

St. Benildus College



School Tour Policy



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1. Purpose of this Policy

To support teachers in the organisation and running of school trips and tours which will ensure a safe, enjoyable and educational experience for all travelling students and staff members.

School tours can be of significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of students. In many instances they reinforce the work taking place in the classroom. The majority of school tours are of one day duration.

School tours are categorised under four headings:

- I. Those which are determined by the particular curriculum subject (such as field trips).
- II. Those which inform and help build awareness of possible career and educational opportunities.
- III. Those that enhance the student's participation in or at sporting events.
- IV. Those which deepen the student's knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social and physical aspects of the areas or countries visited. (Student tours to develop linguistic skills are a good example of the latter).

School Management and personnel will ensure that pupils are under the supervision of responsible adults and that the appropriate adult/student ratio* in relation to age, gender, and activity is in place in advance of the trip.

The school takes its 'duty of care' while acting 'in loco parentis' extremely seriously and will make adequate provision to ensure that it is discharged at all times in the best interest of both the pupils and school personnel.

This policy has been developed in line with the ethos of St Benildus College and should be read in conjunction with all relevant school policies.

2. Scope of Educational Outings and Trips Policy

This policy applies to all members of the staff of St Benildus College who take students off site. It also applies to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

The Code of Behaviour of St Benildus College applies to all students and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off school grounds. The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to trips, whether or not they involve an overnight stay.

- Before a student is accepted for a trip, his previous behaviour will be taken into consideration.
- A student's attendance record will be taken into consideration.
- Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance with the school's Code of Behaviour and with the rules, regulations and special requirements of that tour.
- Unless informed to the contrary it is policy on all day tours that full school uniform is worn. Failure to do so may result in the removal of the student from the tour.
- NOTE: It is important to note that students in serious breach of the code of behaviour may be withdrawn from the trip. If this happens the student will not receive a refund of monies paid.

3. Aims

The Board of Management of St Benildus College supports and encourages school tours. It concurs with Department of Education & Science guidelines which state that: “the objectives of educational tours for schools should be that they be of benefit in the intellectual, cultural and social development of the pupils taking part in them and any activity, in connection with the tour, which is in conflict with this objective is to be avoided” (Circular letter M20/04)

To reflect a world which is developing and changing, current educational philosophy recommends that students have first-hand experience wherever possible. School tours allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced educational process.

School tours require good preparation and organisation to optimise the learning experience for students.

The Board has an expectation that all school trips and tours would have a beneficial effect on pupils, enhancing student development both academically and socially.

4. 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.

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

- All educational trips 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 trips and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary precautions that must be observed 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.

6. Trips within Ireland

- Members of staff who wish to take students on trips must make their request to the Principal. As much notice as possible should be given.
- Trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours and may include weekends.
- Specific written parental permission is required for all trips and should be kept on file by the organising teacher.

- Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from trips by the Principal.

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

- Forward brief details of the trip to the SLT for inclusion in the calendar.
- Inform parents/guardians of the details of the trip in writing. This should include cost, travel arrangements, all arrangements and other relevant information. Parents/Guardians must sign and return the permission slip attached.
- Place a list of students participating in the trip on the Staff Notice Board.

On all school organised trips students will be accompanied by supervising staff members. 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.

The SLT will decide on the allocation of personnel to supervise students on trips.

- Trips may involve a financial cost to the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of transportation to/from events or entry fees. In the case of financial difficulties for particular students, application for assistance may be made to the school for assistance. No student will be prevented from attending a tour for financial reasons.
- The school will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the Coach Company and accompanying staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.
- On occasion it may be suitable for Senior Cycle students (TY, Fifth and Sixth Year students) to travel independently to and/or from an event.
- For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their son's journey to/from the School.
- A member of staff should only travel alone with a student in exceptional circumstances agreed by school management, and where possible when written parental permission has been obtained.
- An Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred on school trips.
- In cases of a breach of school rules, teachers are required to follow the code of behaviour. School sanctions as outlined in our Code of Behaviour will apply.

7. Overseas Trips

- Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Board of Management. 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.

- In the case of trips being oversubscribed, priority is given to those students who are studying the appropriate subject, if applicable. Following that, a lottery system will operate. A percentage of places will be reserved for those who were not successful in previous lotteries for overseas trips and where this number exceeds available places, a separate lottery will take place. The school reserves the right to refuse any student who has a poor discipline record in the school.
- Before a student with a medical condition is accepted to participate in a trip the student must be covered by individual travel insurance. The school must be confident that they can manage the needs of the student without compromising the health and 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 school management, parents/guardians and staff members.
- A general information letter and permission slips will be issued to parents/guardians. This must be signed by parents/guardians and returned to organising teacher. The initial letter to parents/guardians will, where available, contain a draft itinerary, the deadline for registering and details of the non -refundable deposit. Parents/guardians 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/guardians should be informed that students with non -EU passports may need visas for EU countries. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring visas are secured, in date and sorted at least one month ahead of the trip/tour.
- The school amenity charge must be paid to ensure 24 hour insurance cover while on the tour.
- Students must have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.
- It is important to impress upon parents/guardians that the onus is on them to ensure that their son has all necessary up -to -date documentation well in advance of the trip.
- Parents/guardians should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents/guardians understand that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their son to receive all necessary inoculations.
- Students and parents/guardians must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.
- Following payment of the deposit, the parents will be issued with a form for completion re: student details, 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/guardians. Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements will be put in place.

8. Mobile phones

Parents/guardians will be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a 24 hour basis for the duration of the school tour. A mobile telephone will be supplied to the tour leader(s) for school tours. The number of this phone will be given to parents/guardians and students prior to departure for use only in case of emergency. Mobile phone communications between teachers and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participant's mobile phone numbers and will be kept only for the duration of the trip. The trip organiser will have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and one of the Deputy Principals.

The school Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) continues to apply while students are on trips/tours.

Recording, videoing or photographing staff or students without permission is an invasion of privacy and is strictly prohibited. In addition, downloading, viewing and/or distributing inappropriate or offensive material is strictly prohibited and if done will result in serious sanctions up to and including expulsion.

9. Discipline

- 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 may contact the Principal.
- In the event of a serious incident/accident as many members of staff as is possible/practical in the circumstances shall come together; they shall agree on an outline of the details of the incident/accident and taking into account all the facts as they are known at that time, shall decide on a course of action. The details and the decision(s) taken shall be put in writing as close to the event as is reasonable. The Board accepts that in cases where there is lack of consensus over the course of action, the tour leader(s) (where available) has the final decision. In the event that a student is in serious breach of discipline and is sent home any costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians.
- If necessary two members of staff should carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc.). The school reserves the right to examine all luggage carried by students on school tours prior to departure and during the course of the trip. 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. If a search is deemed necessary, the student may also be asked to empty his pockets.

10. Financial administration of school trips

All school trips outside of Ireland must be organised strictly in keeping with the JMB/FSSU 2022/23 - 31 Financial Guidelines 'School Tours – Complying with Regulations and Requirements'.

For trips within Ireland all monies collected from students will be receipted by the organising teacher and money lodged, recorded and receipted immediately with the school office. No cash is to be kept by the organising teacher in classrooms or other locations including bank accounts. The financial details of all trips must be provided to the Principal in written form as part of the planning for such trips.

In the case of overseas trips and overnight trips the tour leader(s) shall be given a sum of money (amount to be decided by the Board) which may be used in the event of an emergency.

Any student who withdraws from a trip after a deposit or full monies have been paid, may not be entitled to a refund. A student, who is not allowed to travel for disciplinary reasons which occur following payment of a deposit or full amount, will not be entitled to a refund.

11. Garda Vetting

St Benildus College complies with the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Act 2016. School trips will be organised in keeping with the school's vetting policy.

12. Transport

Transport arrangements for school organised trips will be advised in advance of the trip.

13. Review & Ratification

- a. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Benildus College
19/3/26
- b. This policy may be reviewed as deemed necessary by the Board.

Signed: Decl Mowlds
Chairperson

Date: 19/03/2026

Signed: Mary Brohan
Principal

Date: 19th March 2026

APPENDIX 1

PROTOCOLS AND PRODECURES

- The school policy on Child Protection and Safeguarding will be complied with at all times.
- **The Code of Behaviour will apply at all times throughout the trip.** School sanctions as outlined in our Code of Behaviour will apply.
- In the case of a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour, the student will have to leave the trip and their parents/guardians will have to come and collect them to bring them home at their own expense. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school.
- The school AUP Policy will apply.
- Trips and outings of any nature require the signing of a form by the student's parent / guardian and the student themselves. Any information about a pupil which may be deemed relevant such as allergies, serious medical problems or special needs should be provided by parents/guardians and potential problems and responsibilities highlighted in advance of any school trip. The final decision regarding a student's attendance on a school trip rests with the school.
- An information session will take place in advance of foreign trips of several days' duration and parents/guardians and students must attend. The leader(s) of the trip will outline the purpose of the trip and the planned itinerary. The behavioural expectations and relevant possible sanctions will also be outlined in advance of departure. Should the particular nature of the trip require any special instructions or outline of expectations particular to that trip, the overall leader(s) of the trip will clarify this information at the information session.
- Parents/guardians will be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a 24 hour basis for the duration of the school tour. A mobile telephone will be supplied to the tour leader(s) for school tours. The number of the phone will be given to parents/guardians and students prior to departure for use only in case of emergency. Mobile phone communications between teachers and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participant's mobile phone numbers and will be kept only for the duration of the trip. The trip organiser will have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and one of the Deputy Principals.
- Parents/Guardians are required to share details of all medical, dietary, physical and personal requirements with the trip organiser in advance of the trip taking place.
- School management reserves the right to allocate student accommodation.
- During the trip school personnel will take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety and protection of pupils when planning for and supervising students during a school trip. Teachers will act in "loco parentis" and will monitor students closely and will recognise the duty of care that teachers have to the students. Each teacher will have responsibility for a particular group of students. Please note: Students on overnight trips cannot be supervised on a 24 hour basis. Trips may involve periods of time without direct supervision, e.g., when students are in a theme park, etc.

- Regular roll calls will take place during the trip. It is important that when asked to do so that students remain in their designated group during the day and arrive on time for roll calls. Students are not permitted to leave the group unless they have been given permission by a leader(s) to do so.
- Pupils are obliged to treat people with respect throughout the trip. This includes teachers/organisers/leaders/drivers/tour guides and anybody they may encounter during the trip. Students are expected to work together in the spirit of inclusion reflected in our school ethos for the duration of the trip and for the benefit of all attendees.
- Students are expected to dress appropriately for the duration of school trips. Students are expected to show due regard for the cultural environment and norms of a particular country. Students are expected to show respect through how they present themselves. Students who are deemed by a leader(s) to be dressed inappropriately will be asked to change into more suitable clothing. Should special clothing be required for a cultural / sporting event, we will do our best to let students know in advance.
- Students will be expected to attend mealtimes unless they have been given permission by a leader(s) not to attend. It is desirable that students do not use mobile phones at mealtimes. The leader(s) will outline clear expectations in relation to this and general mobile phone use and expectations in advance of the trip
- It is the student's responsibility to take care of their own possessions during the school trip to include mobile phones, money etc. We encourage students to take every necessary precaution in this regard.
- Pupils are expected to participate, relative to their ability, in the activity schedule when away on a school trip.
- In the case where students are given permission to be unaccompanied for a specified period of time for a specified activity, students should always travel in groups (minimum of 3). During this time students are expected to treat all others they encounter and their surroundings with respect and school rules apply.
- All students must ensure that hotel rooms are kept clean and tidy. Similarly, it is each student's responsibility to keep the bus clean, tidy and free of litter.
- Save in compelling circumstances, no staff member or volunteer shall accompany a child alone on a journey in a car without a standard parental consent form. Such compelling circumstances will be taken to exist where it can reasonably be judged that the safety or well-being of the child requires that such a journey be undertaken notwithstanding it shall seek to have the presence of a second child or where this is not possible shall notify the principal of the fact that the journey in question was undertaken and the reason why it was judged necessary.
- Should a student become ill during the trip, where necessary, a leader(s) and another student or teacher will remain with that student at the designated accommodation for the day(s) the student in question is deemed too unwell to travel/participate. Please see Appendix 2 re: COVID-19.
- Appropriate and well supervised sleeping arrangements will be put in place. Students are expected to adhere to bedtimes and 'lights out' times. Students are to remain in their rooms after this time. Teachers will be on "patrol" for a reasonable period of time after

lights out and will call students approx. half an hour before breakfast in the morning. Students will not be permitted to be in any other room apart from their own rooms once they have been sent to their rooms at nighttime.

- The trip will be reviewed with attendees in the aftermath of the trip. This will be done in consultation with the senior management team.

APPENDIX 2 – COVID-19

If a student presents with symptoms of COVID-19 and local rules and regulations dictate that the student must isolate or if the student tests positive for COVID-19 while on tour and has to isolate for a period after the tour ends, the student's parents/guardians will have to travel to the relevant country to remain with the student at their own expense. Parents/guardians will be contacted immediately if this arises.

APPENDIX 3 – Critical Incident on a School Trip

The designated Group Leader will inform the Principal as soon as possible in the event of a critical incident. The Principal will convene a meeting of all available members of the Critical Incident Team. The Principal and/or other members of the Critical Incident Team will make contact with families of all staff and students on the tour. The Principal will keep in regular contact with the Group Leader, and if necessary, the Principal or another member of the Critical Incident Team will travel to the location of the tour. The Principal and/or another member of the Critical Incident Team will stay in regular contact with the Tour Organiser and the Department of Foreign Affairs if relevant. The school Critical Incident Plan will be followed as appropriate.

I have read and agree with all of the above.

Student: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Date _____