



St. Mary's Secondary School

School Trips / Outings Policy

School Mission Statement

St. Mary's Secondary School is a Mercy school which is concerned with developing the whole person within a Christian atmosphere.

By providing a balance of educational activities, we foster growth in self-esteem and respect for others.

We take pride in encouraging high standards of teaching and learning.

Scope of Educational Outings and Trips policy

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

The Code of Behaviour of St. Mary's Secondary School applies to all students of St. Mary's Secondary School and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off the school grounds.

Outings and Trips

- The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to trips, whether or not they involve an overnight stay.
- Parents/guardians will be notified, in advance, of all trips and will be required to sign the appropriate consent form. In this way parents, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behaviour at all times.
- For some outings e.g. sporting teams, permission will be sought from parents at the start of the school year to attend/travel to all the associated games.

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

- St. Mary's Secondary School strives to provide an effective education for all its students and is committed to the education, in the broadest sense of the word, of all students who attend the School. St. Mary's Secondary School provides an academic education, which also recognises that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures, is part of a holistic education.
- The curriculum content of some subjects requires field studies/trips/outings/recreational activities, which take place off school grounds.
- Trips assist in bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.
- The school will always strive to have a balanced programme of outings and trips for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.



- All educational trips must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Skills 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 trips and outings, and to provide for the health and safety of staff and students. It also ensures that trips 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 trips and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.

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 trips/outings
- 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.

Day Trips within Ireland

- Day trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours.
- Day trips must have the approval of the Principal.
- Members of staff who wish to take students on a day trip must make their request to the Principal. As much notice as possible should be given.
- Specific parental permission is required for any trip.
- Once the Principal has approved a trip, the organiser should:
 - Inform parents/guardians & school staff by:
 - Recording the event on the school calendar
 - Issuing a parent consent form.
 - Provide a list of students participating in the trip on the notes section of the calendar event.
- On all day trips there must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff traveling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students traveling. On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver.
- Seatbelts must be used by all those travelling at all times.
- Day trips 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.
- If a student withdraws from a school trip at late notice or does not attend the trip on the day will forfeit any payments made as the payment per student for each trip is calculated on the number of students originally participating in the trip.



- If travelling by bus, students must return to the school at the end of a trip and be collected by a parent/guardian. For student safety reasons, students will not be allowed to be dropped off by the bus at any other location.
- The School 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 (Fifth and Sixth Year students, and also Transition Year students in certain circumstances) to travel independently to and/or from an event. In such an instance, the organiser of the trip 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 daughter's journey to/from the School. The organiser of the trip must be informed in advance of these arrangements.
- Incident Report Form via Compass 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 code of behaviour, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

Overnight trips, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

- Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Principal. Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.
- The number of students participating varies depending on the nature of the trip and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency.
- Before a student with a medical condition is accepted to participate in a trip the school must be confident that they can manage the needs of the student without compromising the health & safety of the student in question, the other students participating or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents.
- The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of non-refundable deposit. Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- If a passport is required, parents/guardians should ensure that passports are 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 are encouraged to have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU. They should also have access to travel insurance.
- It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their daughter has all necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the trip.
- Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents understand 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 trip.



- Following receipt of the deposit, parents will receive the Permission Letter and Form all sections of which must be completed and the form returned to the organiser by specified date. 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 trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participants' mobile phone numbers (as given on the Permission Form) and students may be given (if appropriate) the mobile phone number of trip leader– to be carried with them while on the trip. A mobile phone is available from the School, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.
- The trip organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.
- If necessary two members of staff 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 his/her own pockets or to search the clothing that he/she is wearing.
- If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the School Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.
- 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 code of behaviour, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.



Students must be made aware that there are sanctions for misbehaviour on a school tour.

Sanctions for Misbehaviour

Minor Misbehaviour:

Should a student be guilty of minor misbehaviour, the incident should be dealt with in a swift and firm manner and a verbal warning may be all that is needed. The Tour Leader may however feel that specific sanctions are required such as:

1. The student missing out on a specific activity e.g. bowling.
2. The student missing an evening activity e.g. disco.

If a sanction is being imposed it must be made clear to the student why it is being imposed. A student prevented from attending an activity must be supervised by a teaching member of the Tour Team for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school e.g. the student may be banned from involvement in future tours.

Serious Misbehaviour:

Where a student is guilty of 'serious misbehaviour' the Tour Leader must inform the school Principal and in consultation may decide to phone the student's parents/guardians to provide them with details of the incident/s.

In all such cases, parents will be informed of the misbehaviour when the students return home.

In ongoing and extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour a student may be sent home (paid by their parents/guardian).

In the event of this happening, the parents/guardians will be informed and if necessary a teacher will travel home with the offending student. The Tour Leader will decide which teacher accompanies the student home.

In the case of a serious/criminal incident (shop lifting, a violent attack etc.) the parents/guardians will be informed immediately and the matter will be handed over to the local police authorities.

Examples of 'serious misbehaviour' include:

1. Use/possession of alcohol.
2. Use/possession of illegal substances (drugs etc.)
3. Use/possession of cigarettes/vaping.
4. Misuse of legal substances.
5. Disruptive behaviour on coach, plane, boat or in the hotel/hostel.
6. Lack of respect for accommodation rules.
7. Lack of respect for Tour Team or any other supervising adults.
8. Theft or criminal damage to property of others
9. This list is not exhaustive; please refer to the School Code Of Behaviour



Transition Year Programme

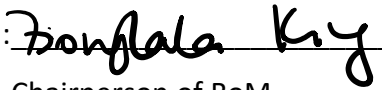
The Transition Year programme at St. Mary's Secondary School aims to give students a wide variety of experiences. Many of these experiences take the form of outings and trips.

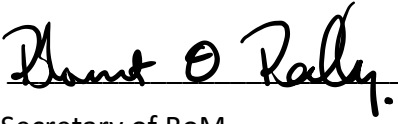
Monitoring and Review

As part of the Development Planning process St. Mary's Secondary School will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedure on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

Ratification

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 14th November 2023

Signed: 
Chairperson of BoM

Signed: 
Secretary of BoM