

School Tour/Outing Policy v 1.0

1. Purpose of Policy

Aims: The primary aim of this policy devolves from DES Circular 12/79, which states that: 'The objective of educational tours for schools should be that they be of benefit to the intellectual, cultural and social development of the pupils taking part in them, and any activity, in connection with a tour, which is in conflict with this objective, is to be avoided.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all school tours, outings and excursions are organised in a safe and secure manner, prioritising the well-being of students and staff while also adhering to the guidelines set forth by the **Department of Education, Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU)**, and other relevant authorities. The policy provides a framework for planning, communication, and financial transparency for all school trips.

Annual Tours which fulfil the educational objectives as outlined in this policy's aims will take place for the following classes:

- Senior Infants
- 2nd class
- 4th Class
- 6th Class

2. General Principles

All school tours and outings must receive approval from the board of management before any arrangements are made.

The board of management, Principal and staff should carefully evaluate the following before approving a tour/outing:

- Staffing arrangements for the tour/outing and the school during the tour./outing
- Financial controls and the need for accountability
- Legal requirements

The board of management should be informed of planned school tours/outings before communicating with students and parents.

Student Safety: The safety and welfare of students are the paramount concerns in the planning and execution of any school tour or excursion.

Equal Access: All students should be encouraged to participate in school tours/outings, regardless of financial or personal circumstances, where possible. Every effort will be made

to accommodate students with additional needs. Teachers will ensure that venues are suitable for pupils with special needs, physical disabilities or other individual considerations. Teachers should consult with Principal about choice of venue if there are any queries of accessibility for individual children. Classes may choose a venue suitable for their own level or lower but not from levels above.

Uniforms: Teachers travelling together will decide whether uniforms or tracksuits should be worn by all. Children should never wear name badges in public under Child Protection guidelines.

Transparency and Communication: Parents/guardians will be informed well in advance of any school tours or excursions, and clear information regarding costs, itinerary, and requirements will be provided.

Compliance with FSSU Guidelines: All school tours must be in compliance with the FSSU guidelines regarding financial management, ensuring that any financial contributions for excursions are handled appropriately.

3. Types of Tours/Outings

School tours/outing may include, but are not limited to, the following types of activities:

- Educational trips to museums, galleries, parks, nature reserves, etc.
- Day trips to local attractions and outdoor activities.

The nature of each tour/outing will determine the specific planning and risk management requirements.

4. Planning and Preparation

Organising Staff: Tours must be planned by a staff member or group of staff designated by the principal. They will be responsible for liaising with external providers, ensuring that appropriate risk assessments are completed in consultation with the Deputy Principal and that in consultation with the Principal the required staffing levels are maintained for student safety.

Conditions of Hiring All transport supplied, will be suitable and well-maintained. Buses booked for tours/trips must be fitted with individual seatbelts and these should be worn by all children. Teachers have the right to refuse to use any bus they find unsuitable for their outing. If the bus proves unsuitable, a replacement will be supplied or the money refunded. The driver will be used to dealing with children and have a thorough knowledge of and follow the itinerary and timetable for the tour. The driver is responsible for the safety of the children while they are travelling, but teachers have the right to intervene if it is felt the safety of the children is compromised.

Risk Assessment: A comprehensive risk assessment will be conducted for each tour/outing, identifying potential risks and the measures to mitigate them. This will cover all aspects of the trip, including travel, accommodation (if applicable), activities, and student health and wellbeing.

Insurance: The school must ensure that adequate insurance is in place for each excursion. This includes both accident and public liability insurance.

Pupils who choose not to participate in the end of year tours/class trips/outings are accommodated in school on the day.

5. Parental/Guardian Consent

- **No Waiver Clauses:** The school will not request any waiver clauses from parents/guardians. Instead, written consent (to include google form) will be sought for each student's participation in a tour or excursion. This will outline:
 - Details of the tour/outing (dates, location, activities, cost, etc.)
 - Emergency contact information for the student
 - Medical requirements (allergies, medications, etc.)
 - Acknowledgement of the risk assessment and the school's safety procedures

6. Financial Management

In line with **FSSU guidelines**, the following measures will be implemented:

- **Costing and Budgeting:** A detailed budget for each tour/outing will be prepared in advance, ensuring that the cost per student is reasonable and covers all relevant expenses, including transportation, admission fees, meals, and any additional required resources, and presented to the Principal.
- **Payment Arrangements:** Payment details will be clearly communicated to parents/guardians. All funds raised for the tour/outing must be properly accounted for and managed according to the **FSSU Financial Procedures Manual**.
- Receipts will be issued by the school secretary for money collected for tours/outings

7. Staff Involvement

- **Teacher and Staff Roles:** Teachers and staff members will supervise and accompany students during tours. The staff-to-student ratio will be determined based on the risk assessment and the age and needs of the students.
- **Vetting:** All staff and volunteers accompanying students on a tour/outing must be Garda vetted and have completed any necessary child protection training.

8. Health and Safety

- **First Aid:** A first aid kit with adequate supplies will be available for each trip, and all staff will be informed of its contents and location.
- **Emergency Procedures:** A clear and effective emergency procedure will be established for every tour/outing, covering various scenarios including medical emergencies, accidents, or inclement weather. This procedure will be shared with staff, parents, and students in advance.

- **Medication:** Any required medication for students will be managed according to the school's medication policy, with specific instructions from parents/guardians.

9. Behaviour and Code of Conduct

- **Student Expectations:** Students are expected to follow the school's code of behaviour at all times. Failure to adhere to the expected standard of conduct may result in the student being sent home early or not participating in future tours/outings.
- **Staff Supervision:** All staff members are responsible for maintaining discipline and ensuring students behave safely and responsibly during the excursion at all times.

10. Post-Tour Evaluation

After the tour, a debrief will be held for all staff involved to assess the overall experience. Feedback may be sought from students and parents, which will inform the planning of future tours/outings. This feedback will be used to evaluate:

- The educational value of the trip
- The effectiveness of risk management
- Any improvements that could be made in future tours

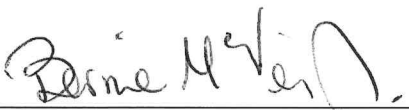
11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains relevant and in compliance with any changes to **Department of Education** guidelines, the **FSSU**, and any other applicable regulations. Changes to the policy will be communicated to staff, parents, and guardians.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 28th January 2025

Signed:

Chairperson of Board of Management



Secretary Board of Management

School Tours – Complying with Regulations and Requirements

1. Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to remind schools of best practice around the financial aspects of school tours. The board of management must ensure that all the requirements outlined in this guideline are adhered to. The guideline applies to tours on the island of Ireland and outside the island of Ireland.

2. Financial Procedures and Controls for School Tours

2.1 Policy Statement on School Tours

The board of management should ensure a clear policy statement on school tours is prepared for the guidance of staff, students, and parents.

2.2 Approval Process

All school tours and outings must receive approval from the board of management before any arrangements are made.

2.3 Board Considerations

The board of management, Principal, and staff should carefully evaluate the following before approving a tour:

- Staffing arrangements for the tour and the school during the tour.
- Financial controls and the need for accountability.
- Legal requirements for tours outside the State (if applicable).

2.4 Board Notification

The board of management should be informed of planned school tours before communicating with students and parents.

2.5 Tour Criteria

Before granting authorisation, the board of management should ensure the following:

- The total cost of the tour should be communicated to parents as early as possible.
- Adequate insurance coverage must be in place.
- Written parental approval is required for each participating student.
- Arrangements must be made for students not participating in the tour and for the classes of any absent teachers.

2.6 Tour Authorisation Form

It is recommended that the tour authorisation form should be completed for all trips.

[Click here](#) for a template form.

2.7 Booking Requirements for Foreign Trips

All foreign trips (outside the island of Ireland) must be booked through a bonded and licensed travel agent or tour operator, in compliance with Aviation Authority regulations. The agreement with the tour operator must contain the requirements of the guideline. While we do not recommend specific tour companies, schools are free to choose any bonded tour operator from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie.

2.8 Payment Handling for Foreign Trips

Payments for travel and accommodation for trips outside the island of Ireland should be made directly to the school tour company, not to the school. Other associated costs can be processed through the school's main bank account. If direct payments to the travel agent are not feasible, schools may collect cheques made out to the bonded tour operator and forward them accordingly. These cheques must be stored securely in the school safe until forwarded, and they must be payable to the bonded tour operator, not the school.

2.9 Collaboration with Tour Operators

Schools are advised to work closely with tour operators to establish procedures that ensure the school retains full control over the tour.

Below relates to school tours/trips on the island of Ireland and outside the island of Ireland (if applicable).

2.10 Financial Administration

At least two teachers should be responsible for the financial administration of a school tour to ensure transparency and protection for all parties.

2.11 Accounting and Documentation

All financial transactions related to the tour should be recorded in the school's accounts using specific tour codes. Invoices and receipts must be retained.

2.12 Self-Financing

Any deficit or borrowing to support a school tour must be avoided at all costs. All tours should be self-financing and exposing the school to any liability associated with the tour must be avoided.

2.13 Regular Reconciliation and Reporting

Accounts and records for the tour should be reconciled regularly, and reports should be presented to the Principal. A financial report on the tour should be presented to the board of management at least twice during the school year and a final report when all transactions relating to the tour have been completed. The financial report on the tour should be incorporated into the annual school accounts.

2.14 Summary Report

Teachers who organised the tour should prepare a summary report for the Principal upon return from the tour. This report should be presented to the board of management. This report should include:

- Date of the tour
- Number of students participating
- Number of adults (teachers/non-teachers) accompanied the students
- Financial summary
- Any issues encountered

2.15 Issuing Receipts

Receipts must be issued for all money collected.

2.16 Money Handling and Lodgement

All money collected should be lodged promptly in the school's main bank account. Funds held for more than a month should be transferred to a school deposit account.

2.17 Advancing Monies

If money is advanced to a teacher for tour expenses, an itemised budget must be in place. For significant amounts, a prepaid card can be used or monies transferred to the teachers account, to prevent risk of loss.

When the tour is complete receipts for all expenses incurred should be submitted to the

school, along with a summary. Any unspent balance should be returned to the school. See below for reporting requirements to Revenue under Enhanced Reporting Requirements (ERR) for advance payments.

3. Enhanced Reporting Requirements (ERR) system

Starting from 1st of January 2024, schools are required to report certain expenses and benefits paid to employees and board of management members through the Enhanced Reporting Requirements (ERR) system on ROS.

As employees of the board of management, the school Principal, teachers, and SNAs must have any reimbursements for travel and subsistence reported to Revenue through ERR. Only reimbursements paid directly to employees need to be reported under this system.

Not Reportable:

- Travel and subsistence expenses paid directly by the school, such as when the school pays for a hotel stay or train tickets using the school credit card, do not need to be reported.
- Reimbursement to a teacher for food purchased for students, such as lunch expenses during a trip, is not reportable under ERR.

Reportable:

- Reimbursement to a teacher for their own travel or subsistence expenses, such as lunch for themselves during a trip, must be reported.

Advance Payment:

- An advance payment is subject to ERR reporting at the time of payment. Then, when the expense is incurred and the receipts submitted by the teacher/employee after the tour, the school will be required to update their ERR submission to Revenue to reflect the actual travel and subsistence expense amount in respect of that teacher/employee only.

Click [here](#) for further information on ERR.

4. Further information or clarification

Further information or clarification on any of the issues raised in this guideline can be obtained from the FSSU.

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2nd October 2024