



Scoil Mhuire School.

Draft Policy Governing School Tours and Trips

Mission Statement.

“Scoil Mhuire is a Christian caring community which encourages the integrated development of every individual concerned.” Every member of the community – teachers, students, staff, parents – feel a sense of commitment and belonging. Our principal objective is to provide our students with a broad and balanced education in all its aspects – intellectual, emotional, physical, moral and cultural. This objective is achieved within a controlled but relaxed and happy environment.

Preamble.

School trips and out of class excursions help to broaden the educational experience of our students, to encourage social integration of groups in the school and build the confidence and self-esteem of students. School trips and out of school excursions are encouraged by Scoil Mhuire and a broad range of such trips and excursions are undertaken.

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with the Department of Education and Science circular letter M20/04.

Rationale.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- The health and safety of all students and teachers involved
- That school trips will be effective and appropriate learning experiences for the students

- That all participating teachers will understand the protocols and procedures to adopt when planning and engaging in trips and out of class excursions
- That the school will be well represented while students are on trips, in line with our stated ethos.

Scope.

This policy applies to all trips that are undertaken with the students in the school, day trips and overnight trips, within and beyond Ireland's borders. School trips are undertaken with class, year and activity groups within the school.

This policy also applies to groups on exchange visits by and to Scoil Mhuire students.

The policy applies to all staff of Scoil Mhuire equally.

Objective of trips.

Some trips are required to work on/ complete compulsory coursework requirements for State Examination. In these cases, students and parents/guardians are advised that if students are absent for coursework trips, it is their responsibility to undertake the field trips independently of the school/teacher. Related coursework will only be verified if completed under the supervision of the class teacher.

Some trips are organised to provide enhanced understanding of specific aspects of the curriculum such as History, Geography or Art trips, Modern Language exchanges, or visits to the theatre, to Science or Career exhibitions.

Other trips relate to extra-curricular activities such as Gaisce Adventure and Model UN.

Some trips, while having worthwhile educational content, are organised within year groups to provide opportunities for social interaction, to build cohesion within a group or to provide a reward for work done.

Roles and Responsibilities.

□ Board of Management

The Board of Management devolves to the Principal the authority to agree to a proposed trip or the investigation of the feasibility of a trip. In the case of proposed overseas trips, the Board of Management will consider these and decide as to whether a trip will be sanctioned. The Board of

Management retains the authority to cancel, postpone or amend the itinerary of a trip in certain circumstances, without refund of monies paid, where these are not recoupable from the tour provider.

□ **The Principal**

The Principal informs the Board of trips and liaises with the Organising Teachers(s) in the initial stages.

The Principal reserves the right to stop a student from participating in a trip, if health and safety concerns for the students or other students arise. This may mean loss of monies paid or additional costs to Parents / Guardians if a student must be repatriated. The Principal reserves the final decision regarding the adults who will travel. The Principal is also responsible for ensuring the adequate supervision of students while on a trip and that those not travelling are adequately catered for in school, in terms of supervision and teaching time.

□ **Parents/Guardians**

The co-operation of Parents/ Guardians is considered fundamental to the success of a trip. Parents / Guardians are responsible for informing the Organising Teacher and Deputy of any factors which may impinge on the student's enjoyment of the trip or that of others e.g. health issues, dietary needs anxieties etc. The responsibility is on the Parent / Guardian to inform herself / himself of the School Code of Behaviour for Students. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Parent / Guardian to ensure that the student presents herself on commencement of the tour without any of the items prohibited under the School Code of Behaviour for Students or law.

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.

Students on tours within European Union shall be required to have a completed E111 form and a valid passport. It is the responsibility of the Parent / Guardian to see to these matters and to ensure that the student is insured to the satisfaction of the Parent / Guardian.

Parents / Guardians are advised that a student may be precluded from attendance on a school trip if attendance during normal class time is poor. The Year Head and Deputy Principal will advise the Organising Teacher and Principal on this matter. Parents / Guardians are responsible for enabling students to achieve full attendance.

□ **Students**

Students are responsible for adhering to the School Code of Behaviour for Students. They are responsible for carrying out the instructions of teachers and other personnel while on tour.

Students are responsible for respecting the environment, law, traditions, local customs and unfamiliar family norms (in case of students staying with host families) which pertain to the location in which they are staying.

Students are responsible for being true to the school ethos and ensuring that all members of the travelling party are included and involved.

Students are responsible for acknowledging the role they play in the maintenance and promotion of the school's good name and reputation, while on a school trip.

Students also bear responsibility not to engage in behaviour which is unsafe for self and for others. Each student is responsible for her own property, luggage, money, etc. All personal belongings should be clearly marked. The school cannot accept responsibility for a student's property.

In the case of overseas trips, the student and a Parent/ Guardian will be required to sign the code of conduct pertaining to that trip.

□ **Staff**

The organisation of a trip is a voluntary activity and relies on the good will of the Organising Teacher(s) and his / her accompanying colleagues. The Organising Teacher names a Deputy.

Once a tour has been sanctioned by the Board of Management, the Year Head and other relevant personnel in the case of overnight trips will be informed of the trip, expressions of interest to become members of the school tour team will be sought from all teaching staff. Tour team members will be determined by the Principal in consultation with the Organising Teacher and Deputy. Decisions about which members of staff join a trip may depend on such factors as the size of the group, the willingness of interested teachers to assist in organising and supervising the trip, rotation of interested teachers as well as requirements specific to the trip. If enough team members are not available within the school, other adults, subject to Garda Vetting, wishing to travel may come from the wider community.

The Organising Teacher and Deputy take responsibility for the organisation of the trip and have the final say in decisions while on the trip. The Organising Teacher and Deputy will ensure that all accompanying teachers are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the trip.

The Organising Teacher acts for the school's Designated Liaison Person (DLP), for child protection purposes while on tour and reports directly to the DLP during the trip and on return.

Other accompanying teachers are to assist the Organising Teacher and Deputy and share the tasks associated with the running of the trip.

In the case of trips arranged for the completion of required task work for state examination purposes, staff members do not have a responsibility to arrange alternative dates for students who do not attend.

The Organising Teacher and Deputy have the responsibility to ensure that activities are not arranged which are prohibited by the relevant insurer. Queries will be clarified before the trip occurs.

The Organising Teacher and Deputy have a responsibility to ensure that the dates of a proposed trip do not clash with other events of importance in the school calendar. Trips will be planned with adequate lead in time, to enable students/ families to save.

The Organising Teacher, Deputy and other staff are responsible for maintaining appropriate contact with the Principal during the trip and of reporting matters of significance in a timely way.

Mindful of the DES guidelines regarding Child Protection teachers will act in a responsible manner (including concerning the consumption of alcohol), having regard to the fact that they are in the company of and responsible for the care of students. Teachers will maintain the same standards of care as apply in a school situation.

Communication with Parents / Guardians.

The Organising Teacher and Deputy will give Parents / Guardians written information at the onset of preparation and / or when the final details are arranged. The correspondence will outline the objective of the trip, costs, details of the trip and the location, travel arrangements, suggestions for clothing and other luggage, suggested spending money, dress code, accommodation arrangements, general advice and so on. In addition, the Organising Teacher and Deputy will provide relevant materials which may come from a tour provider.

While on the trip, teachers will carry a school mobile phone. Students and Parents / Guardians will be made aware of the contact number. The Organising Teacher and Deputy may request the contact details of students and Parents / Guardians in advance, in accordance with GDPR guidelines.

In certain circumstances, students may be permitted to use their own mobile phone, in accordance with School rules. This will be communicated to students, Parents /Guardians in advance.

In every case, Parents / Guardians will be required to give written permission for their daughter to attend the trip. The written permission implies acceptance of this Policy and agreement to adhere to the School Code of Behaviour for Students and other pertinent policy.

Parents / Guardians will be required to inform the Organising Teacher and Deputy of any circumstances which may affect their daughter's ability to fully participate in all aspects of the trip and her enjoyment of same. This includes information about health and medications and other relevant information.

Costs.

It is desirable that all students of Scoil Mhuire can participate in school trips, if they wish to do so. To this end, costs will be indicated to Parents / Guardians at the earliest possible opportunity, to allow for planning. Students will be encouraged to contribute financially where they can.

Clear instructions for the payment of monies due will be issued by the Organising Teacher and Deputy.

Parents / Guardians are responsible for timely payments. If payments are not made on time, no guarantees can be given about the continued participation of the student in the school trip.

Students may be invited to bring spending money on trips. Parents / Guardians are asked to allow a reasonable, not excessive amount of spending money.

In the event that a student is required to return home from an overseas trip early, for example, if she is dissatisfied with arrangements in a host family, is unwell, in serious breach of the School Code, or in need of early return due to a family emergency, the family is advised that it is responsible for costs incurred for the student and for an accompanying adult, should it be agreed that an accompanying adult is required.

Cancellation of school trips.

The Board of Management reserves the right to cancel a school trip or to prohibit the participation or continued participation of a student or teacher in a school trip. This may be on health and safety grounds or due to other considerations.

If a trip, organised by the school or by a licenced agent, is cancelled by the Board, it may not be possible to refund monies paid. While every effort will be made to return monies paid in good faith, this policy gives no guarantee that costs can or will be partially or entirely refunded in the event of the cancellation of a trip.

If a student is prohibited from participation or continuing to participate in a school trip on health and safety or other grounds, Parents / Guardians are advised that monies paid will be forfeit.

Overseas trips are organised by teachers in collaboration with licenced / bonded tour operators, according to aviation guidelines (Aviation Regulation Act 2001). Payments for overseas trips are made directly to the tour operator, not to the school. Any query over costs remains between the Parent / Guardian and the tour operator.

Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs and Specific Additional Needs.

The school recognises that students with special educational needs can greatly benefit from school trips. The enjoyment, health and safety of the student are of paramount importance.

Where students with special educational needs are involved in a group who are going on a school trip, it may be necessary for Parents / Guardians, Management and the Organising Teacher to discuss arrangements in advance, to ensure the enjoyment, health and safety of the students and the whole group, mindful of the specific strengths and vulnerabilities of the students.

Students who have access or shared access to a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) during the school day will be facilitated with SNA care as far as is practicable. Where possible, the designated SNA or a member of the school SNA Team will accompany the student for the full duration of a day trip.

The school is not obliged to provide SNA care on overnight trips. Where a student with access or shared access to SNA care wishes to participate in an overnight trip, the school is willing to consider alternative solutions proposed by Parents / Guardians e.g. the participation of the Parents of the student with special needs in the trip or the agreement of additional costs to enable the provision of SNA care. These proposals should be made to the Organising Teacher, Deputy and Principal, in conjunction with the student's care team in school.

Parents of students with specific additional needs must discuss their child's participation in advance with Management.

School Policy.

All school policy governs day and overnight trips. Parents / Guardians are reminded of the contents of the School Code of Behaviour for Students and the Illness and Administration of Medications Procedure.

The Principal or Deputy Principal meets with a group before overnight trips to outline the School Code.

Specifically, students travelling on overnight trips are reminded that smoking, drinking alcohol, using drugs or other banned substances, engaging in sexual activity, and behaviours which endanger their safety, or the safety of others are prohibited. Any transgressions of this nature will be sanctioned appropriately by the school on return.

Certain items can be freely and legally bought abroad, the possession and importation of which is an offence in Ireland. These include fireworks, knives, lasers etc.

Students are not permitted to engage in activities not permitted on home soil. Any transgressions of this nature will be sanctioned appropriately by the school on return.

The Organising Teacher and Deputy are responsible for investigating and recording breaches of the School Code. Breaches of the School Code will be referred to the Principal / Deputy Principal in a timely way. The Organising Teacher will remain in contact with the Principal during the trip and will inform the Principal of serious breaches of the School Code. If it becomes necessary to question a student about a potentially serious matter, another adult must be present.

Serious breaches of the School Code may merit immediate sanction in the tour location (e.g. exclusion from activities) up to and including the student being sent home. In this case, the Parent / Guardian is

responsible for all costs arising. Decisions around sanctions for serious breaches of the School Code will be made by the Organising Teacher and Deputy, in conjunction with the Principal.

All teachers have the authority to sanction minor breaches of the School Code while on a trip or to refer the matter through the correct channels on return to school.

In relation to Data Protection and the use of images or recordings made of students, the school may need to retain photographic, audio or video records of elements of the trip for a few purposes (verification, coursework, publicity.) The school will have sought the permission of Parents and Guardians for the use of such images for publicity purposes on enrolment.

Supervision of Trips.

The principal retains responsibility for ensuring that adequate and appropriate supervision of students on trips is achieved. The level of teacher supervision on trips will depend on the nature of the activity involved and the age of the students. Enough staffing to ensure the safety and welfare of the students and teachers will be agreed between the Principal and Organising Teacher when the trip is being planned.

At least one supervising teacher will always be on each bus travelling. Enough supervision will be provided so that a teacher is available to accompany a student to emergency services, without inadequate supervision of the remaining students, should an emergency arise.

On returning to school a teacher will remain on supervision until all students have been collected.

It is desirable that, in the case of trips abroad, at least one supervising teacher would be conversant in the language of the target country.

It is desirable that in the case of extended day or overnight trips, at least one supervising teacher would have first aid competence. Where it is not possible, teachers will be made aware of protocols. A first aid kit will be provided where appropriate.

Regular head counting and roll taking of students will take place, particularly when leaving a venue. Teachers will carry a list of all students and adults involved on the trip.

The Organising Teacher and Deputy will establish rendezvous points and advise students what to do if they become separated from the group. Remote supervision may take place on occasion, e.g. if students are on shopping trips, certain adventure activities, during parts of school exchanges. Parents will be notified of this in advance. Students are advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 students. Adequate arrangements will be made re checking in with supervising teachers at certain times. Students are reminded of the importance of careful time keeping.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that students are always behaving safely, including at night (on overnight trips) and in all locations (including in bedrooms, changing rooms etc.) Should checks on bedrooms and changing rooms or similar be necessary, teachers will work in pairs. Students are

bound by the house rules of the accommodation providers, including those of host families, B and Bs, hotels, etc.

In certain circumstances, some elements of the School Code may be waived by the Principal or Deputy Principal during the trip, if appropriate. This will be communicated to Parents / Guardians in advance e.g. Uniform, use of mobile phone or recording equipment etc.

While the school retains the right to modify plans to itineraries as circumstances demand, Parents / Guardians accept that changes requested by students when on a trip cannot be considered (e.g. change of venue, visit to relative living close to a venue, attendance at a religious service etc.) Parents / Guardians are asked to consider this in advance of a trip.

Guidelines for use of Private Bus and other Transport Services

Many school trips involve use of or hire of bus or other transport services. In all these cases:

- Students must abide by instructions issues by drivers, airport / ferry / terminal staff etc.,
- Students must have all documentation required with them; the Organising Teacher and Deputy may handle this documentation for the student.
- Parents / Guardians are advised that it may not be possible to cater for students whose documentation (Passport / Visa etc.) gives rise to circumstances at points of entry. This may preclude the student's participation in a trip.
- Each passenger will have her / his own individual seat.
- All coaches used by the school must have an up to date PSV licence and Cert and adequate insurance.
- Emergency procedures will be indicated to students.
- Central aisles and access to exits must always be kept clear.
- Students are advised to remain seated facing forward and to refrain from unnecessary movement during the journey.
- Where seat belts or other safety features (e.g. life jackets, harnesses, helmets) are advised, they must be used.
- Students are responsible for their property while travelling and leave items on the vehicle at their own risk.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that they leave the vehicle tidy as they leave it.
- Students are advised to rest and eat healthily on travel days, particularly if they are prone to travel sickness.

Critical Incident.

Should a critical incident, as defined by the School's Critical Incident Policy, occur, the Organising Teacher and Deputy will follow protocols agreed in that policy.

While, the Critical Incident Team will remain the primary agent for decision making in relation to the incident, it may be necessary for the Organising Teacher and Deputy to make decisions for the security, welfare, safety and health of students. They do this in good faith.

The Critical Incident Team will coordinate with the Organising Teacher, and where necessary, delegate authority to the Organising Teacher for communicating with the relevant Parents / Guardians, medical services, consular and embassy personnel, police or other security services, school insurers, travel agent or tour operator.

Evaluation and review of this policy

This policy will be developed, monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis by the staff and ratified by the Board of Management.

The experience of students and their Parents / Guardians and staff on return from a trip can inform policy. Views and observations are invited on return.

School management will accept feedback from staff, students and parents / guardians made through the proper use of the appropriate channels i.e. staff meetings, student committees and parent council meetings. This feedback will inform periodic evaluation of the policy by Management.

This policy was drawn up in January 2019 and will be reviewed as necessary.

Signed:

Date: