular.
- To assist staff in the planning of trips and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary precautions that must be observed to provide for the health and safety of staff and students. It also ensures that trips and outings take place efficiently and smoothly and that the standard of supervision is firmly within guidelines and standards.

6 Day Trips within Ireland

- Members of staff who wish to take students on a day trip must make their request to the Principal. As much notice as possible should be given
- Day trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours and may include weekends.

- Specific written parental permission is required for all trips and should be kept on file by organising teacher
- Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from trips by the Principal.

Once the Principal has approved a trip, the organiser should:

1. Forward brief details of the trip to the Deputy Principal for inclusion in the calendar.
2. Inform parents / guardian of the details of the trip in writing. This should include cost, travel arrangements, all arrangements and other relevant information. Parents must sign and return the permission slip attached. See template appendix 1.
3. Place a list of students participating in the trip on the Staff notice Board and provide a copy of this list to the Deputy Principal and the school office (for roll) and include in the Activities Diary in staffroom.

On all school organised trips students will be accompanied by supervising staff members. There must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff traveling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students traveling. The Principal / Deputy Principal will decide on the allocation of personnel to supervise students on trips.

- Day trips may involve a financial cost to the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of transportation to/from events. In the case of financial difficulties for particular students, application for assistance by the organising teacher may be made to the Deputy Principal.
- The School will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the Coach Company and accompanying staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.
- On occasion it may be suitable for Senior Cycle students (LCA, Fifth and Sixth Year students, and also Transition Year students in certain circumstances) to travel independently to and/or from an event. In such an instance, the organiser of the trip must get approval from school management and request written parental permission in advance.

- In the case of Junior Cycle students, school management may request students to travel independently of the school and accompanied by their parent / guardian.
- For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their daughter's journey to/from the School.
- A member of staff should only travel alone with a student in exceptional circumstances agreed by school management, and where possible when written parental permission has been obtained. The ratio of staff and students travelling on school tours will be decided by school management in consultation with the organising staff member.
- An Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred on school trips.
- In cases of a breach of school rules, teachers are required to follow the code of behaviour / sanctions as appropriate in the circumstances.

7 Overseas Trips:

- Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Board of Management. Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.
- The number of students participating varies depending on the nature of the trip and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency.
- In the case of trips being oversubscribed, priority is given to those students who are studying the appropriate subject. Following that, a lottery system will operate. The school reserves the right to refuse any student who has a poor discipline record in the school
- Before a student with a medical condition is accepted to participate in a trip the student must be covered by individual travel insurance. The school must be confident that they can manage the needs of the student without compromising the health and safety of the student in question, the other students participating or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be

considered on an individual basis in consultation with school management, parents and staff members.

- A general information letter and permission slips will be issued to parents. This must be signed by parents and returned to organising teacher. The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and details of non -refundable deposit payable directly to the travel agent. Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- If a passport is required, parents/guardians should ensure that passports are valid for at least six months following the trip.
- Visas may be necessary for the destination and some countries require them to be processed together. 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 E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.
- It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their daughter has all necessary up -to -date documentation well in advance of the trip.
- Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents understand that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.
- Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.
- Following payment of the deposit, the parents will be issued with a form for completion re: student details, all sections of which must be completed and the form returned to the organiser by specified date. Details of accommodation, travel arrangements, any special local conditions, personal items that the student needs to bring, guidelines for spending money and money for extras such as meals and excursions will also be sent to parents.

8 Mobile phones:

Parents / guardians will be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a 24 hour basis for the duration of the school tour. A mobile telephone will be supplied to the tour leader for school tours. The number of the phone will be given to parents / guardians and students prior to departure for use only in case of emergency.

Mobile phone communications between teachers and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participants mobile phone numbers and will be kept only for the duration of the trip.

The trip organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the School Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.

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.

- If necessary two members of staff should carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc.) with the student present. This will only be done for good reasons based on reasonable grounds, such as concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns. If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty her own pockets.

9 Financial administration of school trips:

All school trips outside of Ireland must be organised strictly in keeping with the JMB/FSSU 2015/2016 Financial Guideline – 05

For trips within Ireland all monies collected from students must be receipted by the organising teacher and money lodged, recorded and receipted immediately with the school office. No cash is to be kept by the organising teacher in classrooms or other locations including bank accounts.

The financial details of all trips must be provided to the Principal in written form as part of the planning for such trips.

In the case of overseas trips and overnight trips the tour leader shall be given a sum of money (amount to be decided by the Board) which may be used in the event of an emergency.

10 Garda Vetting:

St Mary's complies with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2016. School trips must be organised in keeping with the school's vetting policy.

11 Transport:

Transport to school organised trips will be arranged by the school in the first instance where practicable. For small group events alternative transport may be required but will be organised with parental permission. Students who wish to deviate from the transport arrangements must do so in conjunction with parental permission in advance of trip to tour organiser.

12 Monitoring and Review:

As part of the development planning process St. Mary's Secondary School will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedure on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

13 Review & Ratification

- a. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School on 15-5-2017.
- b. This policy may be reviewed as deemed necessary by the Board.

Signature of Chairperson _____ Date _____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____



St. Mary's Secondary School, Mallow

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

A number of students are travelling to ----- on -----

We will travel by ----- leaving at ----- from school grounds and returning at -----
- approx. School rules apply.

Yours sincerely,

Organising Teacher.

I wish do not wish

My daughter _____ Class _____ to travel on ---
insert date -----to -----insert event-----.

Signed _____

Parent/Guardian