

St Patrick's & St Brigid's College Educational Visits & Activities Off-Site Policy



Adopted on:

Review Date

Educational Visits and Activities Off Site Policy

Policy Statement

The School places a high value on fieldwork, excursions, visits and organized holidays. Such trips are of enormous benefit. It is a central part of the ethos of the school to provide the opportunity for educational visits and school excursions.

Pupils' physical and moral safety is of paramount concern. The School accepts that trips, visits and outdoor activities cannot be completely without risk but it requires that those staff in charge take all reasonable precautions to protect the health, safety and welfare of pupils and staff, and minimise the risk of untoward or dangerous situations). This policy (along with the procedures and Risk Assessment) is supported by and works in conjunction with the School's Behaviour and Discipline policy, Child Protection (Safeguarding). *All lead supervisors of educational visits must be aware of the procedures of SPB College Emergency Plan.*

The Principal and Governors must be satisfied of the competence (training, assessment and experience) of staff to undertake and supervise the various activities. The lead member of staff will brief all accompanying staff about all aspects relating to the health and safety of pupils accompanying the educational visit or outing. This may include designating staff with specific tasks e.g. care of medication. All staff supervising a trip will be as well informed about the proposed visit as the leader. They will need preparation before the visit.

Equal Opportunities

Every effort will be made to ensure that School journeys, visits and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender, religion etc.

Pupils with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities, Special Educational and Medical Needs

Wherever it is feasible, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities should be included, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. Any problems/limitations should be considered at the planning stage and when carrying out the risk assessment. Special attention is made to supervision ratios. Each leader, for information, should hold summary sheets containing details of the pupil/pupils' special needs. The group leader should discuss the visit with parents of those children with special needs to ensure sufficient support is in place for each child and the teacher.

Any planned activity that involves caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or watersports must involve a check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 for England, Scotland and Wales).

In order to assess whether a trip should be allowed the following criteria will be applied:

Criteria for Departmental Trips

These should have a genuine educational value and/or academic relevance and benefit. Obvious examples would include Geography, History and Biology Field Trips, Modern Languages trips and Work Experience. They can be day or residential trips.

Criteria for Recreational Holidays

There are also some recreation trips that build teams and promote physical activity trips abroad. These include the Key Stage 3 Reward trip to Delphi in the summer and Skiing in the winter. New recreational trips would be considered.

Planning the Trip

- At the earliest possible opportunity gain the permission of the Principal for the trip by forwarding a Trip Proposal, stating the rationale for the trip, the possible classes involved, spaces available, lead supervisor and costings. **This should be done before the trip is mentioned to pupils.** A nominated Deputy Trip leader is required.
- Prior written consent should be obtained from parents to the tour schedule, to the exact cost of the tour, to any activities (or possible activities) undertaken on the tour, to any accommodation to be used and to the arrangements for dealing with medical emergencies. For day trips a Consent Form must be completed for each pupil. For residential trips the Parental and Medical Consent Form must be completed for each pupil.
- Adequate travel insurance must be arranged for trips outside the UK and Ireland.
- If the trip is residential there must be a nominated person who acts as the home based contact. There should also be an emergency back-up (normally an Assistant Principal or Senior Leader).
- For residential trips a text parents System must be in place to facilitate communications in case of delay, accident or change of plans.

Communication with Parents

It is imperative that parents are given full and complete written details regarding the organisation of all visits. For all visits, including residential, a letter specific to that visit will be sent to parents and their consent obtained. Copies of all such letters should be given to SLT and copies and to the School office and stored electronically in the relevant folder on the staff shared area. Residential visits will involve a parent's meeting, where all pertinent information to that visit is outlined and emergency procedures explained. For day trips a Consent Form is completed for each pupil. For residential trips the Parental and Medical Consent Form is completed for each pupil. This form obtains permission for the staff member in charge of the trip to make medical decisions on behalf of the parents if they cannot be contacted for any reason in an emergency.

Parents are required to give permission in advance for emergency medical treatment. Full contact details for parents must be obtained.

Supervision Levels

There needs to be some standard arrangements for this so that the School is confident that:

- a) Legal requirements regarding supervision and safety are fully met
- b) Best Practice guidelines are fully met
- c) Pupils are well cared for
- d) Parents are not unduly subsidising unnecessary staff.
- e) No trip is accompanied by less than 2 staff (unless deemed appropriate by the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) and a risk management plan is in place).
- f) Mixed parties contain at least one male and one female member of Staff.
- h) Volunteers accompanying residential trips should have appropriate police checks done.
- i) Ten pupils per member of Staff on non-hazardous trips abroad or on residential trips in this country is the guideline.
- j) For day trips the number of pupils may be higher, but there should never be a ratio of less than one teacher per 20 students.

In most cases the travel company gives a standard number of free or subsidised places. (This normally varies from 1:12 to 1:8). This figure is made clear on the Trip Proposal. If the member of staff organising the trip believes that there is a particular reason for having additional/fewer staff this **MUST** be discussed with the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) during the planning stage of the trip. An enhanced risk management plan will be required.

Financing of Trips

All trips should be self-financing or funded from subject budgets. If there are any unexpected losses they should be explained in writing to the Principal.

Detailed accounts of all school trips must be given to the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) within one month after the return to school.

No money held on behalf of the pupils should be paid into a private bank account.

Lead staff can organise appropriate fund raising or secure sponsorships to assist with the cost of trips. These should be agreed with the Principal.

Documentation

All documentation should be saved in the relevant sub folder in the in the Staff Shared Area (SIMS).

For all Trips

- a) Copies of all letters concerning the trip sent to parents, must be approved by the Principal before they are sent out.
- b) The Approved School Trip Form which will contain: a list of names of all pupils and staff; addresses and contact name of place to be visited, the trip organiser's contact number (a school mobile phone must be used) and the contact number for the emergency back-up.
- c) A Risk Assessment which is relevant to the trip.

For Residential Trips

Both the above and :

- a) Name of home based contact
- b) List of contact phone numbers for the pupils and staff (remember that parents may not be at their usual address during the holidays)
- c) Phone number and address of your place of accommodation
- d) Details of itinerary
- e) Risk management plan which includes a Risk Assessment and a Specific Risk Assessment (written specifically for the trip)
- f) A copy of all Parental and Medical Consent forms

For Trips abroad

All the above and:

- a) Flight /ferry times and details
- b) Passport details
- c) Details for procedures for lost passports

Safety and Welfare

It is essential that the trip leader should make a careful and written **risk assessment** of all aspects of the trip. **This MUST be handed into the Principal, with the Approved School Outing form, at least 7 days prior to departure.**

Good practice would include:

- a) Making a preliminary visit to the site of the trip (If this is not feasible you must discuss with the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care))
- b) Looking into the qualifications of any outside instructors or guides to ensure they meet nationally required standards.
- c) Ensuring that there will be acceptable provision of sufficient and appropriate food and drink.
- d) Ensuring that as far as possible pupils should not be exposed to smoke from cigarettes when travelling.
- e) Adequate emergency care should be available and arrangements made for caring for any pupil who is ill.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management Plans

Risk Assessments/Risk Management Plans should be completed and include a number of considerations including:

- a) Hazardous materials
- b) Fire precautions and fire procedures
- c) Pupils supervision including remote supervision
- d) Transport
- e) First aid and the administration of medicine
- f) Safeguarding
- g) Security
- h) Welfare of pupils
- i) 'Plan B' procedures
- j) Insurance
- k) Clothing and equipment
- l) Inclement weather
- m) SMT contacts

This list is not exhaustive and thought should be given to other areas of risk, if applicable to the trip.

Medical Issues

- First Aid kits must be carried.
- In the case of pupils who need medication, check with parents whether they wish you to keep and administer it (always get this permission in writing) or whether the pupils are competent to administer it themselves. In either case note down details of the drug and dosage.
- In hot countries care should be taken to ensure that pupils are protected from the harmful rays of the sun and from the effects of dehydration.
- The exact circumstances of any accidents, injuries or illnesses must be carefully recorded.
- Those pupils that carry epipens for anaphylaxis should have one epipen on their person and one extra epipen, with usage instructions, entrusted to a member of staff. Pupils who normally carry inhalers should have a spare with them on all residential trips.

Accommodation

- For residential trips always check all allocated rooms on arrival at your accommodation and make sure that there is nothing unsafe and that you have noted anything that is broken, missing or in any way inadequate. Inform the hotel management at once.
- Pupils **MUST** be shown Fire Escape routes in hotels and guest houses on arrival.
- Make sure that the pupils know where to find a member of staff in the night in the case of any emergency.
- Members of Staff must check that all pupils are in their rooms at the appropriate bed-time. The security of their rooms should also be checked and where there are locks these should be used. If pupils are sleeping in downstairs rooms windows should be shut.

Mobile phone

Always take a School mobile phone on every outing. Please always ring into school if you are delayed or contact a member of SLT.

Supervision of Swimming in Swimming Pools

Staff must ensure that the Swimming Pool is safe. This would include:

- Are there accurate signs displaying the depth of the pool?
- Are there lifeguards present
- Is there a poolside telephone and an alarm
- Is the water clear and regularly tested for cleanliness
- Is the water less than 1.5 metres deep? If so diving must not be permitted.

A member of staff must always remain on the side of the pool. There should be a supervision level of at least 1 teacher to 20 pupils.

Supervision of Swimming in the Sea or other natural waters

THIS IS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS. IT SHOULD ONLY BE UNDERTAKEN IF THE PARTY LEADER GIVES PERMISSION AND IF A TEACHER PRESENT ON THE TRIP HOLDS A RELEVANT LIFE GUARDING QUALIFICATION, OR AS PART OF A PLANNED ACTIVITY ORGANISED BY AN APPROVED THIRD PARTY PROVIDER.

Pupils Left Unsupervised

- If it is intended that pupils are to be left unsupervised by a member of staff at any stage (e.g. allowed to go shopping or even out in the evening), parents must be informed in writing and in detail prior to the trip that this will be occurring.
- Pupils should never be allowed to go off in groups of less than three and should always have a report back time.
- Pupils should never be allowed to swim or take part in any activity which may cause harm unsupervised.

Behaviour on the Trip

All pupils should observe the highest standards of politeness, courtesy and conduct at all

times. Particular care needs to be taken when on public transport or in residential accommodation. Even out of school time pupils are representing the school and should do everything in a way that reflects positively on them as well as on their school. The expectations of good behaviour must be explained to pupils before any trip and reiterated as appropriate. The Trip Leader will be responsible for pupil discipline in accordance with School policy. A member of The Senior Management Team will be available to give advice and to contact parents as necessary. Poor behaviour on School Trips must be reported to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) on or before return to School. Pupils must be made aware that there may be further repercussions on their return to School and that they may lose the right to participate in future trips.

Drinking Alcohol

The normal procedure is that pupils should not be allowed to drink alcohol when on School trips.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted on School trips.

Pupils Sent Home

It should be made clear to parents in advance that if a pupil is sent home for misbehaviour then parents will be expected to pay for all costs incurred.

Minibus Trips

Minibuses are booked via the School Office. All drivers must be over 21 and hold a category B licence for at least two years and have passed the appropriate test before transporting pupils. The size of the minibus that can be driven depends on the type of licence held.

Pre-departure checks

Before departure **basic checks** on the vehicle ought to be carried out :

- Lights (including hazard warning lights)
- Tyre pressures and wear
- Fluid levels: oil, brakes, radiator, windscreen washer
- Wipers and horn

If in your opinion the bus is not roadworthy do NOT use it and tell the Principal's Secretary immediately.

Seatbelts

The driver should check that all passengers have correctly adjusted and fastened their seatbelts.

Doors

The driver should check that all doors are properly closed before departure.

Luggage

Ensure that any loose items (bags etc) are safely stowed at floor level and are not blocking the way out of the minibus.

Length of Driving

For all but short journeys, it is strongly recommended that there should be two drivers

After **three hours** of driving, drivers **MUST** take a break of at least 20 minutes (except where a relief driver is available)

Speed Limits

Speed limits must be adhered to at all times.

Accidents / Incidents / Vehicle Faults

Any of the above must be reported to the Principal's Secretary on returning to school.

Publicity for Trips

The school can always make use of video clips and photos of trips and tours. If you wish to borrow the school digital camera please see Shaun McLaughlin.

Please Shaun have any photos that might be of sufficient quality for either newsletters or the press.

Recording and Reviewing

It is the responsibility of the lead supervisor of each trip to report accidents and 'near accident', sometimes known as near misses. Reviews of each trip and monitoring of good practice should always be reported to the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care)

If in doubt about any aspect of a school trip you should consult a Senior Teacher