

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

1. INTRODUCTION:

- ▶ **1.1** St. Nathy's College believes that students can derive a great deal of educational benefit from participating in school tours and field trips. Such activities give students the opportunity to engage in experiences not available in the classroom, and help develop a student's imaginative skills, encourage greater independence and enhance the student's social and cultural development. These guidelines are designed to help ensure that students stay safe and healthy as they enjoy the educational experiences of school tours and field trips.

- ▶ **1.2** Most school tours and field trips take place without incident. However, there is a growing concern about further ensuring the safety of students. These guidelines are not designed to discourage teachers, but to ensure that good planning and attention to safety measures are in place to prevent accidents and incidents and lessen the seriousness of those that may occur.

2. GENERAL:

- ▶ **2.1** These guidelines should be read in their totality, as there may be some overlap in the requirements for planning specific trips and/or activities. For example, when planning **a trip abroad** the section on **Residential Trips** will also be important.

PLANNING SCHOOL TOURS AND FIELD TRIPS

Outline the proposal to the Principal / BOM, seeking approval in principle.

Proposals to include:

- Objectives of the activity
- Likely date, duration and venue
- Student group, age profile and staffing requirement
- Resources required and estimate of costs
- How the activity will be funded

Planning

- Contact reputable tour operator/ service provider
- Contact venue. Is it suitable for the group?
- What are the transport options?

- Who will lead the group and who will supervise it?
- Who will pay for the activity?
- Risk Assessment

Substantive proposal to Principal/ BOM:

- Details of dates
- Risk assessment
- Emergency procedures
- Transport
- Insurance
- Costs
- Funding
- Composition of group
- Staffing

Shorter Trips

- Get parental consent for trips involving students up to age 18
- Inform parents of activity routine
- Brief students
- Engage in activity, monitoring risks at all times.

Residential – Abroad

- Obtain approval from Principal/ BOM to prepare the visit subject to satisfactory preparation

Final Preparation

- Information to and from parents
- Briefing meeting with parents and students
- Secure full payment of costs
- Obtain final approval from Principal / BOM and parental consents
- Go on trip, monitoring the risks at all times

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

SUPERVISION

▶ **3.1** It is expected that all school tours, field trips and extra curricular activities will be adequately supervised.

▶ **3.2** The following ratios should apply:

Games:	1 teacher: 25 students
Field Trips (Ireland):	1 teacher: 20 students
Adventure Activities:	1 teacher: 10 students
Residential Trips:	1 teacher: 10 students
School Tours (Ireland):	1 teacher: 20 students
School Tours (Abroad):	1 teacher: 10 students
Swimming (Beach, River etc.):	1 teacher: 10 students
Swimming Pools:	1 teacher: 20 students

▶ **3.3** Students should not be brought swimming or on adventure type trips without a qualified lifeguard or other suitably trained personnel.

▶ **3.4** Personnel other than teachers volunteering to chaperone or supervise students should only do so if a teacher is also accompanying the group and if he/she has received Garda clearance with regard to working with young people.

▶ **3.5** The group leader must ensure that all supervisors understand their roles and responsibilities at all times and are fully briefed by the group leader before departure.

▶ **3.6** The group leader must ensure that all supervisors are made aware of their duties and responsibilities viz a viz student health, safety and behaviour prior to departure.

▶ **3.7** Regular head counting of students should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all students and adults involved in the activity. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the group.

4. PREPARING STUDENTS

▶ **4.1** Students who are well briefed about an activity will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Students should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the activity will

entail. They must understand what standards of behaviour are expected of them and why rules must be followed. Students should be made aware of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

▶ **4.2** Students, whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential activities the group leader should consider whether such students should be sent home early. Parents and students should be told in advance about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a student will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

▶ **4.3** For some students an overnight trip may be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other students. They should understand:

- ▶ **4.3.1** The aims and objectives of the trip/activity
- ▶ **4.3.2** Background information about the place to be visited
- ▶ **4.3.3** Basic foreign words and phrases where appropriate
- ▶ **4.3.4** Relevant foreign culture and customs
- ▶ **4.3.5** How to avoid specific danger and why they should follow rules
- ▶ **4.3.6** Why safety precautions are in place
- ▶ **4.3.7** What standard of behaviour is expected
- ▶ **4.3.8** Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct
- ▶ **4.3.9** Who is responsible for the group
- ▶ **4.3.10** If on a foreign trip, items not to be brought back to Ireland
- ▶ **4.3.11** What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group
- ▶ **4.3.12** Rendezvous procedures, including time keeping
- ▶ **4.3.13** What to do if separated from the group
- ▶ **4.3.14** Emergency procedures, including telephone numbers, etc.
- ▶ **4.3.15** Pocket money and security of personal items
- ▶ **4.3.16** Maps and town plans, as appropriate
- ▶ **4.3.17** Limitations of movement, such as out of bounds areas

▶ **4.4** Remote supervision may have to take place on occasion. For example, when students are on shopping trips, certain adventure activities etc. Parents should be notified of this in advance. Students should be advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 students, as appropriate and adequate arrangements should be made re: checking in with supervisors at given times.

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

5. SCOPE OF THE GUIDELINES:

▶ **5.1** While routine extra-curricular activities are covered under these guidelines, its main thrust is directed at events that entail a great deal of structured organization such as residential, field and adventure trips as well as foreign tours.

6. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

▶ **6.1** Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or tour unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum, which parents already know about through the school prospectus or a letter. Seeking consent at time of enrolment for such routine activities may be appropriate.

▶ **6.2** Before residential visits or when students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities parents should be invited to attend a briefing meeting where details (oral and written) of the proposed trip should be provided. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend.

▶ **6.3** Parents need to be made aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the trip will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and welfare should be given to parents.

▶ **6.3.1** Dates of the trip.

▶ **6.3.2** Objectives of the Trip.

▶ **6.3.3** Times of departure and return - parents must agree to meet the student on return.

▶ **6.3.4** The location where the students will be collected and returned.

▶ **6.3.5** Modes of transport including the names of travel companies.

▶ **6.3.6** The size and gender breakdown of the group and the level of supervision, including times when remote supervision may take place.

▶ **6.3.7** Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site.

▶ **6.3.8** Names of leader, of staff and of other accompanying adults.

▶ **6.3.9** Details of planned activities and how any risks will be managed.

▶ **6.3.10** Standards of behaviour expected in respect of alcohol, sexual behaviour, smoking and general group discipline including prohibited items. This information may take the form of a code of conduct which parents may be required to sign.

▶ **6.3.11** What students should not take on the trip or bring back

▶ **6.3.12** Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident,

cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents may need to arrange additional cover.

▶ **6.3.13** Clothing, equipment & items of personal hygiene to be taken.

▶ **6.3.14** Money to be taken.

▶ **6.3.15** Information regarding what the parents will be required to consent to.

▶ **6.4** The group leader should seek parental consent for:

▶ **6.4.1** Adventure activities

▶ **6.4.2** Foreign trips

▶ **6.4.3** Other residential trips

▶ **6.5** If parents withhold consent the student will not be taken on the trip.

▶ **6.6** A parental consent form should be completed for each student in the group. Besides conveying the parent's consent it may also be used for obtaining details required as follows:

▶ **6.6.1** Any allergies/phobias the student may have.

▶ **6.6.2** Any medication the student is taking, what the dosage is and who is to administer it, or whether the student can administer it

▶ **6.6.3** Any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the family during the proceeding 4 weeks and any other recent illness suffered by the student.

▶ **6.6.4** Any special medical or dietary requirements.

▶ **6.6.5** Whether the student suffers from travel sickness.

▶ **6.6.6** The student's ability to swim.

▶ **6.6.7** Any other information the parent thinks is relevant.

▶ **6.6.8** The parental home phone numbers and address.

▶ **6.6.9** An alternative contact, phone number and address.

▶ **6.7** The contents of a consent form will vary according to the type and duration of the trip.

▶ **6.8** Medical consent should form part of the parental consent form for foreign trips. Parents should be asked to agree to the student's receiving emergency treatment, including anesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If the parents do not agree to this, the Principal may decide to withdraw the student from the trip — given the additional responsibility this would entail for the school. Doctors in another country may be reluctant to operate on a student unless assured of parental authorisation for such treatment

- ▶ **6.9** The group leader should inform parents that they will be expected to fund the early return of a student whose conduct gives rise for concern on a trip. A written agreement may be necessary
- ▶ **6.10** The Principal should ensure that parents can contact their child via the group leader or the school contact in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the trip or a late arrival home. Parents should therefore:
 - ▶ **6.10.1** Know the destination details.
 - ▶ **6.10.2** Be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (particularly during holiday periods when the school may be closed) and at the venues the group will visit.
 - ▶ **6.10.3** Provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency.
 - ▶ **6.10.4** In the event of an emergency parents should contact the group leader/school contact who will then liaise with the student.
 - ▶ **6.10.5** In the event of an emergency on the trip students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so or as directed by the group leader.
- ▶ **6.11** An evaluation of all trips should take place on return and a report, including a financial statement should be submitted to the principal.

7. CHARGING FOR TRIPS

- ▶ **7.1** If a trip is linked to a particular curricular or subject area the charge to be imposed may be compulsory.
- ▶ **7.2** All non-curricular and optional extra trips shall be voluntary.
- ▶ **7.3** Group leaders should be mindful of the social and economic status of families when charging for trips. Planning should be done well in advance and a procedure should be put in place whereby students can pay for the trip over a period of time at an agreed rate.
- ▶ **7.4** When planning for a trip, group leaders should factor in all costs, including contingencies and should ensure that all charges are paid well in advance of departure.
- ▶ **7.5** Monies paid in advance will be forfeited if a student withdraws from the tour, except where such funds are recoupable through the insurance policy.

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Teachers in charge of students during a school trip have a duty of care to ensure that the students are safe and healthy. They also have a duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would.
2. Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school trip.
3. If an accident/incident happens, the priorities are to:
 - ▶3.1 Assess the situation.
 - ▶3.2 Safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
 - ▶3.3 Attend to the casualty.
 - ▶3.4 Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know about the incident.
4. The group leader should take charge in an emergency and ensure that back up cover is arranged. All those involved in the school trip should be informed of the proposed arrangements in advance.
5. There should be a named school contact with all the necessary information about the trip. This person is the school's link with the group and their parents.
6. If an emergency occurs on a school trip, the main factors to consider include:
 - ▶6.1 Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
 - ▶6.2 Ensure that the group is safe and looked after.
 - ▶6.3 Establish the identity of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
 - ▶6.4 Ensure that parents are informed and in cases of minor injury adequate arrangements should be made to get the student home, to liaise with the parents and to ensure that the injury is monitored.
 - ▶6.5 Ensure that all members who need to know are aware of the incident, and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.
 - ▶6.6 Ensure that a teacher/s accompanies/accompany casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group is adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
 - ▶6.7 Notify the police if necessary.
 - ▶6.8 Notify the Irish Embassy/Consulate, if abroad.

▶ **6.9** Inform the school contact

▶ **6.10** The following details should be passed on to the school via the school contact:

▶ **6.10.1** Nature of incident

▶ **6.10.2** Date and time of the incident

▶ **6.10.3** Location of the incident

▶ **6.10.4** Names of casualties and nature of injuries

▶ **6.10.5** Names of others involved

▶ **6.10.6** Names of witnesses

▶ **6.10.7** Action taken so far

▶ **6.10.8** Action yet to be taken and by whom

▶ **6.11** Notify insurers, especially if medical attention is required. This may be done by the school contact.

▶ **6.12** Notify the Travel Agent or transport operator. This may be done by the school contact

▶ **6.13** Ascertain telephone numbers for future calls. Landlines should be used, where practicable, to ensure quality of communication.

▶ **6.14** Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details, and preserve vital evidence.

▶ **6.15** Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident

▶ **6.16** Complete the Committee's accident report form as soon as possible. Copies should be brought on residential and foreign nips.

▶ **6.17** No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to families. Media enquiries should be referred to a designated media contact in the home area.

▶ **6.18** No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

▶ **6.19** In the event of an emergency parents should contact the group leader/school contact, who will then liaise with the student

▶ **6.20** In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so or as directed by the group leader.

7. It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other students or staff in the school has been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. It is advisable for schools to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the

school as a whole to cope with the effects of a particular incident.

Acknowledgement

Most of the material contained in these guidelines is based on “Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits“ published by the Department for Education and Employment (UK) 1998.

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TOURS / ACTIVITIES

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

- 1.** The group leader should check and agree the provider's arrangements for supervision and recreation during the evenings and between adventure activities. The group leader should also provide any relevant information to the provider such as the group's age-range, competence, accompanying adults, etc.

- 2.** The group leader/teachers retain ultimate responsibility for students during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. This also applies to some residential and day trips. The provider is responsible for the safe running of the activity. Everyone, including the students, should have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school staff and the provider's staff.

- 3.** The group leader/teachers should have sufficient information on what each activity involves before it takes place. They should approach the instructor at an appropriate safe interval if they are concerned that the students may be at unnecessary risk. Assurances may be sought that the provider has:
 - ▶ **3.1** Checked the suitability of staff/temporary workers to work with young people.
 - ▶ **3.2** Clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of its staff
 - ▶ **3.3** The appropriate security arrangements.
 - ▶ **3.4** Appropriate Public Liability Insurance.

- 4.** The Board of Management should satisfy itself that:
 - ▶ **4.1** The group leader and other supervisors are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of students in a given activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant certification, where it exists.
 - ▶ **4.2** The group leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventure/activities/trips.
 - ▶ **4.3** Appropriate risk assessment has been carried out.

- ▶**4.4** The supervision will be appropriate.
- ▶**4.5** There is adequate first aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group.
- ▶**4.6** The emergency procedures include activity-specific measures and that supervisors/providers are competent to carry them out.
- ▶**4.7** The equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition.
- ▶**4.8** Every student is suited to the activity and is properly briefed, prepared and equipped.

5. Some adventure activities, such as those under the Gaisce Awards, may require students to work without direct supervision. Particular attention should be given to the information and training provided to students before supervision can be withdrawn. Parental consent must be sought.

- ▶**5.1.** The information and training should be provided by appropriately qualified personnel. The project leader should be satisfied that the students have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability, judgment and skills to be left without direct supervision.

6. Withdrawal of supervision should be a gradual four stage process.

- ▶**6.1** Accompanying the group.
- ▶**6.2** Shadowing the group.
- ▶**6.3** Checking regularly at agreed location
- ▶**6.4** Checking occasionally at agreed locations.

7. Students should be familiar with all equipment used or taken without direct supervision, and in addition to training, an initial element of adult supervision in the use of equipment may be required. The condition and suitability of any equipment, particularly safety equipment, taken or used during these activities should be assessed separately.

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TOURS / ACTIVITIES

COASTAL VISITS AND WATER

1. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The group leader should bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a Coastal activity:

- ▶ **1.1** Tides, rip tides and sandbanks are potential hazards. Timings and exit routes should be checked.
- ▶ **1.2** Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags.
- ▶ **1.3** Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return, if separated.
- ▶ **1.4** Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire, sewage outflows, etc.
- ▶ **1.5** Some of the group's time on the beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds.
- ▶ **1.6** Cliff tops/caves can be highly dangerous even during daylight hours. The group should keep to a path at all times.

2. Swimming in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities. They should only be allowed as formal or supervised activities, preferably in recognized bathing areas which have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. Students should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

3. The group leader, or another designated teacher in the group, should preferably hold a relevant life saving award, especially where lifeguard cover may not be available.

4. The group leader should:

- ▶ **4.1** Be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers.
- ▶ **4.2** Ascertain for themselves the level of the students' swimming ability.
- ▶ **4.3** Be aware of the local conditions — such as currents, weeds, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom.
- ▶ **4.4** Designate a safe area of water for use by the group.

- ▶**4.5** Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water.
- ▶**4.6** Ensure that students have not eaten (at least 30 minutes) before swimming.
- ▶**4.7** Ensure that the activity is safe for students, especially any with disabilities.
- ▶**4.8** Adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall.
- ▶**4.9** Ensure that the students behave appropriately in and out of the water.
- ▶**4.10** Ensure that proper changing facilities are available and that propriety is observed regarding gender separation. In mixed groups there should be at least one male and one female supervisor.

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TOURS / ACTIVITIES

FARM VISITS

1. Farms can be dangerous, even for people who work on them. Taking young people to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with Ecoli D157 food poisoning and other infections.
2. The group leader should check that the farm is well managed, that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good hygiene standards.
3. Students should be reminded:
 - ▶3.1 Not to place their faces against the animals
 - ▶3.2 Not to eat until they have washed their hands
 - ▶3.3 Not to drink from farm taps
 - ▶3.4 Not to ride on tractors or other machines
 - ▶3.5 Not to interfere with farm machinery.
 - ▶3.6 To stay away from hazardous areas such as slurry tanks etc.
 - ▶3.7 Not to wander away from the main group.

D. FIELD STUDIES

1. Field Studies associated with a range of subjects including Geography, Biology, History, CSPE etc. may take students to industrial sites and urban areas as well as into the countryside and to the coast. The scope of field studies means that the group leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, should also be competent to lead and instruct their students within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk.

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TOURS / ACTIVITIES

RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

1. Issues for the group leader to consider include:

- ▶ **1.1** The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the pupils. The group leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance.
- ▶ **1.2** There should be a reasonable pro-rata gender balance of teachers for mixed gender groups.
- ▶ **1.3** Ideally each room should have en-suite facilities, but as a minimum requirement there should be separate male and female bathroom facilities for students and adults.
- ▶ **1.4** The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the groups use.
- ▶ **1.5** There should be safe heating and ventilation.
- ▶ **1.6** The entire group should be aware of the layout of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, and its regulations and routine.
- ▶ **1.7** Where the reception area in a particular building is not staffed 24 hours a day, appropriate security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors.
- ▶ **1.8** The manager of the accommodation should be asked, through the tour operator, for assurances that the staff including temporary workers, has been checked as suitable for work with young people.
- ▶ **1.9** Locks on doors should be operable in all rooms, but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times.
- ▶ **1.10** There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc. and for the safe keeping of valuables.
- ▶ **1.11** There should be adequate lighting at all entrances, corridors and rooms.
- ▶ **1.12** There should be provision for students with disabilities.
- ▶ **1.13** Balconies should be stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe.
- ▶ **1.14** Where possible students should not be lodged in ground floor rooms.
- ▶ **1.15** The fire alarm should be in certified working order throughout the building.
- ▶ **1.16** There should be recreational accommodation/facilities for the group.
- ▶ **1.17** The hotel/hostel management should undertake not to supply or sell alcohol or tobacco to students.
- ▶ **1.18** There should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby every night.
- ▶ **1.19** A curfew time of not later than 9:00pm should be set for students.

► **1.20** The easy accessibility of medical personnel/facilities.

2. The group leader should confirm, prior to departure, that the hotel/hostel has proper and accessible fire exits and that it meets local regulations. After arrival fire evacuation procedures should be outlined to the students.

3. The group leader should also confirm, prior to departure, that the hotel/hostel meets all local hygiene regulations.

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TOURS / ACTIVITIES

TRIPS ABROAD

1. Travelling abroad can be hugely rewarding for students, but it is important that careful preparation takes place.
2. All trips abroad should be booked through a reputable travel agency with experience in the organisation of trips for schools and young people.
3. It is good practice to make an exploratory visit to the location. If this is not possible, the group leader should gather as much information as possible on the area to be visited from:
 - ▶3.1 The tour operator
 - ▶3.2 The provider of facilities at the location
 - ▶3.3 The Department of Foreign Affairs
 - ▶3.4 Embassy/Consulate
 - ▶3.5 Other schools who have been to the area/used the facilities
 - ▶3.6 The Local Authority and/or schools in the area
 - ▶3.7 The Internet, books and magazines
4. A minimum supervision ratio of 1 teacher to 10 students should apply. There should be enough teachers in the group to cover an emergency.
5. Factors to consider for trips abroad include:
 - ▶5.1 Language — particularly common phrases
 - ▶5.2 Culture e.g. body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, customs, attitudes to gender etc.
 - ▶5.3 Drugs, alcohol usage
 - ▶5.4 Food and drink
 - ▶5.5 Money, how to carry money and valuables discreetly
 - ▶5.6 How to use phones abroad & code for phoning home

▶ **5.7** What to do in an emergency

- 6.** It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to meet teachers and others who will be taking the students overseas.
- 7.** The group leaders must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance.
- 8.** One of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country.
- 9.** The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip.
- 10.** Photocopies of the group's (individual) passports should be taken for emergency use.
- 11.** If a group includes students whose national or immigration status or entitlement to an Irish passport is in doubt, it is advisable to make early enquires to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice and Law Reform and the Passport Office.
- 12.** Students other than EU nationals may require a separate passport and/or visa and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group.
- 13.** 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, the principal should seek advice from the Court in relation to trips abroad well in advance.
- 14.** Emergency medical facilities are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in EU countries to EU nationals. Form EI 11 from the local Health Board is the certificate of entitlement and must be completed by the student's parent and returned by the group leader.
- 15.** It is advisable for the group leader to take a contingency fund in case treatment has to be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later.
- 16.** The group leader should ensure that he/she obtains and takes with him/her:
 - ▶ **16.1** Travel tickets, passports and visas. It is advisable to carry a separate list of the numbers of any travel documentation/passports and photocopies of the group's documents in a sealed waterproof bag.
 - ▶ **16.2** A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency and/or center / hotel, if appropriate

- ▶ **16.3** Medical documentation e.g. forms EI 11 and significant medical histories. These should be carried by the group leader at all times.
- ▶ **16.4** Parental consent forms and permission for the group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf.
- ▶ **16.5** The phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the Principal and/or of the school contact.
- ▶ **16.6** The names and addresses of parents and telephone numbers (home and work) where they can be contacted.
- ▶ **16.7** Copies of a list of group members and their details.
- ▶ **16.8** Details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number.
- ▶ **16.9** The name, address and telephone number (including emergency number) of the Travel Agency.
- ▶ **16.10** The name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation.
- ▶ **16.11** Details of local hospital/medical and emergency services.

17. Full details of the trip must be retained by a designated person in the school while the trip is in progress. This should include:

- ▶ **17.1** The itinerary and contact telephone numbers/addresses of the group.
- ▶ **17.2** A list of group members and their details.
- ▶ **17.3** Contact names, addresses, telephone numbers of the parents and next of kin.
- ▶ **17.4** Copies of parental consent forms.
- ▶ **17.5** Copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers, etc.
- ▶ **17.6** A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency, centre / hotel etc., if appropriate.

18. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that this information is available at all times. This is particularly important if the trip takes place when the school is closed.

19. The group leader must ensure that each student knows what action to take if there is an emergency or a problem.

20. The group leader and supervisors should know where the nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number.

21. The group leader needs to be aware that some diseases are more prevalent in some countries than in others and should know what action to take should a member of the group become infected,

and what actions to take to prevent infections.

22. Many of the health problems of pupils on longer trips are caused by lack of food, liquid or sleep. The group leader should plan to minimize these risks.

23. The group leader should carry a contingency fund to cover the eventuality of a student running out of funds. This contingency fund should be used solely for the purpose of providing food and drinks for the student.

24. If appropriate, parents should be asked to provide suitably factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses and students should be advised about the dangers of over exposure to sunshine.

25. It is advisable, if appropriate, to check that the ship/aircraft or coach being used by the Travel Agency has a wheelchair service and lifting facility.

26. The group leader should resist any attempts to split the group while travelling. If this has to be done then each group should have a separate group leader.

27. The group leader should ensure that all supervisors are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the trip.

St. Nathy's School Policies - Effective: September 2010

SCHOOL TRIPS & TOURS

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TOURS / ACTIVITIES

EXCHANGE TRIPS

- 1.** The success of an exchange trip depends largely on good relationships and communications with the partner school.
- 2.** School exchanges differ from other trips abroad in that students will spend most of their time with host families and are, therefore, not always under the direct supervision of school staff.
- 3.** The group leader should remember that host families will not be subject to Irish law.
- 4.** Students must be made aware of behavioural expectations agreed with the host family. The following should be ensured by the group leader:
 - ▶ **4.1** A good personal knowledge of the host school and its environs.
 - ▶ **4.2** Satisfactory 'pairing' arrangements. The partner school should inform the host family of any special, medical or dietary needs of their guests, age and gender.
 - ▶ **4.3** Matches should be appropriate.
 - ▶ **4.4** Parents, students and the host school should be clear about the arrangements for collecting and distributing students to families, and for transporting students throughout the exchange.
 - ▶ **4.5** The principal should retain a list of all the students involved and their family names, addresses and telephone numbers
 - ▶ **4.6** Students living with host families should have easy access to their teachers, usually by telephone.
 - ▶ **4.7** Parents should be made aware that their children will be living with host families and will not always be under direct teacher supervision.
- 5.** The group leader should ensure that host families are thoroughly vetted including criminal background checks insofar as these are available. The group leader should, as a minimum requirement, seek assurances from the partner school as to host family suitability.

