

Policy of St Ailbe's School

on

Educational Outings & Tours

Scope of Educational Outings and Tours policy:

This policy applies to all members of the staff¹ of St. Ailbe's School who take students off campus. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

The Discipline Policy of St. Ailbe's School applies to all students of St. Ailbe's School and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off the campus and anywhere students are clearly identified or identifiable as students of the St. Ailbe's School.

The Discipline Policy also applies to all outings and to tours, whether or not they involve an overnight stay.

Before a student is accepted for a tour, his/her previous behaviour may be taken into consideration.

Parents/guardians will be notified, in advance, of all tours and both parents and student should sign the appropriate consent form. In this way parents, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behaviour at all times.

Parental consent is not required for outings, sanctioned by the Principal, which take place during the school day.

Rationale for having tours/outings and the need for a relevant policy:

St. Ailbe's School exists to provide an effective education service to all its students and is committed to the education, in the broadest sense of the word, of all students who attend St. Ailbe's. St. Ailbe's School provides an academic education which also recognises that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures is part of an holistic education.

The curriculum content of some subjects requires field studies/ tours/ outings/ recreational activities, which take place off campus.

Tours assist in bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.

There should be a balanced programme of outings and tours for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents, does not overburden the school timetable, or impact on Academic Achievement of Students.

¹ (*Definition of staff -Any person who is employed by St. Ailbe's School.*)

All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Science in Circular Letter M 20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria contained in this circular.

To assist staff in the planning of tours and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary precautions which must be observed to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.

It also ensures that tours and outings take place efficiently and smoothly and that the standard of supervision is firmly within guidelines and standards.

To clarify expectations of behaviour for all tours and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.(see School Rules)

To involve all members of the school community in ratifying this policy on tours/outings in order to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of an active living policy.

Links to Mission Statement .

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states that St. Ailbe's School aims "It is our hope that every student who leaves this School will be equipped not only to make their own way in the world but also to make their particular contribution to society and at the same time continue their lifelong learning process".

Links to Ethos

This policy reflects the ethos of St. Ailbe's School which has inherited: a commitment:

"to learn to think independently,
to tolerate and value diversity,

by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in St. Ailbe's School."

Objectives

That the health, safety and welfare of our students is safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the demands on the physical resources of the students, having regard to their age and capacity, and the dangers to which they may be exposed.

That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all tours/outings

Finally that, staff are aware that the degree of care required of them should be that of a "careful parent" which would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student.

Content of policy:

- Day Tours within Ireland (including Northern Ireland)
- Overnight tours, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland
- General. Guidelines for the PE programme.

Day Tours within Ireland.

Day tours may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours.

Day tours must have the approval of the Principal.

Members of staff who wish to take students on a day tour must put their request in writing to the Principal by completing the Tour Proposal Form Included in the proposal should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the tour.

Day tours that are planned to take place entirely within normal school hours do not need specific parental permission. At the start of the school year "parents will give advance written permission for all such tours that have the approval of the Principal.

Specific parental permission is required for a day tour that:

- is expected to extend beyond normal school hours
- includes an activity which requires supervision by trained professionals (such as visits to an Outdoor Education Centre)
- Both parents and students must sign the Code of Behaviour section on this Permission Form to indicate their understanding and acceptance of the Code of Behaviour of St. Ailbe's School which applies to all school activities, whether on or off campus.

Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from day tours.

Once the Principal has approved a tour, the organiser should:

- enter the details onto the College database
- in order to minimise any medical risks or others, submit a list of the names of those travelling to the Office

- in order to inform parents/guardians, forward brief details of the tour to the Principal for inclusion in Staff Announcements and in the calendar of events.

On all day tours there must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff travelling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students travelling. Students in First Year will require most supervision. On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver.

Day tours may involve a financial cost to the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of transportation to/from sporting events. In the case of financial difficulties, application for assistance may be made to the Principal and/or Tour Organiser.

The College will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the coach company or staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.

On occasion it may be suitable for Senior Cycle students (Fourth Fifth and Sixth Year students) to travel independently to and/or from an event. In such an instance, the organiser of the tour must advise parents in advance. Junior Cycle students may not do so.

For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their children's journey to/from St. Ailbe's School. The organiser of the tour must be informed in advance of these arrangements.

A member of staff should only travel alone with a student when parental permission has been obtained.

On completion of a tour, the organiser must complete the "trip report" and hand the details to the school's PRO, Principal and Year Heads.

An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven substance abuse.

Overnight tours²

Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas tour, must submit their request for approval to the Principal, by completing the Tour Proposal Form.

Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the tour. The request must be received with a minimum of One months notice for inclusion in the School's Calendar of Events.

² (Inside or outside the Republic of Ireland)

An overseas tour must be organised through a bonded travel agency³. This does not apply to travel within the island of Ireland.

The number of students participating varies depending on the nature of the tour and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency.

In the case of tours being oversubscribed, priority is given to those students who are studying the appropriate subject. Staff in charge reserve the right to refuse any student they deem unsuitable for the tour (see Schools Rules). Those considered unsuitable would include:

- students who in the past have proved unruly or undisciplined on tours
- students who have a poor discipline record in the school.

The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of non-refundable deposit, and also include the Information for Parents and Students and Rules and Regulations for Tours. Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

The organiser should factor into the budget an extra amount (maximum 10% of the full tour cost) to cover any extras that may not be covered in the basic cost.

If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's passport must be included with the deposit. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip.

Visas may be necessary for the destination and some countries require them to be processed together. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.

Students must have their European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.

It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their child/children has all necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the tour.

Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.

Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the tour.

³ *Under the Package Holiday and Travel Trade Act 1995, the government now regards any person making arrangements for overseas travel for a group to be an "Organiser". Such organisers would have to satisfy the legislation and minimum insurance cover and guarantee to cover possible insolvency. This legislation is intended to protect the customer. Therefore, all teachers organising foreign travel on behalf of students must make all arrangements through a bonded travel agent (IATA).*

Following receipt of the deposit, parents will receive the Permission Letter and Form. All sections of the Form must be completed and returned to the organiser at least two weeks before travel. No alterations or additions may be made to any official School form. Details of accommodation, travel arrangements, any special local conditions, personal items that the student needs to bring, guidelines for spending money and money for extras such as meals and excursions will also be sent to parents.

Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the tour may be necessary. A list should be made of participation mobile phone numbers (as given on the Permission Form) and students should have the mobile phone numbers of participating staff -to be carried with them at all times while on the tour. **It is recommended that a credit card size laminated list of details be made, which may be easily carried in a wallet** (fig. 1). A mobile phone is available from the school, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.

Name:

Accommodation Address:

Tel. No:

Group Contact Details: St. Ailbe's School, Tipperary Town, Tipperary Ireland

Mobile No.

Group Leader Mobile No.

Home Contact No.

Fig. 1

The tour organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

One of the staff members on the tour should have had training in First Aid and be, responsible for a First Aid Kit. Parents should inform the organisers if their children have any special medical needs. A log must be kept of all incidents.

Two members of staff, one of whom must be female if female students are travelling should carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc) with the student present. This will only be done for good reasons based on reasonable grounds, such as concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns.

Staff should not have any physical contact with a student's clothing. If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty their own pockets or to search the clothing that they are wearing.

If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the School's Discipline Policy, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.

On completion of a tour, the organiser must complete the "trip report" and give copies to the Schools PRO, Principal and year Heads for inclusion in local newspapers and inhouse magazines.

An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven substance abuse.

General Guidelines for the PE programme .

Each coach is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to his/her match. If a minor accident occurs the PE staff will treat it on the spot. Anything deemed a major or potentially threatening injury is directly referred to the day-nurse or the matron. In the event of a serious accident the PE staff will ring an ambulance directly.

Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded on an accident report form, a copy of which is submitted to the Bursar. PE staff will appraise students of the necessary safety equipment for each respective sport.

If any student is excused, with written permission, from all or part of a PE class the teacher must be informed in the normal manner. If the excuse is due to illness, the student is expected either to accompany their class and watch the proceedings or remain indoors with another PE group.

The PE staff organise transport to and from all matches, using a recognised coach company. In the case of local venues, parents could be asked to provide transport.

When an away match is organised during school hours when PE activities are scheduled for other students, the number of staff travelling must be dependent upon the staffing requirements of the activities on campus. Generally one coach will travel with a team. The needs of the students on campus must receive priority when organising such matches.

Policy Development and Availability

This Policy relating to Tours and Outings has been developed with teachers through a sub-committee and agreement at staff meetings. Approval from parents is sought through the St. Ailbe's School Parents Council Association and from students through the Student Council. Approval from the BOM is also mandatory.

A sub-committee shall consist of four members of the teaching staff and one representative from the management of the School. The sub-committee will be responsible for drafting additions, amendments and alterations to the policy. Consultation with parents and students will be as mentioned above.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the availability of the Policy to parents/guardians and students.

Implementation and Compliance

1. All members of the Schools staff who are in charge of students on a tour or outings off-campus will monitor the implementation of this Educational Outings and Tours Policy.

2. The full co-operation of students and parents/guardians is expected for all off-campus activities.

3. Parents/guardians must encourage their children to uphold the standards of behaviour required on all Tours and Outings.

Success Criteria

- The planning, organisation and carrying-out of all tours and outings has proceeded without hitches.
- Any unforeseen event which occurred was dealt with promptly and in line with the guidelines in this policy.
- All staff members and students returned safely, having achieved a worthwhile learning experience.

Review and evaluation

At the end of every tour/ outing, the organiser, in the submitted report, should include any recommendations for changes or inclusions in this policy.

There should be an annual review of the Educational Outings and Tours Policy by a staff sub-committee.

Legislation/equality proofing:

A solicitor who has expertise in this area must approve the draft of the Educational Outings and Tours policy and any subsequent additions, amendments or alterations. These must be submitted to BOM for final approval. Any amendments will become part of the Policy, and will be notified to parents.

Dates of the BOM Meetings at which the Educational Outings and Tours Policy, and any additions, amendments or alterations were ratified:

Policy adopted on: Date: _____

Signed _____.

OUT OF SCHOOL VISITS –

Introduction

At present there is no legislation to regulate and license activities for children under 18 years of age. The Lyme Bay Tragedy of 1993 exposed the lack of comprehensive regulation of outdoor centres, requiring legislation to ensure that only fully qualified staff at licensed centres should be responsible for pupils.

Activity Centre trips are of course not the only places of out of school visits and this chapter, although mainly concerned with outdoor education, (involving some degree of physical challenge and risk) seeks to give general guidance for the:

- safety of pupils
- general guidance
- outdoor education
- foreign visits
- transport
- insurance
- work experience.

Health and Safety law

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005

This Act provides for the general duties of employers, including activity centre management, to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of employees and the health and safety of all users who are affected by their work activities. The Act also requires that employers prepare a Safety Statement that clearly identifies the various risks associated with the various work activities and any preventive procedures that need to be in place to reduce these risks to an acceptable level. Persons with particular responsibility for safety must also be named and their responsibilities detailed.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 1993 (SHAWAWR)

These Regulations require employers to:

- carry out a risk assessment
- record any appropriate action that needs to be taken for significant risks and inform employees accordingly
- establish emergency procedures and communicate those procedures to those in serious or imminent danger }
- co-operate in matters relating to health and safety
- provide training where necessary
- where, during outdoor activities any staff or pupils die or are severely injured, the incidents should be reported to the Health and Safety Authority. Where the person injured is a staff member, if they are out of work for three or more days as a result of the accident the accident is reportable. For pupils or other third parties the accident is reportable if they require medical attention
- provide and maintain personal protective equipment (PPE) that offers adequate protection to hazards where required. While this is a requirement

relating to employees, i.e. the staff, it is not an explicit legal requirement for non-employees such as pupils. However, being in charge of pupils, it will be necessary to advise them or indeed select appropriate PPE which can be paid for by the students or their parents directly. Alternatively, where there is not a potential hygiene problem, such equipment could be shared.

Responsibility for Safety

Principal

The school managerial authority- the VEC bears final responsibility for safety in a school.

Under the direction of the pertinent school managerial authority, it is the role of the Principal to ensure-with the assistance of the other personnel involved-that all out-of-school visits comply with the Department of Education and Science's or governing body's guidelines and with the school's own health and safety policies. This will involve:

- assessing the objectives of the trip -it should be emphasised that safety is the prime objective which should not be compromised in order to meet educational or other objectives
- selecting the appropriate leader -this is vital and if the visit is an outdoor activity,
- checking that the teacher has the appropriate qualification or has experience of managing groups in an outdoor or residential context
- ensuring that the place of the visit is suitable
- nominating a person to be responsible for out of school visits. There should be a co-ordinator to ensure that common procedures are adopted and that relevant training is provided for the staff involved
- providing consent forms for parents and ensuring that a completed form is received for each pupil. Consent forms should be kept in a central, accessible location along with a~ accurate register of all adults and pupils present on the visit
- depending on the nature of the trip, a full briefing should be given to parents through a parents' meeting. This would include the content of the trip and the code of conduct expected of the children
- sorting out finance to ensure that all payments are accounted for and if it is a large excursion a statement of account should be prepared at the end of the trip
- ensuring that there are emergency procedures in place for the trip. Party leaders should have 24-hour emergency contact numbers in their possession. Additionally, the school should have full details of the group's itinerary
- arrangements have been made for all of the medical needs and special educational needs of all children participating in the visit
- ensuring that there is an acceptable staff to pupil ratio, depending on the nature of the trip. The Department of Education and Science lists them as:
- one adult to fifteen group members for visits where the element of risk to be encountered is similar to that normally encountered in daily life, for example, visits to sites of historic interest, most field work, local walks etc.
- one adult to ten group members for all trips abroad

- When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the potential risks may be greater and staff to pupil ratios should reflect this.

Party leader's responsibility

However, it is the party leader who is responsible for and in charge of the party throughout the time they are out of school. Aside from the duty of care which those taking over the charge of a child have, the party leader should also consider:

- assessing the suitability of the pupils involved and whether their behaviour could jeopardise the safety of the others in the group
- giving all appropriate information concerning the trip and whether outdoor clothing is necessary
- recommending the supplies necessary for the trip, for example, waterproofs,
- emergency food and making a check list if necessary
- checking the individual pupil's capabilities to ensure that they are capable of
- physical exertion if it is a demanding activity. Additional consideration will
- have to be given to those with special needs
- asking questions in the consent form to determine:
 - (a) any health problems/allergies/dietary requirements/details of any contagious infectious diseases suffered within the last three months
 - (b) whether the child is taking any medication, if so what it is, the dosage and asking whether it can be self administered.
- ensuring that the school knows all of the necessary details of the trip including
 - a
- copy of the parental consent forms and the register of the children involved
- if the trip is to return to the school late in the evening ensuring that parents are
- aware of this and that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils
- are not left stranded.
- ensuring that at least one party leader must be qualified in first aid to Emergency
- Aid level and must carry a first-aid kit
- having a framework of procedures to be followed in the event of an incident
- resulting in serious or fatal injury.

Pupil's responsibility,

The pupils should also be aware of their responsibilities which are:

- not taking any unnecessary risks
- following the instructions of the leader and other adults
- dressing and behaving sensibly and responsibly
- looking out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and telling
- the group leader about it
- not undertaking any task that they fear or that they think will be dangerous.

Pupils should also ensure that any letters and forms relating to the excursion are safely delivered from school to home and vice versa.

Foreign visits

In addition to the general requirements there are particular considerations that relate to both the planning and operational aspects of foreign visits:

- the staff to pupil ratio recommended by the Department of Education and Science
- is one adult to ten group members
- clear safety rules and behaviour standards should be issued verbally or in writing
- to inform pupils whilst on transport, for example, planes or ferries and students
- should be informed of the emergency procedures in each case
- advice should be issued to children on how to carry money or traveller's cheques
- head counts should be made each time there is a change of transport
- there should be medical consent from parents in order to agree to the pupil's receiving emergency treatment or general consent to administer medicines
- insurance cover will be required and it is recommended that parents be informed in
- writing of those responsibilities which the school accepts and that copies of the insurance arrangements be made available to parents before the party leaves
- ...organisers may wish to check the travel advice relating to personal safety for their destination
- party leaders should be familiar with the legal position relating to child protection and drug misuse in the host country.. Information may be obtained from the destination country's Embassy
- staff may also wish to take with them the address and telephone number of the nearest Irish Embassy in the destination country
- if the visit is outside Europe to Asia or to a region where tropical diseases and malaria are a possibility, then the pupils will require vaccinations and advice should be sought from a local Medical Practitioner or the Department of Health and Children
- the Principal should have a full itinerary of the trip and contact numbers at all destinations
- it may be necessary to plan alternative routes in the event of possible delays, cancellation or transport strikes
- it is important to ensure that the group's accommodation is suitable in terms of washing and sleeping facilities
- driving arrangements in foreign countries. should be checked prior to departure.
- Where a vehicle will carry more than eight passengers EC Regulations on drivers' hours specify maximum daily, weekly and fortnightly driving hours, maximum driving without a break, the minimum break period and weekly rest. Further information can be obtained from the Institute of Transport

- working tachographs are also required to be fitted in minibuses and coaches, if travelling through European countries.

Transport arrangements for out of school visits

School Minibus -

Many schools use their own transport for excursions but should ensure that this is not a casual arrangement. Minibus drivers, where the carrying capacity is above eight persons, will require the correct licence other than the standard B category car licence. The Principal teacher is responsible for ensuring that the minibus is properly maintained. They may delegate this function to a competent person. The person responsible for maintaining the minibus should:

- check the vehicle's condition on a weekly basis
- ensure proper servicing by a reputable garage
- maintain the record-of-use book with service history, insurance, NCT/DoE certificates and other relevant documents
- check with the Principal teacher before allowing others to drive the vehicle
- ensure that any teachers driving the minibus are qualified to do so
- ensure that drivers of the school minibus are aware that the vehicle should always be logged in and logged out.

Minibus drivers

The user is responsible for the condition of the vehicle on the road. If the user considers the minibus to be in a bad condition it should not be driven. The number of passengers in the vehicle should never exceed the number of seats available as this may affect the validity of the insurance and could adversely affect the dynamics of smaller vehicles.

Drivers should have a clean driving licence. Any accidents or impending prosecutions should be reported to the Principal teacher, not only for the concern of pupils' safety but also because of a possible effect on insurance premiums or cover.

Careful consideration should be given to the length of the driving time coupled with supervising children all day. If the visit is a long way away, there should be a relief driver available to take over to avoid drowsiness at the wheel.

If the party is large, there should be another teacher in the minibus to supervise the pupils and prevent them from distracting the driver.

Log sheets should be made concerning the length of the journey to ensure that the vehicle is not misused.

Seat belts

There is at present no requirement for minibuses to be fitted with seat belts where the passenger seating capacity is greater than eight, other than for the person travelling in the front of the vehicle. Likewise for coaches. Where seatbelts are available, children should be actively encouraged to use them.

For vehicles that can transport less than eight persons, seatbelts should be available for all passengers. While a lap belt is legally sufficient, a full three point belt is preferable. Where airbags are fitted to the vehicle the minimum size of seat occupants should be observed.

Insurance arrangements

These will vary depending on the nature of the trip. Although the policy must be specific to cover the activities which are to be undertaken. The school will have a number of insurance arrangements and in the planning stages of a trip the group leader should check to see whether additional cover is needed. The following is a checklist:

- public liability covering claims for negligence'
- third-party liability covering claims against the Department of Education and Science or the school and its employees
- personal accident cover for leaders, voluntary helpers and party members
- medical treatment
- transport and passenger liability
- high risk activities, (often excluded from standard policies)
- damage to or loss of personal or hired equipment and any limits that might apply
- programmed and non-programmed activities
- transport and accommodation expenses in the case of emergency
- compensation against cancellation or delay
- compensation for loss of baggage and effects
- legal assistance in the recovery of claims
- failure or bankruptcy of the centre or travel company.