



Coolmine Community School Policy on School Tours

Introduction

School tours have the potential to provide students with experiences that complement and supplement their curricular and extra-curricular experiences – aesthetic, cultural, emotional, sporting, social etc. Tours also enhance the collaborative relationships between staff and students and foster communication across classes and year groups. As such, tours significantly enable Coolmine Community School to achieve its goals for the holistic development of its students more effectively than might otherwise be the case.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members of Coolmine Community School who take students off campus. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/ guardians.

Rationale

- All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Science in the Circular Letter M 20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy the criteria contained in this circular.
- Coolmine Community School exists to provide an effective and broad education to all its students. It provides an academic education, which also recognises that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures, is part of a holistic education.
- There should be a balanced programme of outings and tours during the school year that do not prove too costly to parents and do not overburden the school timetable.

Objectives

- To assist staff in the planning of tours and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary precautions to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.
- To ensure that tours and outings are organized efficiently and that the standard of supervision is firmly within guidelines and standards set by Department of Education and Science.
- 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.
- 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.



Content

Planning

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 student will derive from the tour. The request must be received before the end of September in any school year for inclusion in the following year's programme. The tour shall not be deemed to have been authorised for advertising until the Principal has formally approved the tour by signing the proposal form. A copy of this form is attached to the policy.

Tours should be planned well in advance of tour dates and preferably before the start of the school year. The full cost of the tour should be communicated to parents at the planning stage. This will have the added advantage of facilitating financial preparation with a view to allowing maximum pupil participation. Every effort should be made to ensure that the cost involved does not prevent any pupil or group of pupils participating in the tour.

The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary, the deadline for registering and payment of deposit, details of a parent's information night and also a copy of the school tour policy. It should also state that payment would be in installments over a period of time. Parents must be aware that the organizer reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

In the case of school tours outside the island of Ireland Boards of Management/ School Management may not rely on the state indemnity and thus appropriate insurance cover should be obtained.

In the case of tours being oversubscribed a lottery situation will apply. Following on from this a waiting list will be formed. The right to exclude a student from a tour is reserved to a committee comprising of the Principal, Deputy Principal, relevant Year Head and organiser of the trip. 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 payment of a deposit or of the full cost does not constitute a contract, as a severe breach of the schools code of discipline may result in the student being excluded from the tour.



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.

By international standards, the school year in Ireland has long holiday periods. Educational tours of more than one day's duration should be arranged to coincide with the school holidays.

Communication

Mobile phone communication between teachers and students on the tour may be necessary. A list should be made of participants mobile numbers (as given on the permission form) and students should have the mobile numbers of participating staff to be carried with them at all times while on the tour. A mobile phone is available from the school, as staff members are not required to give their personal numbers to students. This number will also be given to parents. This phone is only to be used in emergency situations.

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

Health and Safety

As many of the staff members as possible should have training in first aid and one person should be responsible for the first aid kit. Parents should inform the organisers if their son or daughter has any illness, allergies, and dietary or medication requirements in good time. A record must be kept of all incidents.

Documentation

Students must have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the E.U.

The passports and E111 forms will be collected and retained by the tour organiser at least two weeks in advance of the trip. The passports will be photocopied at this point. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip.

Visas may be necessary for the destination and there may be an additional cost to secure a visa. Parents need to be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for E.U. countries as well as other destination countries.

It is important to impress on the parents that the onus is in them to ensure that their son/daughter has all the 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 son/ daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.



Behaviour

Teachers and other designated adults supervising the trip are in loco parentis and, therefore have the responsibilities and rights of a prudent parent. Students are expected to behave in a courteous, co-operative and considerate manner. They must abide by the teacher's directions and decisions in all matters.

Any breach in trust may result in parents being contacted and requested to arrange and finance the return of their son or daughter.

Parents are also asked to note that should a teacher suspect breach of regulations, he/she has the right to ask the student to empty pockets/baggage/containers/items of apparel to ascertain if illicit substances are present.

Two members of staff one of whom must be female may carry out an 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.

Students possessing, consuming, passing or promoting the use of alcohol, drugs, solvents, aerosols or other such dangerous substances, while participating on the school tour render themselves liable to severe penalties including suspension or expulsion and reportage of the offence to An Garda Síochána

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. If a serious incident takes place, parents and management will be notified at the earliest convenience.

School authorities reserve the right to implement these regulations and by signing the permission slip parents/ guardians accept this. In addition, they accept as a responsibility the obligation to ensure that their son or daughter is fully aware of the consequences should he/she be found in breach of the above regulations.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Board of Management:

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time.
- To approve the policy
- To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.

Principal and Deputy Principals

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.



Teachers/ Organisers of the School Tour:

- To implement the policy and provide feedback to management that may assist the review process.
- To instruct students as to what is expected of them in relation to preparing for and participating on the school tour.
- To keep accurate records of the above.
- To ensure that all information given to students at meetings prior to departure is documented for parents.

Parents:

- To support the school policy in all aspects.

Students:

- To accept the policy and abide by the conditions

Implementation:

- Management and all members of the school staff who are in charge of students on a tour will monitor the implementation of this policy.
- The full co-operation of students and parents/guardians is expected for all tour activities.
- Parents/ guardians must encourage their son/ daughter to uphold the standards of behaviour required on all tours.

Success Criteria:

- Management, teachers, parents and students are satisfied with the effectiveness of the policy.
- The planning, organisation and carrying out of tours and outings have 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.

Monitoring procedures:

- Ongoing monitoring will take place through informal discussion with all parties involved.
- The Principal and Deputy Principal will meet with the tour organiser immediately after each tour to discuss the effectiveness of the policy.



Review:

- The policy will be reviewed if the need arises or after two years, whichever comes first.

Timeframe

- This policy was ratified on 06/05/08

Coolmine Community School
Tour Proposal Form

Tour Proposer: _____

Duration & Dates of Tour: _____

Destination & Itinerary: _____

Total Cost and Amount and Date for Payment of Deposits:

Reasons for Tour: _____

Participants & Number of Places Available: _____

Supervision: _____



Coolmine Community School
Scoil Phobail Chúil Mhín

Insurance: _____

Principal's Signature: _____

Date: _____