

Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, Thurles



Educational Tours & Out of School Activities Policy November 2019

Educational Tours & Out of School Activities Policy

Foreword: While this policy focuses mainly on foreign school tours, the guidelines outlined should be considered for all trips and outings organised in the name of the school.

Rationale:

This Policy has been drawn up in the context of Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter M 20/04 – Educational Tours by School Groups

The purpose of tours and outings is to provide students with cultural, educational, spiritual and social development in an alternative environment to enhance the experience of school.

Proposals:

All school outings are subject to approval on suitability and timing by the Principal. Proposals should be submitted well in advance by the tour coordinator to the Principal with all details and costings outlined.

Foreign School Tour Goals:

To create good/positive memories of school

To foster independence and maturity

To encourage travel, providing greater understanding of different cultures

To improve students social skills, communication skills and life skills in general

To create an extension and reinforcement of classroom activities.

Inclusion:

It is school policy to include all children in school tours. A decision on any exclusion rests with the Principal & Tour Coordinator. The school reserves the right to conduct appropriate risk assessments. It should also be noted that should a student be on the “ladder of referral” (colloquially known as “on report”) the decision around inclusion on the tour rests with the Principal. Typically a student on Principal’s or board of management red report will not be allowed to travel. A student on white or yellow report will be risk assessed to inform the final decision.

Tour Company:

Where appropriate a chartered tour company will be used in the booking and organising of the proposed tour. The tour company in collaboration with the tour coordinator will be responsible for:

The suitability of travel and accommodation arrangements
Appropriate travel insurance for all travelling

Responsibilities of Tour coordinator:

Keep accurate accounts including full details of income and expenditure on a yearly basis.

Accounts will be overseen by the principal and checked annually by ETB.

Work closely with the tour company to plan and organise the tour.

Communicate regularly with parents keeping them informed of all developments during the planning stage. Hold an information evening for the parents before the tour departs outlining expected behaviour, costing, itinerary and contact information.

Have a full list of students attending, their parents/guardians contact numbers and details of any medical information necessary

Work in partnership with all teachers travelling on tour to ensure a safe and enjoyable tour for all travelling.

Maintain contact with the Principal during the tour and deliver a full detailed report to the Principal on return, outlining the achievements of the tour and any difficulties or problems which arose during the course of the tour.

Tour coordinator should consult with and follow the department of foreign affairs guidelines applicable to destination

Teachers should do a risk assessment on the students travelling. The following information should be supplied to the principal if applicable

What are the hazards

Who may be harmed

Ways to prevent this harm

Teacher in charge

Professional Responsibilities of Staff

Teachers and school staff who volunteer to lead school tours and/or facilitate extra curricular activities do so in a professional capacity. The primary duty of teachers and school staff is to care for and ensure the safety of all students on tour. Teachers and school staff must adhere to prescribed guidelines of co-operation for tours. Each attending member of staff must agree to these guidelines prior to departure on the school tour.

Guidelines for Staff

The teachers and school staff who attend school tour will be assigned a group of students (ratio of 1:8 approx) for which they will be responsible.

The care provided for students must be of the same standard of that which the teachers and school staff provide in a school situation.

To ensure cohesion in the enforcement of discipline during the school tour, attending teachers and school staff must familiarise themselves with the school tour rules. Discipline must be enforced appropriately.

In the case of a shortage in teaching staff volunteering to participate in the school tour, the shortfall in supervision may be provided by Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and/or appropriately garda vetted parents of students attending Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed (as per Dept of Education guidelines on Educational Tours & Out of School Activities Policy M20/04). SNAs and parents will be invited to act as group carers, working in partnership with a teacher facilitating an increased teacher/student ratio. SNAs and parents must report any arising disciplinary and/or other arising issues to the tour coordinator, for the tour coordinator to deal with.

The tour itinerary should be arranged prior to departure of the trip. Attending teachers and school staff are welcome to contribute to the finalisation of the itinerary. Teachers and school staff must ensure that all students attend each planned activity on the itinerary. The itinerary will not be subject to change for the duration of the trip unless the Tour Coordinator deems it necessary to do so.

Teachers and school staff are required to attend to the care of students for the duration of the trip. Teachers and school staff will be on duty each day of the trip. Supervision at night will also be required and will be carried out on a rotation basis.

Should a member of staff become ill or need to leave their group for any reason beyond their control, the unattended students will be distributed evenly among each remaining group coordinator.

In special circumstances, the Tour Co-ordinator may be able to grant leave to a teacher or school staff member on request. This leave is subject to the approval of the Principal and he/she must be given notice of such a request prior to departure of the tour.

While on tour, teachers and school staff must act in a responsible manner at all times, remembering that they are in the company of and are responsible for the care of the students of Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed. Therefore the inappropriate use of alcohol, drugs or the engagement in any other activity which would compromise and/or inhibit the provision of care to students is forbidden.

Responsibility of Parents

Parents are expected to help with preparing their child for the tour in a number of ways;

- Ensure all payments are submitted on time for the tour.

Working in partnership with the teachers who are monitoring student behaviour in school.
Making sure all students have valid passports and EHIC cards to travel on tour
Consent to the proposed rules and regulations for the tour and give signed acceptance of the discipline policy.
Give details of student medical conditions. Written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times), relevant paperwork to support the transport of medication across customs borders and parental permission to administer same.
Attend planning night where all details are presented and discussed by Tour coordinator, Teachers and Parents. (Itinerary/ Rules / Contact Details / Concerns)
Participate in an individual risk assessment if deemed necessary by school management or tour coordinator.

Responsibility of Students

- Only those students with a good record of behaviour in school will be allowed go on school tours/outings.
- Before students go on tour they must agree to the contract of behaviour as laid out in appendix 1
- School outings are designed to be both educational and enjoyable for both students and coordinators. All students are asked to approach outings positively and in the spirit of which they are intended.

Appendix 1 Contract of Behaviour

Student Tour Rules/Parental Guidelines

Foreword:

A School Tour is an authorised School Activity

All existing school rules must be adhered to rigidly by everyone. No exceptions will be made.

The good conduct of all is crucial to the safety and overall success of a tour.

General Conduct

Everyone must conduct themselves at all times (in private and in public), in such a manner as to not give offence or annoyance to other people.

Punctuality and consideration for others are essential.

Attitude:

Students must travel with a spirit of genuine willingness and co-operation and accept that teachers are “in loco parentis”.

Teachers will not accept disrespect of any kind.

Friends:

Bus seats and bedroom accommodation will, as far as possible, be allocated to friends.

Teachers have the right to change pairs or groups where they deem necessary.

School to School:

Travel arrangements are from “school to school”.

Parents/Guardians must accept full responsibility for the punctual arrival and collection of their son/daughter from Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed.

Back Packs:

On departure from Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed students will not have access to their cases and/or bags until arrival at the hotel.

It is advised that students have a back pack or bag to carry personal belonging needed for the journey

The same will apply on the return journey

Students must carry on their person, at all times, the address of the hotel in which they are staying.

All luggage can be searched

Please note,

When sailing there is no weight restriction on bags but students are asked to pack wisely.

Clothes for 3 days/Jacket/toiletries etc. This will be outlined in the letter and briefing to parents.

When flying there are weight restrictions which must be strictly adhered to. Any extra charges will be charged to the student while on tour.

Supervision:

The party will be split into smaller manageable groups, each under the supervision of a teacher. The teacher will accompany the group at all times, in all activities. Students must participate fully in the entire range of group activities.

Please take note that while it is foremost that your son/daughter is supervised on the trip, it is expected, (as with parenting), that your son/daughter will have free time in unsupervised situations. During these times, your son/daughter's behaviour is expected to be governed by the rules outlined and have regard for the health and safety of all on the tour. Full cooperation is expected in this matter.

On the Coach

Time on the coach is for sightseeing, relaxing.

Please listen to and follow all directions and rules given by teachers and the bus drivers.

A plastic rubbish bag will be distributed. Please use it so as to ensure the bus is kept clean.

Travelling by Sea/Plane:

Students with a history of being unwell when travelling are advised to take travel sickness tablets the morning of travel.

Students will be allowed to walk around the boat/plane but they must follow some guidelines

Don't wander off alone

Don't enter restricted areas

Be extra vigilant

No running

Follow directions from all airline/ferry staff

Students are advised to keep seat belts on when flying

At the Hotel:

Follow the hotel rules and please respect the culture of your host country.

Do not leave money in your hotel room when out touring

On checking out, be sure that all your property has been removed and that all rooms are clean and tidy and that all keys are returned.

Any student found charging services to the room will be asked to pay on departure from the hotel

Sleeping:

Students are expected to be in their rooms and have lights out with quietness as instructed by teachers.

Students are expected to sleep in allocated room

A night warden is appointed to supervise the corridors and will report to the tour coordinator, room numbers where there is noise and/or general disturbance.

Remember there will be many other paying residents outside of our tour group (with families) entitled to a good night's sleep

No Smoking – No Alcohol – No Drugs

Smoking/ Vaping and using smoking paraphernalia of any type is strictly prohibited at any time or location while on tour.

Students must not enter licensed premises, consume alcohol or have any dealings of any kind with alcohol or drugs.

Teachers have enough responsibility already to cope with and it is expected that senior pupils will set a good example for the younger members of the party.

Property:

It is part of the educational process for pupils to learn to look after their property.

Take the serial number of valuables or better still, leave them at home. Take precautions against pickpockets, e.g. locks for ruck-sacks.

Phones:

Students may bring their phones and indeed are encouraged to do so for their own safety and parents'/guardians' peace of mind. Please check costs with your phone supplier and ensure that insurance covers loss of phones overseas as the the school cannot be liable for either.

Malicious Damage:

Students who are responsible for malicious damage to hotel or coach property or to other student's or teacher's property must pay for the cost of repairs or replacement

Health:

Parents must fill in any details as required on the tour consent form (see Appendix 2)

If a student is on regular medication, parents/guardians must let the tour coordinator know the details and ensure that their son/daughter brings more than enough medication.

A spare prescription, extra tablets, inhalers etc. bearing the student's name should be given to the tour coordinator for safekeeping.

All health information will be dealt with in a discreet and absolutely confidential manner.

Medication must be carried by the student on their person

No student may take medication of any type without the prior knowledge of the tour coordinator and the written consent of the parents.

A teacher will be in charge of first aid.

Purchases:

Students must not purchase or have on their possession:

§ Cigarettes

§ Vapes/e-cigarettes

§ Drugs of any kind (unless on prescription and agreed in advance with the tour coordinator)

§ Smoking paraphernalia of any kind

§ Cigarette lighters

§ Flick combs

- § Flick knives
- § Pen knives
- § Martial art objects
- § Fireworks – including bangers and rockets,
- § Imitation guns (including Pellet Guns)
- § Caps
- § Spray cans
- § Solvents of any kind
- § Pornography

§ Any other offensive material of any kind or any other item identified by teachers (and explained to students) during the trip which they deem to be inappropriate

Please keep receipts for all purchases

If in doubt do not buy. Students in breach of these rules will not be allowed participate in future school tours.

If students are found breaking any local law, they may be detained by the police.

All costs involved in their return home will be the responsibility of their parents/guardians.

Procedure for Breach of Rules on Tour:

In the case of serious misbehaviour, we reserve the right to send the student in question home early accompanied by a teacher. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for any costs involved.

On Return to School:

A written report will be presented to the Principal by the Tour coordinator.

Parents/Guardians will be called to discuss the problem.

Any serious misbehaviour may result in suspension or expulsion from school. We trust however, that such occurrences will not arise.

If an issue requiring a meeting with parents following the tour arises, students will not be permitted to go on school tour again.

Conclusion:

In these rules and guidelines the Principal and participating teachers have anticipated as far as possible likely problems and dangers that might arise.

We wish however, to stress that normally we find that on our tours, our students are mature, co-operative well behaved and have an enjoyable experience.

Appendix 2

CONTRACT-School Tours

CONTACT PHONE NUMBERS:

HOME _____

Mother/Guardian Mobile _____

Father/Guardian Mobile _____

Other _____

MEDICAL INFO:

Is your son/daughter allergic to any food/medicine?

Please give details.

•

Please list any prescribed medicines your son/daughter will be carrying on the trip.

•

•

•

In case of Medical emergency, I authorize the Tour Leaders to act in loco parentis.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

STUDENT NAME: _____

We have been informed of the expectations regarding behaviour on the school tour to _____ . We have read the rules in the school tour policy at www.cmco.ie and agree to adhere to them fully.

We are aware that should any breach of this Code of Behaviour will result in parents/guardians being contacted and may result in a Student being sent home at the expense of a parent.

Signed:

Parent/Guardian

Student

Date:

Appendix 3 School Outings Guidelines

Procedure for organising of any group outing from school (including debating, theatre visits, educational trips etc.)

Permission must be sought and obtained for all trips. This is done by discussing the date, cost, number of pupils, mode of transport, departure and return times with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

The cost of the trip must be covered by those participating students.

In drawing up a list of participants, attention must be given to the behaviour record of applicants. The Year Head, in consultation with the Principal or Deputy Principal, may refuse any student permission to go on an outing, for previous serious misbehaviour.

Teachers should do a risk assessment on the students travelling. The following information should be supplied to the principal if applicable:

What are the hazards
Who may be harmed
Ways to prevent this harm
Teacher in charge

Parents/Guardians should be sent details of the trip using an appropriately amended trip letter (see later)

Details of the outing must be provided to the parents/guardians prior to departure.

Written permission from parents/guardians is required for all outings from school by students (copies of the parental permission form are available from the front office).

Parents/guardians must be made fully aware that a student may be sent home at his/her own expense if the behaviour of the student warrants it.

Students must receive clear instructions before leaving the school on an outing as regards Code of Behaviour.

Smoking, consuming chewing gum, possession of or consuming alcohol or any illegal substance is strictly forbidden on school outings. This should be stated clearly to all participants.

A complete list of participating students must be put on compass, sent to the Deputy Principal for approval and it is the responsibility of the outing coordinator to mark the roll

Teacher arranging outing must have a full list of students attending, their parents/guardians contact numbers and details of any medical information necessary

Per the standard letter, parents are requested to bring any medical issues to the attention of the school

The wearing of the full school uniform is compulsory on all school outings, except with the expressed permission of the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Any relevant forms, such as parental consent, should be kept on file by the organising teacher.

Appendix 4
Trips letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As part of your child's science experience at Coláiste Mhuire Co-Ed, we are offering him/her the opportunity to attend xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx on xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

The details for the planned trip to xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx are as follows;

- The bus will leave the school xxxxxxxxxxxx on xxxxxxxxxxxx. Signed up students must be present at xxxxxxxxxxxx. The bus will depart at that time and if students are not present the fee is non-refundable.
- The cost (to cover the cost of the bus and entry) is xxxxxxxxxxxx
- As time at the exhibition will be limited and to avoid large queues for food at the venue, students are strongly advised to bring a substantial packed lunch.
- It is planned to return to the school at approx. xxxxxxxx. Please be available to collect your son/daughter at the school at this time. However, as this time is dependent on traffic, it is advisable to keep in contact with your son/daughter via mobile phone should there be any delay.
- Students are required to wear their full school uniform.
- All students will be expected to represent our school by displaying respectful and courteous behaviour at the exhibition. The normal code of behaviour will apply.
- Should a student's behaviour warrant removal from the trip, parents will have to pay the cost of additional transportation.
- Places are limited and students must have their forms and money to xxxxxx by the xxxxxxxxxxxx. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis. Please note that a student's behaviour record may be taken into consideration when places are being allocated.
- This is open to xxxxxxxxxxxx students
- Should you child have a medical condition that we need to be aware of, please send a note to that effect.

We hope that all students find the day both enjoyable and educational,

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
----- xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

I give permission to my son/daughter _____ to attend the trip on xxxxxxxx to xxxxxxxxxxxx. Should you need to contact me on the day my number is

_____ Signature of Parent/Guardian

