



# Ardscoil Rath Iomgháin

## School Tour Policy

### 1. Rationale

To reflect a world which is developing and changing, current educational philosophy recommends that students have access to new learning experiences wherever possible. School tours/trips allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a well-balanced educational process. These 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. It is the wish of the school that all involved should have an enjoyable experience on the school tour.

### 2. Introduction

Ardscoil Rath Iomgháin concurs with the Department of Education Guidelines which states:

'the objective of educational tours for schools should be that they be of benefit in the intellectual, cultural and social development of pupils taking part in them and any activity, in connection with the tour, which is in conflict with this objective should be avoided.'

All school tours/trips will take place in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter M 20/04. School personnel are required to adhere to the Child Safety Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 and all registered teaching staff to adhere to the Children First Act 2015.

All school rules and policies apply while on school trips. In particular, parent(s)/guardian(s) and students should be aware that permission to travel on a school related activity is conditional on strict adherence to the Code of Behaviour. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be acquainted in advance with the rules, regulations and special requirements of that trip.

School trips, outings and all school tours are a privilege reserved for students who meet certain standards of behaviour while at school. Students who do not meet these standards of behaviour, as decided by the school management, may be refused permission to participate in a school outing. The management reserves the right to refuse/withdraw a student from participation in a school trip. All deposits/final payments are accepted on a provisional basis.

Final confirmation in relation to a student's eligibility will be given to the student when the student's behaviour and attendance records have been checked and deemed satisfactory. All outstanding school monies must be paid in full before a deposit for a trip is accepted. This eligibility can be determined right up to the day of travel. Students who withdraw, or are withdrawn, from a trip after money is paid may not be entitled to a refund. In exceptional circumstances the school will liaise with the tour company.

Every effort will be made to accommodate the maximum number of students who wish to travel. In the event the tour/trip is over-subscribed, selection of students will be based on a lottery system and a waiting list will be put into operation.

It is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad e.g. passport, identity card are up to date and in order.

The school will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result. Failure to comply with deadlines etc. may result in the student losing his/her place on the trip and losing her/his deposit/monies paid.

### **3. Criteria for participation in school tours:**

- a) The student must have demonstrated an adherence to the school's Code of Behaviour.
- b) The student must have demonstrated an attitude of co-operation in all areas of school life.
- c) The student must have a high level of school attendance.
- d) Parental consent must be received prior to departure.
- e) Payment of tour fee must be made on or before the set date prior to departure.
- f) Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be requested to inform, in writing, the trip leader of any special medical needs or medication required by their daughter/son while on the tour/trip. This note should also outline the nature of the medication; the dosage involved and when the medication needs to be taken.
- g) Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to sign a consent form which will allow medical advice to be followed in the event of injury/illness and where it is not possible to contact them in the time available.
- h) Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to give full details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a twenty-four-hour basis for the duration of the tour.
- i) Students must have their European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for travel to countries in the EU.
- j) For tours/trips that extend beyond the normal hours of the school, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that arrangements are in place for their son/daughter's journey to and from school.

### Exceptional Circumstances

Should a tour group or individual get stranded overseas and the circumstances fall outside the insurance cover in place or an airlines obligation, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to fund the cost of the journey home.

The school reserves the right to cancel any trips if it is deemed that the health and safety of students and/or staff are at risk. This decision will be taken on advice from all relevant bodies. The cancellation of trips for this reason may result in the loss of all monies paid by parent(s)/guardian(s) for said trip.

In cases of an accident, staff will normally apply first aid only. Expert medical attention will be sought should this be deemed necessary and best practice will be followed. Where a serious accident occurs, staff will seek medical assistance as a first priority, and contact the school to inform the office of events. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted as soon as possible by the tour leader as well as the school. The Board of Management has full confidence in the staff and their decisions. It is the parent(s)/guardian(s) responsibility to cover the costs of any treatment and to pursue reimbursement through insurance procedures.

## **4. Rules and regulations for school tours and trips**

- a) Students must obey members of staff at all times.
- b) Students must be courteous, friendly, respectful and cooperative.
- c) Students must stay with the tour group. A student may not go off by themselves or wander off alone unless they have permission.
- d) Students are expected to respect property while on the tour/trip. This includes all forms of transport (buses, airplanes, subway etc), the hotel/hostel and all other facilities. Students will be expected to pay for any damage caused.
- e) Students must stay in assigned groups at all times and are expected to be punctual.
- f) Students are forbidden from purchasing, possessing, supplying or consuming alcohol, tobacco, vaping equipment or any drugs.
- g) Students are forbidden from purchasing, or possessing any dangerous items such as knives, pellet guns etc. Pornographic material is also forbidden.
- h) The school requires the parent(s)/guardian(s) to guarantee that their daughter/son is not in possession of alcohol, tobacco, vaping equipment, dangerous items or any other illegal substances prior to going on the tour/trip. Students will not be permitted to go on the trip if under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- i) Students are not permitted to have tattoos or piercing applied whilst on tours/trips.

- j) Students participating in a school tour/trip must use the transport organised by the school and must return home on the aforementioned transport.
- k) Unless otherwise informed, it is policy on all day trips that full uniform is worn. Failure to do so may result in the removal of the student from the trip.
- l) Mobile phones are strictly forbidden on all trips unless otherwise stated.
- m) Recording, videoing or photographing staff or students without permission is an invasion of privacy and is strictly forbidden. In addition, downloading, viewing and distributing inappropriate or offensive material is strictly prohibited and if done will result in serious sanctions.
- n) In the case of overnight trips:
  - ❖ Students must not give the name of their hotel, room number or mobile phone number to anyone unknown to them.
  - ❖ Students must not enter another hotel guests' room or allow anyone to enter theirs.
  - ❖ Once the group has retired for the night, no student has the permission to be in another students' room, on the corridors or in any other area of the premises.
  - ❖ In addition to the Code of Behaviour and school trips/tours policies, students must also adhere to the law of the country which they visit.

If a student misbehaves in a serious manner or jeopardises the safety and wellbeing of themselves or others, it may be necessary to send said student home. In such a situation a teacher may accompany the student. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be liable for the substantial costs involved and must be available to collect her/his daughter/son from a designated area.

If for any other reason a student needs to return home early the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be liable for the substantial costs involved.

Sanctions may also be implemented on return to school for such offences.

The school reserves the right to examine all luggage carried by students on school tour/trips prior to departure and during the course of the trip/tour.

## **5. General procedures for day trips**

Day trips are organised on a voluntary basis, in accordance with DES guidelines, and are determined by the availability of teaching staff. The following general procedures apply to day tours/trips:

- a) Day tours/trips may take place during the school day or outside of school hours.
- b) A letter informing parents/guardians of itinerary and cost will be sent home. This will also include a permission slip to be signed by parent/guardian granting the student permission to attend.
- c) The school will constantly review the list of students wishing to attend the trip, and a decision will be made regarding each student's ability to attend the tour right up to the day of departure. All monies will be collected and deposited.
- d) A list of students attending the tour/trip will be given to the office.
- e) Staff will not travel alone with a student, except in an emergency.

**Note**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) should be aware that permission slips will not be required for their daughter/son to participate in sporting events that represent the school.

## **6. General procedures for overnight School Tours**

Overnight tours are organised on a voluntary basis, in accordance with DES guidelines, and are determined by the availability of teaching staff. The following general procedures apply to overnight tours:

- a) Students and parents/guardians will be informed of the tour.
- b) The school will obtain a quotation from the tour company and estimate the cost per student to cover expenses.
- c) A letter will be sent to parents/guardians of students interested in the proposed tour.
- d) The school will review the list of students wishing to travel, and a decision will be made regarding each student's ability to attend.
- e) Itinerary will be planned with the Tour company.
- f) Additional information will be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students before travel, giving details of the tour. This communication will cover the following:
  - ❖ An itinerary
  - ❖ Accommodation
  - ❖ Personal items that a student may need to bring
  - ❖ A consent form to be signed by students and parents/guardians giving permission for school staff to act in loco parentis
  - ❖ A medical form outlining any medical condition/medication that staff need to be aware of.
  - ❖ A contact details form with details of parent(s)/guardian(s) contact number(s).

- g) Consent forms, signed by parent(s)/guardian(s), will be collected giving permission for the student to attend the tour and also agreeing to the rules and regulations set out in the schools Code of Behaviour Policy and the Tour/Trip policy, as well as deposit. Students must also sign this form.
- h) Passports will be photocopied and forwarded to the Tour company.
- i) Contact numbers of all parent(s)/guardian(s) will be gathered, as will medical forms detailing any medical issues regarding students.
- j) Students will be met before the tour to discuss the tour, health and safety. This will also give students the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the tour.
- k) A list of students attending, as well as a list of parent(s)/guardian(s) contact details will be given to the office.
- l) Students will be assigned rooms.
- m) Ardscoil Rath Iomgháin will use a licensed and bonded tour operator or travel agent to arrange foreign travel packages which include accommodation and other services.

## **7. General procedures for staff on trips**

- a) The trip leader will have access at all times to the contact details of parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and school authorities.
- b) Staff will carry out regular head counts of students and organise a meeting point for students if they are separated from the group.
- c) If an accident/incident occurs, an accident/incident report form should be filled out by the trip leader as soon as possible and submitted to management upon return.

Staff will provide a permission slip with all the relevant details that students and parents/guardians must sign.

d) In cases of an accident, staff will normally apply first aid only. Expert medical attention will be sought should this be deemed necessary and best practice will be followed. Where a serious accident occurs, staff will seek medical assistance as a first priority, and contact the school to inform Management of events. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted as soon as possible by the tour leader as well as the school. The Board of Management has full confidence in the staff and their decisions. It is the parent(s)/guardian(s) responsibility to cover the costs of any treatment and to pursue reimbursement through insurance procedures.

## **8. Supervision of tours and trips**

The number of staff which accompanies a group will be influenced by several factors after consultation with Management.

Certain tours/trips may facilitate shopping or recreation which may not be directly supervised. This situation will usually be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to parents/guardians. The school expects that all students travelling on a tour/trip will display a certain level of maturity commensurate with their age.

Students on tours which involve an overnight stay in Ireland or abroad will not be supervised on a twenty-four-hour basis and all extended school tours/trips will involve periods of time without direct supervision. Parent(s)/guardian(s) who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should not permit their daughter/son to take part in such trips/tours.

## **9. Students with special educational needs**

Students with Additional Education Needs are included on school tours and are offered the opportunity to take part. Adequate arrangements for supervision of all students are arranged as appropriate depending on the nature and duration of the tour. Applications from students with more complex care needs will be reviewed on a case to case basis and advice sought from professionals if needed. Additional costs will be borne by the parents/guardians. If it is felt that the care needs of a student cannot be adequately catered for on a school tour/trip the application to be included will have to be refused.

## **10. Policy evaluation and review**

This policy was evaluated by representatives of the staff, Parents Association, Students Council and adopted by the Board of Management on 20/05/2020. The policy will be reviewed regularly, and all the stakeholders will be consulted in relation to any changes to the policy.