

ST. PATRICK'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL



SCHOOL TOUR POLICY

The School Tours Policy of St. Patrick's Classical School should be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour, the Child Safeguarding Statement, the Protocols for Protection of Students in St. Patrick's Classical School and the Child Protection Guidelines. The school's Code of Behaviour applies to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours, i.e. when on school related activities/outings/tours where students are identified or identifiable as students of St. Patrick's Classical School.

Rationale

It is the policy of the Board of Management/Principal/Deputy Principal to encourage, where appropriate, extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities which further the broader educational development of students.

School trips/outings are an integral part of school life. They enhance classroom learning and add to the personal and social development of the student.

- The curricular content of many subjects requires field studies/tours/outings/recreational activities which take place off campus
- All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Science in Circular Letter M20/04 particularly that school tours should be an extension and reinforcement of classroom activities. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.
- A relevant policy is needed to assist staff in the planning of tours/outings and to lay out the necessary precautions which need to be observed in order to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.
- A relevant policy is also needed to ensure that there is a balanced programme of tours/outings that does not overburden the school timetable or prove too costly to parents.

DEFINITION:

A School Tour is defined as any group travel involving at least one overnight stay.

School Mission Statement:

The mission of St. Patrick's Classical School is to educate its students according to the best traditions and highest standards of Catholic schooling. It endeavours at all times to provide, through as wide, as varied and as balanced a curriculum as is possible, for the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural and moral development of all its students.

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of the Board of Management/Principal/Deputy Principal to encourage, where appropriate, extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities which further the broader educational development of students.

APPROVAL:

1. The Tour Leader(s) must obtain permission from the Board of Management (BOM), Principal/Deputy Principal to take students on a school tour. A general outline of the tour, including travel dates, tour company details, travel insurance, the total tour price and the general tour itinerary, should accompany the request for permission. Permission must be sought from the October Board of Management meeting.
2. Prior to seeking permission, the Tour Leader(s) must enter into discussions with the Principal/Deputy Principal to ensure that the proposed tour dates do not impinge upon the normal teaching routine of the school year.

Unforeseen Changes to Tour/Trip Post-Booking

Where, after a tour/trip has been booked in accordance with this Policy and on dates that do not impinge on teaching and learning time, the Tour Leader(s) becomes aware of any material change outside his/her control (including, but not limited to, changes by a provider to dates, times, itinerary, transport or accommodation) that may affect the approved arrangements, the Tour Leader(s) must immediately notify the Board of Management (via the Principal) and seek advice on whether the tour/trip should proceed as amended, be rescheduled or cancelled. No altered arrangements are to be confirmed with the provider until the Board of Management has considered the matter and issued directions.

In urgent cases requiring a prompt decision (e.g. provider deadlines), the Principal, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board of Management, may give an interim direction to be noted at the next Board meeting.

3. All school tours must conform to the criteria as set down in the Department of Education and Science circular M20/04 relating to Educational Tours by School Groups (inside and outside of the State).

The Tour Leader(s) must ensure that pupils and staff who are travelling on foreign school trips are aware that the protection under the legislation in repatriating passengers and providing refunds to those prevented from travelling abroad only comes into operation where bookings are made directly with licensed travel agents and/or tour operators.

The legislation provides that it is a requirement that any person or legal entity that sells travel out of Ireland must hold an appropriate license to do so. Under the provisions of the Transport (Tour Operators and Travel Agents) Act 1982 a travel agent is defined as:

“a person other than a carrier who as agent sells or offers to sell to, or purchases or offers to purchase on behalf of, any person, accommodation on air, sea or land transport commencing in the State to destinations outside the State or Northern Ireland or who holds himself out by advertising or otherwise as one who may make available such accommodation, either solely or in association with other accommodation facilities or services”

Under the Act a tour operator is defined as:

“a person other than a carrier who arranges for the purpose of selling or offering for sale to any person, accommodation for travel by air, sea or land transport commencing in the State to destinations outside the State or Northern Ireland or who holds himself out by advertising or otherwise as one who may make available such accommodation, either solely or in association with other accommodation facilities or other services”

Any school wishing to organise a school tour abroad must do so using a licensed tour operator or travel agent to arrange the travel package including accommodation and other services. All monies must be paid directly to the tour operator or travel agent, not to school staff or event coordinator.

Compliance ensures that the event is covered by the relevant bond held by the tour operator or travel agent with the Commission for Aviation Regulation as part of the annual licensing requirement, if for any reason the license holder ceases to trade.

It is imperative that the tour operator or travel agent chosen to arrange the overseas trip holds a current license. The full list of all current license holders is available on www.aviationreg.ie.

PROCEDURE:

In order to ensure that schools are compliant with this legislation, please note the following:

1. All school tours travelling outside of the Republic of Ireland must be booked through a bonded licensed travel agent or tour operator from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie.

Payments from students should be made **directly** to the travel agent or tour operator and not collected through the school. Where it is not possible for payments to be made directly to the travel agent the Aviation Regulator has confirmed that a school is in compliance with relevant legislation where cheques made out to the bonded travel operator are collected by the school. These cheques can be forwarded to the bonded tour operator by the school. It is important to note that these cheques **must** be made payable to the bonded tour operator, **not** to the school.

2. Many tour operators and travel agents can accept payments electronically or by cheque and cash. The Tour Leader(s) must work closely with the tour operators in establishing procedures to ensure the school retains full control of the tour.

3. This policy does not recommended use of any particular tour company. Schools are free to select any of the bonded tour operators from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie

4. FSSU Guideline 04-2007/2008 ‘Educational Tours by School Groups’ and Circular M20/04 give further guidance on the operation of school tours.

TOUR TEAM:

1. A Tour Team, led by the Tour Leader(s) should be put in place as soon as possible. A reserve list is advisable in case a member of the team should subsequently be unable to travel,

2. The Tour Team may come from different departments within the school structure. If a sufficient number of Team members are not available within the school, other adults wishing to travel may come from outside the school. Tour Team members may include: (a) Teaching Staff (b) Special Needs Assistants (c) Secretarial Staff (d) Caretaking Staff (e) Parents (f) Members of BOM (g) Staff Partners (h) Friends of Staff. All adults travelling must be Garda Vetted.

3. The Tour Leader(s) should meet the full Tour Team at the outset so as to discuss individual duties. Ideally all members of the Tour Team should be involved in organising the tour, taking up duties in one of the following areas. (a) Tour Finances – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader (b) Group Passport – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader – for reasons of privacy some students may obtain their own passports. (c) E111 forms – any member of the Tour Team (d) The Tour Itinerary – cultural passes, internal tours – any member of the Tour Team (e) General needs – medical kit, home contact numbers, medical services' contacts in area to be toured etc. – any member of Tour Team.

TOUR FINANCES:

All income and expenditure related to the Tour should conform fully to the accounting practices of the school. A full account of income and expenditure should, at reasonable notice, be available to the Principal/Deputy Principal and the BOM. The Tour Leader is responsible for the following Financial Procedures:

1. Tour leader must meet with the principal to discuss all matters relating to the tour, financial etc
2. When on tour the Tour Leader should keep receipts of all money spent.
3. If for whatever reason there is money left over at the end of the tour, it should be refunded to the students when they return to school. Students must sign for any refunded money and parents/guardians must acknowledge receipt of the refund in question.

4. On completion of the Tour and all associated financial transactions, the Tour Leader must provide the Principal/Deputy Principal and BOM with a complete Financial Statement.

ELIGIBILITY:

Students who are suspended from school will not be permitted to travel on a school trip scheduled during the same academic year as the suspension.

Monies paid may not be refunded, subject to the Policy of the Tour Company organising the trip.

Students who have not paid other monies due to the school (including but not limited to book rental, annual charge etc.) will not be eligible to travel on a school tour.

Participation of Students Requiring Support on School Tours and Trips

St. Patrick's Classical School is committed to the inclusion of all students in the full life of the school, including educational tours, field trips, and extracurricular activities. Every reasonable effort shall be made to facilitate the participation of students who ordinarily receive Special Needs Assistant (SNA) support during the school day or where a student presents with care, safety, or behavioural needs .

Participation in any school tour or trip by a student who ordinarily receives SNA support shall be subject to the availability of that student's assigned SNA or a Parent/Guardian (subject to Garda Vetting and Child Safeguarding checks) to accompany and support the student for the full duration of the tour or trip.

Participation in any school tour or trip by a student who requires support due to Mental Health challenges or behavioural needs shall be subject to the availability of that student's Parent/Guardian (subject to Garda Vetting and Child Safeguarding checks) to accompany and support the student for the full duration of the tour or trip.

The absence of suitable support if required on a tour or trip would represent an unacceptable level of risk to both student and tour leaders.

NOTICE TO PARENTS:

1. Once permission has been granted by the BOM the parents/guardians of the selected group/year/class should receive a circular outlining the general nature of the proposed tour. As far as possible all the students in the target group should receive the circular on the same day.
2. The circular should specify;
 - ◆ The objectives of the tour.
 - ◆ The itinerary and duration of the tour.
 - ◆ The full costs involved and the method of payment (deadlines etc.).
 - ◆ Information regarding insurance and indemnity.
 - ◆ The general rules of behaviour to be observed (detailed rules to follow).
 - ◆ If the numbers are limited and a deposit is required to secure a place.
3. Parents should also be made aware, through the circular, of their duty to inform the school of any relevant Health or Safety issues which might affect their children while on tour.
4. The signed consent/permission of parents/guardians is an essential pre-requisite for the participation of any student on the tour.

MEETING PARENTS:

Preferably in the week before departure, a meeting of the parents of all students going on the Tour should be held. Where possible all students and staff travelling should attend this meeting as well. A representative of the Tour Company may also be invited to the meeting to address parents. The following information should be given to parents at this meeting:

1. A detailed itinerary – dates, times, locations, hotels, addresses, contact phone numbers etc.
2. Advice on a reasonable daily allowance, in the currency of the country to be visited, for each student to bring.
3. Advice to students, in the presence of parents, as to how best students can safeguard their money when on Tour.

Parents should also use the meeting to provide the Tour Leader with written information on the form provided about the student/s medical background.

1. Where a student requires constant or regular medication specific written details must be given to the Tour Leader. Parents/guardians may request a private meeting at another time to inform the Tour Leader about the illness and the manner in which the medication should be administered.
2. The Tour Leader should establish if a non-medical person can administer the medication.
3. Each parent/guardian must fill in a form which includes medical history, contact numbers, allergies and medication to be taken. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that a student has medication sufficient to last the entire Tour.
4. In the event of a medical emergency/dental emergency while on Tour it may be necessary for a member of the Tour Team to act in loco parentis. The following agreement should be issued to all parents/guardians and must be signed prior to the tour.

We, the tour leaders (named below) will act on medical advice presented to us if in the event of an accident or emergency where it is not possible to contact parents, guardians or next of kin either by phone or due to time considerations.

Before the tour leaves parents/guardians must specify in writing the person/s they wish the Tour Leaders to contact in the event of parents/guardians being unavailable. In the event of an emergency parents/guardians will always be contacted first.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

The Tour Leader must ensure that complete contact information is left on file in the Office, available for use in the event of an emergency. The list should include:

1. Names, addresses and home contact numbers of all those going on the Tour.
2. Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
3. A contact number, day or night, for the Tour Leader(s).

ON TOUR SUPERVISION:

Prior to leaving each teacher should be assigned a small number of students and be known to the students as their Group Leader. If possible these groups should remain unchanged throughout the tour. It is the responsibility of each Group Leader to:

1. Call his/her group together at specific times in busy areas (bus depots, airports etc.)
2. Count the group members on and off planes, ships, trains, buses etc.
3. Arrange specific meeting points and times to meet students when on day tours (city landmarks, cafes, ski slopes etc.)

The Tour Leader should place teachers on a Supervision Rota for use in the various types of overnight accommodation used. Students should be made aware that corridors are being supervised. The Tour Leader should:

1. Draw up a rota for nightly corridor supervision.
2. Draw up a rota for calling students each morning.
3. Ensure teachers are on corridor duty until 1am/2am or as required.

It is not recommended that personnel other than current school staff are engaged in chaperoning or supervising students in their overnight accommodation although in certain instances this may be necessary. If there are plans to use anyone other than staff personnel in this capacity, the Tour Team member will require Garda clearance to do so before the tour takes place.

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR:

The Code of Behaviour is to be observed by all students. The Code itself should be positive and consistent with the objectives of the Tour and with the age and level of maturity of the students involved.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the students prior to departure and outline the Code of Behaviour as follows:

1. Students must adhere to the school rules at all times where they are applicable.
2. Students must adhere to the Tour dress code as set down by the Tour Leader.
3. Students must follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
4. Students must be well behaved on public and/or private transport while on tour.
5. Students are responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
6. Students are responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy.

The Tour Team should check all rooms before students have access to them and make a note of any damage done prior to their arrival. Vacated rooms should also be checked for damage.

SANCTIONS ON TOUR:

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 a half-day's activities (not however an activity related to health and safety).
2. The student missing out on a specific activity e.g. bowling.
3. 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.

Examples of 'serious misbehaviour' including but not limited to :

1. Use/possession of alcohol.
2. Use/possession of illegal substances (drugs etc.)
3. Use/possession of cigarettes.
4. Misuse of legal substances (lighter fluid, tippex etc.)
5. Disruptive behaviour on coach, plane, boat or in the hotel/hostel.
6. Lack of respect for accommodation rules.
7. Lack of respect for the Tour Team or any other supervising adults.
8. Theft or criminal damage to property of others.

Where a student is guilty of 'serious misbehaviour' the Tour Leader may decide to phone the student's parents/guardians to provide them with details of the incident/s.

In ongoing and extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour a student may be sent home.

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.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal on return to school.

REPORTING BACK TO BOM/PRINCIPAL/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL:

Within two weeks of the Tour party's return, the Tour Leader should provide the BOM/Principal/Deputy Principal with a general, written report outlining:

1. The achievements/success of the Tour.
2. A completed Financial Statement.
3. Details of any incidents which required the imposition of sanctions while on Tour.
4. An assessment of the School Tour Policy and suggestions for ways to improve or strengthen it prior to future School Tours.

INSPECTION TOURS/COMPLIMENTARY TOURS:

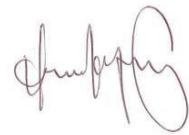
Offers of Inspection Tours/Complimentary Trips etc. from Tour Companies to tour organisers in the school must be brought to the immediate attention of the Principal and the Board of Management. All interested parties will be made aware of the offer(s). Expressions of interest from eligible staff members will be sought and a decision will be made by the Principal and Board of Management following consultation with interested members of staff.

The Board of Management approved and ratified the School Policy on the 10-11-2025.

Signed:



Signed:



Fr. Gerry Stuart

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 10-11-2025

Mr. Harry Mc Garry

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 10-11-2025