



Scoil Mhuire agus Íde

**Bóthar Buí,
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School Tours & Trips Policy

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy governs all school tours, trips, and educational visits, whether day trips, overnight stays, domestic or international travel. It ensures safe, inclusive, and educationally valuable experiences whilst meeting all legal and regulatory requirements.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy complies with:

- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (updated 2023)
- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Department of Education Circular 0023/2023

3. RATIONALE AND EDUCATIONAL VALUE

School tours enhance learning by providing experiential education, developing social skills, fostering independence, and broadening students' cultural and environmental awareness. Tours complement classroom learning and support holistic student development.

4. PLANNING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Proposal Requirements:

- For overnight trips, teacher submits written proposal minimum 8 weeks before departure including: destination, educational objectives, date, cost/budget, supervision plan, and preliminary risk assessment
- Principal approves all day trips

- Board of Management approves overnight and international trips minimum 4 weeks in advance

Parent Notification:

- Detailed information provided minimum 1 week before day trips, 6 weeks before overnight trips
- Information includes: itinerary, costs, departure/return times, supervision arrangements, clothing/equipment requirements, emergency contacts

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

Mandatory Requirements:

- Comprehensive written risk assessment completed minimum 2 weeks before all tours using school template (See Appendix 1)
- Risk assessment identifies hazards, control measures, emergency procedures, and medical considerations
- Principal approves all risk assessments; Board reviews overnight/international trip assessments

Key Risk Areas Addressed:

Transportation safety, venue hazards, supervision adequacy, medical emergencies, behaviour management, weather conditions, lost child procedures

6. SUPERVISION AND CHILD SAFEGUARDING

Vetting Requirements:

- All adults supervising tours must hold current Garda vetting through Túsla
- Volunteer drivers/supervisors vetted minimum 4 weeks before departure
- No private accommodation permitted; only registered, vetted providers used

Supervision Ratios:

- 1 adult per 12 students for international trips
- Students with additional needs: enhanced ratios determined following individual assessment
- Minimum 2 adults on all trips regardless of group size
- On overnight trips, it may not be possible to provide 24/7 supervision - students are expected to follow instruction at all times.

Safeguarding Protocols:

- Clear communication channels established
- Students never left alone with single adult in unsupervised setting, except in the case of a medical emergency
- Regular headcounts at transitions
- Buddy system implemented
- Room allocation is determined by lead teacher and ensures appropriate groupings for overnight stays

7. INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Equity Commitment:

The school promotes maximum participation. Financial assistance available through designated school fund via confidential application. Reasonable accommodations provided for students with disabilities or additional needs following consultation with parents and relevant professionals. Alternative arrangements may be offered where participation is not feasible.

8. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Cost Management:

- Costs kept reasonable and proportionate to educational value
- Detailed cost breakdown provided to parents
- Payment plans available for tours exceeding €100
- Fundraising initiatives may offset costs
- No child excluded solely due to financial constraints

Refund Policy:

- Refunds are governed by tour provider terms and conditions
- Partial refund if student unable to participate due to illness (subject to tour provider terms)
- No refund for voluntary withdrawal within 2 weeks of departure unless exceptional circumstances

9. BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

Expectations:

Students must adhere to the School's Code of Behaviour during all tours. Parents and students sign acknowledgment of expectations before departure. Serious breaches may result in early collection at parent expense, exclusion from future tours, or disciplinary sanctions per school policy.

Pre-Tour Briefing:

Students receive a clear briefing on expected behaviour, safety rules, itinerary, and emergency procedures.

10. CONSENT AND DATA PROTECTION

Required Consents:

Separate, specific written consent obtained for:

- Tour participation
- Emergency medical treatment
- Photography/video recordings
- Data sharing with venue providers/transport operators
- Consent for bag search by staff members if determined necessary by lead teacher

Consent forms clearly state purposes, storage duration, and withdrawal rights, compliant with the school's Data Protection Policy and GDPR requirements.

11. MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Medical Protocols:

- Parents provide written details of medical conditions, medications, allergies, and emergency contacts. Parents must disclose all medical needs/medications required prior to travel.
- Please note, teachers are not medical professionals. They will act to the best of their ability in any given scenario.
- Comprehensive first aid kit carried on all trips
- Emergency services contact protocols established before departure

Emergency Response:

- Emergency contact maintained throughout trip
- Critical incident procedures activated if required
- Principal notified immediately of serious incidents

- Parents contacted promptly regarding incidents involving their child
- Written incident reports completed promptly

12. INSURANCE

Parents informed of coverage scope and advised to consider additional personal travel insurance for international trips.

13. TRANSPORTATION

Standards:

- Licensed, insured operators used for hired transport
- Private vehicles used only with appropriate business insurance and vetting
- Seatbelts mandatory; verified before departure
- Driver breaks comply with legal requirements on extended journeys

14. EVALUATION

Trip organiser completes evaluation report within 2 weeks covering educational outcomes, logistics, safety issues, and recommendations. Serious incidents reviewed by the Board of Management. Parent and student feedback sought for overnight/international trips.

15. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principal: Overall responsibility for policy implementation, trip approval, risk assessment review

Trip Organiser: Planning, risk assessment, parent communication, supervision coordination

Board of Management: Policy approval, overnight/international trip approval, incident review

Parents: Provide accurate information, ensure appropriate consent, support student preparation

Policy Effective Date: 23/2/26

Signed: 

Date: 23/2/26

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: 

Date: 23/2/26

(Principal)

Appendix 1.

RISK ASSESSMENT: INTERNATIONAL OVERNIGHT SCHOOL TOUR

School: _____

Destination: _____

Dates: _____

Year Group: _____

Total Students: _____ Staff: _____

Trip Leader: _____

1. IDENTIFIED HAZARDS & RISK RATINGS

| Hazard | Risk Level | Control Measures | Residual Risk |

Travel accidents (coach/plane/ferry) Risk - Medium

- Use reputable, insured transport providers
- Check vehicle safety standards
- Brief students on seatbelt use
- Emergency contact list with staff

Residual Risk - Low

Students getting lost/separated Risk - High

- Buddy system mandatory
- Staff:student ratio 1:12 minimum
- Mobile phones for all staff
- Meeting points pre-arranged
- Hi-vis items or group identifiers
- Roll call every 2 hours

Residual Risk - Low

Medical emergencies/accidents Risk - Medium

- First aid trained staff (minimum 2)
- Comprehensive first aid kit
- EHIC/Travel insurance for all
- Medical consent forms completed
- List of student medications/conditions
- Local hospital details researched

Residual Risk - Low

Allergic reactions Risk - Medium

- Individual Healthcare Plans for at-risk students
- EpiPens/medication carried by staff
- Restaurant staff informed of allergies
- Students briefed on food safety

Residual Risk - Low

Inappropriate behaviour/bullying Risk - Medium

- Code of conduct signed by students/parents
- Clear consequences outlined
- Staff supervision at all times
- Room checks (9pm, 11pm, 2am)
- Mobile phone policy enforced

Residual Risk - Low

Safeguarding concerns Risk - Medium

- Garda-vetted staff only
- Child Protection training current
- Students never left unsupervised
- Designated Liaison Person contactable
- Clear reporting procedures

Residual Risk - Low

Accommodation safety (fire/security) Risk - Medium

- Accommodation pre-vetted for safety standards
- Fire exits identified on arrival
- Fire drill conducted first evening
- Staff accommodation near students
- External doors secured at night

Residual Risk - Low

Terrorism/political unrest Risk - Low

- Monitor DFA travel advice pre-departure
- Register trip with Irish Embassy
- Avoid high-risk areas
- Emergency evacuation plan prepared

Residual Risk - Low

Lost passports/documents Risk - Low

- Photocopies of all passports held by trip leader
- Digital copies stored securely
- Parents retain copy at home
- Irish Embassy contact details available

Residual Risk - Low

Inadequate supervision Risk - Medium

- Male and female staff members
- Staff rota for night supervision
- Students in rooms by 10pm
- Staff remain sober throughout
- Emergency communication system

Residual Risk - Low

2. PRE-DEPARTURE REQUIREMENTS

Documentation:

- Parental consent forms (medical, photography, emergency contact)
- Student medical information and medications
- Travel insurance certificates
- Passports (check 6-month validity)
- EHIC cards for EU destinations
- Emergency contact card for each student
- Safeguarding policy distributed to staff

Student Preparation:

- Pre-trip meeting for students and parents
- Code of conduct signed
- Cultural awareness briefing
- Safety briefing (travel, accommodation, activities)
- Emergency procedures explained

Staff Preparation:

- Staff roles clearly assigned
- Emergency response plan rehearsed
- Contact details for: school principal, DLP, DFA, Irish Embassy, local emergency services
- Staff briefing document including safeguarding protocols

3. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Medical Emergency:

1. Administer first aid if trained
2. Contact local emergency services
3. Notify trip leader and principal
4. Contact parents immediately
5. Complete accident report form

Missing Student:

1. Immediate roll call
2. Search last known location
3. Contact accommodation/venue security
4. Notify local police if not found within 30 minutes
5. Contact principal and parents
6. Designated staff continues search while others supervise group

Serious Incident/Critical Incident:

1. Ensure immediate safety of all students
2. Contact emergency services if required
3. Notify principal immediately
4. Principal contacts Board of Management Chair and TUSLA if safeguarding concern
5. Do not speak to media—refer to principal

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Trip Leader: Overall responsibility, main contact, holds all documents

Deputy Leader: Assumes control if leader unavailable

First Aiders: Manage medical issues, hold medication

Staff Members: Supervise assigned groups, conduct room checks

5. APPROVAL

Risk Assessment Completed by: _____

Date: _____

Approved by Principal: _____

Date: _____

Board of Management Notified: _____