



Policy for School Tours and Educational trips

St. Nathy's College
Ballaghaderreen
Co. Roscommon

1. Introduction

Educational trips help to develop students' social skills, promote independence, stimulate cultural awareness, develop further enquiry, encourage creative learning and advance self-management skills. St. Nathy's College is committed to incorporating educational trips into its scheme of work, providing that they will enhance students' relevant understanding and experiences, and that their inclusion is practicable, considering the constraints of staffing, cost and time.

2. Aim

The aim of an educational trip will provide a significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of students in the particular year group taking part in the trip and which benefit cannot be provided by in-school activities alone.

3. Procedures

1. All educational trips and field trips must be approved by the Board of Management.
2. The template attached at **Appendix 1** must be completed and submitted to the Principal when planning a school trip and will be retained for examination by the inspectorate during a school inspection.
3. Educational trips of more than one day's duration will be arranged to coincide with normal school holiday periods. However, if an educational trip and/or field study is an integral part of a school programme the Board of Management may grant permission for the trip/field study to be held during term time and as per the requirements of Department of Education circular M20/04.
4. The Board of Management will ensure that students who are not participating in an educational trip and/or field study are adequately catered for while their teachers are away on school trips. Appropriate arrangements will be made for the conduct of all classes in accordance with Department of Education circular PPT01/03. When planning the trip cognisance must be taken of the impact the trip will have on the normal work of the school and the number of absent teachers will be kept to a minimum.
5. In exceptional cases it should be noted that:
 - a. The Board of Management reserves the right to deny an individual student to travel. This may be determined on the grounds of health and safety due to medical issues, behavioural difficulties and/or a poor attendance record.
 - b. Any breach of behaviour by a student that is deemed to jeopardise the safety of an individual and/or the group as a whole may result in the immediate sending home of that student.

4. Scope of the Policy

Trips may be categorised into two subsections:

- Those which, under the criteria set out in specified syllabus are deemed obligatory to the content and/or assessment of the subject, such as field investigations.
- Those which are undertaken in an effort to engage with experiential learning outside of the classroom, deepening the student's knowledge and understanding of the subject matter to which they are exposed.

5. Planning

Procedures for teachers organising trips.

1. Outline the proposal to the Principal. The proposal should include the following:
 - a. objective of the activity
 - b. intended date, timeframe and location of the trip
 - c. a profile of the student group involved – age, numbers etc.
 - d. the supervision requirements
 - e. estimated cost and how the trip will be funded
 - f. any additional resources that may be required
2. The group leader must obtain permission from the Board of Management to take students on a school trip. A general outline of the trip, including travel dates, tour company details, travel insurance, the total price and the general tour itinerary, should accompany the request for permission. In the case of particularly onerous excursions/trips involving foreign travel the proposal must be brought to the Board of Management no later than October of the academic year during which the trip will take place.
3. All school trips must be in accordance with Department of Education circular M20/04 relating to Educational Tours by School Groups inside and outside of the State.
4. Proper insurance cover must be in place.
5. A licensed tour operator must be used.
6. The group leader will ensure that contact information is on file in the office and available for use in the event of an emergency. The list will include:
 - i. Names, addresses, phone numbers, emails of all students on the trip

- ii. Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
- iii. A contact number, day or night, for the group leader

6. Risk Assessment

The group leader will undertake a risk assessment prior to any school visit/trip which involves a careful examination of what could cause harm to anyone, together with an identification of the control measures necessary in order to reduce the risks to a level which, in the professional judgement of the person carrying out the assessment, is deemed to be acceptable. This process is applicable to **all** visits.

The risk assessment will consider any significant hazards (hazards that could result in serious harm or affect several people) or risks relating to a visit. It will take into account the venue, activities, group, transport, 'plan B' etc.

Risks are also monitored throughout the visit and where appropriate, activities are modified or curtailed to suit changed or changing circumstances.

7. Data Protection

The College will keep financial information regarding the students' participation in a trip, a record of monies paid by parents for the trip, insurance information and/or details of any fundraising for the trip. The College also receives detailed information for the student travelling on the trip including medical data and may include copies of passport and health insurance e.g. copy of the E111/EHIC card.

The Data Protection Policy of the tour operator selected by the College will be made available to all parents/students.

Parents and students will be informed in writing in advance of the trip that their personal data will be transferred to the tour operator for the purpose of making travel arrangements etc. A copy of the personal information held by the tour operator will be provided on request.

The information contained in these forms will only be used for the stated purpose, in accordance with the College Data Protection Policy and will not be used for further purposes or disclosed to third parties.

8. Insurance

Public and Employer's Liability

St. Nathy's College liability policies cover the legal liability of the school in relation to Educational Tours/Activities organised by Schools/Centres subject to the normal terms, conditions and exceptions of the policies.

Where educational trips/activities involve activity of a specialist or high risk nature e.g. adventure sports, skiing, horse-riding, ice skating etc., the College will ensure that the centre providing the activity is a reputable provider and that evidence of their Public Liability Insurance including an indemnity to St. Nathy's College is obtained.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance will be organised for educational tours/activities, which involve travel outside the island of Ireland. School tour travel operators normally provide travel insurance as part of the tour package. However, when travel and accommodation are organised directly by the school/centre (e.g. language exchanges), travel insurance must be organised with the Travel Agency or an Insurance Broker. Please note the exclusions in the Travel Insurance Policy.

Personal Accident Insurance

All students participating in a school trip and or activity will have Personal Accident Insurance.

9. Finance

All income and expenditure related to the trip should be in accordance with the accounting practices of St. Nathy's College, the Department of Education and FSSU procedures.

A full account of income and expenditure should, at a reasonable notice, be available to the Principal and to the Board of Management.

If a trip is linked to a particular curricular or subject area the charge to be imposed may be compulsory.

At least two teachers will be involved in the financial administration of a school trip.

Separate financial records will be maintained for each school trip.

A detailed record of all participating students and the amounts paid will be retained.

Written permission will be received from the parents of all tour participants and a receipt for all money paid will be issued.

All money collected for a school trip will be lodged as soon as possible in the main school bank account.

All financial transactions relating to the trip should be recorded in the school's accounts using the tour codes on the accounting system. Invoices and receipts should be retained to support all payments.

Any deficit or borrowing to support a school trip must be avoided. All tours should be self-financing and exposing the school to any liability associated with the trip must be avoided.

It is obligatory to use the services of a licensed tour operator or travel agent when bringing any group of students or adults outside the State.

It is imperative that the tour operator or travel agent chosen to arrange the overseas trip holds a current license. The full list of all current license holders is available on www.aviationreg.ie and should be checked in advance of the trip being advertised. Payments from students should be made directly to the travel agent or tour operator and not collected through the school.

The group leader is required to work closely with the tour operator in establishing procedures to ensure the school retains full control of the trip.

The group leader should be mindful of the social and economic status of families when charging for the trip. 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.

When planning a trip, group leaders will ensure that all charges are paid well in advance of departure. The group leader should also request that a statement of account from the tour operator be sent to the Principal.

Monies paid in advance may be forfeited if a student withdraws from the tour, except where such funds are recoupable through the insurance policy.

Accounts and records for the trip should be reconciled at regular intervals and a report given to the Principal. A financial report on the trip will be presented to the Board of Management at least twice during the school year and a final report when all transactions relating to the tour have been completed.

The financial report on the tour will be incorporated into the annual school accounts.

10. Communication with Parents

Trips should be planned, in consultation with parents, well in advance of trip dates and preferably before the start of the school year.

The full cost of the trip should be communicated to parents at the planning stage. Every effort should be made to ensure that the cost involved does not prevent any student and/or group of students from participating in the trip.

Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or trip unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum, where parents are already aware of such activity through the school communication system.

Before undertaking residential visits or when students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities, parents will be invited to attend a briefing meeting where details of the proposed trip will be provided.

Parents will be made aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the trip will be exercising the same care as a prudent parent.

The following information will be provided to parents:

- dates of the trip
- objectives of the trip
- times of departure and return
- the location where the students will be collected and returned
- modes of transport including the names of travel companies, etc
- the level of supervision, including times when remote supervision may take place
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site
- name of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults
- contact details for the group leader for the duration of the trip
- details of planned activities and how any risk will be managed
- standards of behaviour expected in line with the Code of Behaviour of the College.
- 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
- clothing, equipment and items of personal hygiene to be taken
- what students should refrain from taking on the tour or purchasing while on tour
- information regarding parental consent

Permission for the students to participate in the trip must be obtained in **writing** from parents. Parents will complete a consent form which will include the following information:

- ✓ parents address, phone number and email
- ✓ alternative contact, phone number and address
- ✓ name, address and telephone number of family doctor
- ✓ any allergies/phobias the student may have
- ✓ any medication the student is taking

- ✓ any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the immediate family during the preceding four weeks and any other recent illness suffered by the student
- ✓ any special medical or dietary requirements
- ✓ any other information the parent considers relevant

Medical consent will form part of the parental consent form for foreign and residential trips. Parents will be asked to agree to the student's receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic 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.

Parents are responsible for seeking medical advice in relation to vaccinations that may be needed when travelling abroad. When considering the student's participation on an international trip, parents will make themselves aware of any indigenous medical issues that may be present in the destination country.

The Board of Management may decide that students with certain medical conditions may not be brought on the trip. Such decisions shall be taken on the basis of medical evidence and in the interest of the health and safety of the student and others which will be discussed and explained to the student and parents.

In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader and/or the Principal has made contact in the first instance.

An evaluation of all trips will take place on return and a report will be submitted to the Principal and Board of Management within two weeks of the date of return.

11. Travel Documents

Parents will be notified of the relevant travel documents that will be needed for the trip. This will include passport and visa requirements.

The attainment of travel documents such as passports and/or visas will be the responsibility of the parents. The parents will also be responsible for ensuring that these documents meet the requirements.

In the case where the group includes a student whose national or immigration status or entitlement to an Irish passport is in doubt, it is advisable that parents make early enquires to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice and Law Reform and/or the Passport Office.

Students other than EU nationals will be made aware that they may require a separate passport and/or visa and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group.

If a student is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that Tusla 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.

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 recommended that this card should be carried by all those travelling.

12. Student Preparation and Responsibilities

The Code of Behaviour applies to all students for the duration of the school trip.

Cigarettes, alcohol or any other illegal substances are not permitted. This is in accordance with normal school policy. There will be no exceptions. These are deemed as serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour.

For the safety and security of the whole group, students' bags and rooms may be subject to random searches, if necessary.

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.

Students must never leave their group without permission and must observe all curfews. Any breach of behaviour by a student that, in the opinion of the group leader, jeopardises the safety of an individual or the group as a whole may result in the immediate sending home of that student.

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.

Students should be of full cognisance that any tour undertaken is to garner a learning experience and therefore the student must take responsibility for their learning whilst engaged with the tour.

Students should make themselves aware of any cultural, environmental or social sensitivities and/or hazards that may be encountered when on tour.

Students will take personal responsibility for their health and safety by making themselves aware of emergency exits, fire assembly points and firefighting equipment. Students will wear seat belts when provided.

13. Supervision

St. Nathy's College will ensure adequate supervision on all school trips and field studies.

The following ratios should apply as a general principle regarding the supervision of students on particular trips.

- Games: 1 teacher: 30 students
- Field Study (Ireland) 1 teacher: 30 students

- Adventure Activities 1 teacher:10 students
 (with trained personnel present)
- Residential Trips 1 teacher: 15 students
- School Tours (Ireland) 1 teacher: 30 students
- School Tours (Foreign) 1 teacher: 10 students
- Swimming Pool 1 teacher: 30 students *(with lifeguard present)*

Students will not be brought swimming or on adventure type activities without a qualified lifeguard or other suitably trained personnel on duty.

It is not recommended that personnel other than teachers are engaged to chaperone or supervise students. Nevertheless, on occasion this necessity may arise. In this regard personnel other than teachers such as Special Needs Assistants, PMEs, past staff members should only accompany students if a suitably qualified teacher is also accompanying the group and if the College has received a vetting outcome for the personnel. 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.

The group leader must ensure that all supervisors understand their roles and responsibilities at all times and that they are fully briefed as to the rules, regulations and requirements pertaining to the particular trip before departure.

Remote supervision may be required on occasion, for example, when students are on instructed adventure activities, shopping etc. Parents will be notified of this in advance. Students will 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.

All supervisors have a responsibility to act as positive role models for students in terms of their actions and behaviour and in particular in relation to smoking and consuming alcohol, etc.

Regular head counting of students should take place:

- at specific times and in busy areas e.g. bus depots, airports etc.
- count group members on/off planes, trains, buses, etc.
- arrange specific meeting points and times when on day trips (city landmarks, café, ski slopes, etc.)

The group leader will advise students what to do if they become separated from the group.

The group leader will ensure that a supervision rota is in place on residential trips and on foreign school trips. The group leader will:

- ✓ Draw up a rota for nightly corridor supervision

- ✓ Draw up a rota for calling students each morning
- ✓ Ensure teachers are on corridor duty until 1am/2am or as required

All supervisors will carry a list of all students and adults involved in the activity.

14. Photography/Social Media

It is expected that students' use of mobile phones will be responsible and in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Behaviour.

Posting/sharing photos online of any group member, student or teacher, without their express consent is forbidden. Any taking of photographs that is deemed to be irresponsible or bring the College into disrepute will be subject to the school's disciplinary procedures in line with the Code of Behaviour.

15. Emergency Procedures

The group leader must ensure that everyone involved is aware of any contingency plans for inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, aware of the first-aid facilities, and aware of any emergency telephone numbers.

The group leader will ensure the following health and safety standards are in place:

- all private coaches that are hired are fitted with seatbelts and that these seatbelts are worn by the students at all times.
- accommodation has safety procedures in place including emergency exits, fire assembly points and firefighting equipment.
- students are made aware of emergency exits where applicable.

The group leader will ensure that they have access to emergency details and relevant medical information for staff members and students.

The group leader will ensure that they have access to the emergency contact numbers such that as embassy numbers, travel agent emergency line, etc.

If an incident/accident happens, the teacher present will act accordingly in line with the following policies: Child Safeguarding Statement, Health & Safety Statement and the Critical Incident Policy.

If an incident/accident happens, an accurate incident/accident report form should be completed as possible and the Principal notified.

If a student becomes injured or ill while on a trip, necessary medical attention will be sought by the group leader on behalf of the student. It is the parents' responsibility to cover the costs of this treatment or to pursue reimbursement through insurance procedures. Where practicable, parents will be consulted before such treatment is sought.

If a student becomes injured or ill while on a trip, to the extent that they cannot safely continue to partake in the activities, and whereby they require individual care that supersedes the level the supervising leaders can give without infringing on the care needs of the group as a whole, parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child.

In the event of an emergency at home, parents should contact the Principal who will then contact the group leader who will liaise with the student.

In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly until directed by the group leader. Students will be advised not to use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter as this may be picked up by media which may result in a risk of family and friends becoming aware of the incident before being officially informed by the school.

Appropriate first aid equipment will be brought on all trips and a member of staff will be competent to use the contents.

16 Specialised Activities

The group leader will check and agree the provider's arrangements for supervision and recreation during the evenings and between adventure activities.

The group leaders will retain ultimate responsibility for students at all times, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. 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.

The Board of Management will satisfy itself that:

- 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
- The group leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventure/activities tour
- An appropriate risk assessment has been undertaken
- The supervision will be appropriate
- There is adequate first aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group
- The equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition
- Every student is suited to the activity and is properly briefed, prepared and equipped

Some adventure activities, such as those under the Gaisce Awards or a ski trip, may require students to work without direct supervision. Particular attention will be given to the information and training provided to students before supervision can be withdrawn. Specific parental consent must be sought in such situations.

Appropriately qualified personnel will provide the information and training. The group leader will satisfy themselves that the students have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability, judgment and skills to be left without direct supervision. The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four-stage process.

- accompanying the group
- shadowing the group
- checking regularly at agreed location
- checking occasionally at agreed locations

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 group leader should be satisfied that the condition and suitability of any equipment, particularly safety equipment, taken or used during these activities meet the required standard.

Field studies associated with a range of subjects including Geography, History, Agricultural Science, etc. may take students to urban or rural sites which may have very specific hazards that must be acknowledged in the planning. 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 rural environments at minimal risk. The following list, though not exhaustive, may need to be considered when planning and carrying out a field investigation:

- Parents should be made aware of field investigations to rivers or coastal areas in potentially high risk environments and the precautions that will be undertaken. Boundaries should be set and no student should be allowed beyond these set perimeters without the expressed permission of the group leader present and only when it is safe to do so.
- The group leader will ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags. Cliff tops/caves/river banks and other such natural landforms are potentially dangerous. The group leader will ensure that all staff and students keep to the designated path at all times.
- Field investigations may involve the necessity for students to work in rivers, caves, sea and/or other natural landforms. Students should be given a safety lesson in advance advising them of the potential hazards and their responsibilities. This may include awareness of such hazards as tides, currents, undercut banks, loose rock,

uneven walkways, overhangs etc. Timings and exit routes will be checked if undertaking an investigation in a coastal environment.

- Field investigations may also involve farm visits. The group leader will check that the farm is well managed, that it meets safety standards, animal welfare standards and that it maintains good hygiene standards. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with Ecoli 0157, food poisoning and other infections. Up to date information, in regards to agricultural hazards, should be researched prior to the farm visit. Students should be given a safety lesson in advance advising them of the potential hazards and their responsibilities.

17 Reference to others policies and documents

The school tours and educational trips policy operates within a legislative framework and adheres to the following documents and school policies:

- DE Circular M20/04
- DE Circular PPT 01/03
- Children First Act 2015
- General Data Protection Regulation Guidelines
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003
- Health and Safety at Work Acts 1989 and 2005
- Guidelines on Managing Safety and Health in Post-Primary Schools
- Commission for Aviation Regulation under the legislative framework of the Aviation Regulation Act 2001
- FSSU Financial Guideline 2017/2018 07 School Tours – Booking & Collection of Payments
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Bus Safety Practice
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Critical Incident Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Substance Use Policy
- Supervision Procedures
- Uniform Policy

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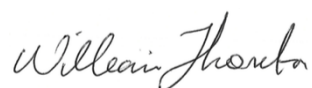
18 Report

The group leader will provide the Principal and the Board of Management with a report within two weeks of return outlining:

- ✓ the achievements/success of the trip
- ✓ a complete financial statement
- ✓ details of any incidents
- ✓ suggestion for ways to improve future school trips

19 Ratification of Policy

This policy was approved by the Board of Management of St. Nathy's College on
25 November 2021



Chairperson Board of Management

Review Date November 2023

Appendix 1 School Tour Application Form Template (Department of Education)

Details of School Tour

Name of School	Address	Roll Number
St. Nathy's College	Chapel Street Ballaghaderren Co. Roscommon	68067P
Tour Dates		
From	To	Number of school days
<i>Brief Outline of Tour</i>		
Number of participating students		Number of students in relevant grade
<i>If some students are not participating outline the reason why</i>		
<i>Expected benefit to accrue from the tour</i>		

Why is the tour deemed to be necessary?

Adults accompanying the students

Class Teacher	Number of other teachers	Other adults
Confirmations		
That appropriate arrangements are made in accordance with Circular PPT 01/03 for those classes whose teachers are absent with the tour	Yes	No
That adequate insurance is in place to cover all risks while on tour	Yes	No
That parental permission has been secured for each student who is to participate on the tour	Yes	No

Signature: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Incident Report Form



Name of Student:

Class:

Date:

Signed: _____

Date: _____