

Roscommon Community College



# School Tour & Residential Trip Policy

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Ratified by Board of Management:

Reviewed:



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## Introduction & Rationale

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

The Board of Management of Roscommon Community College supports and encourages school tours. The Board concurs with Department of Education guidelines which state that

*"the objective 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".*

It is school policy to organise outings for the benefit of students when this is deemed appropriate by the teaching staff, in consultation with the Principal. The school recognises the benefits of outings to complement normal school work, for educational or sporting purposes. Some trips are demanded by the particular curriculum subject, such as field trips. Other outings and trips are additional to the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity though they deepen the student's knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social and physical aspects of the areas or countries visited. Foreign Language exchange trips to develop linguistic skills and deepen cultural awareness are a good example of the latter.

The lengths of trips may vary from a short local visit to a foreign tour involving staying away for several days. School trips, outings and tours are a privilege reserved for students who meet minimum standards of behaviour while at school.

**Students who do not meet minimum standards of behaviour, as decided by the Principal, may be refused permission to participate in a school outing. The Principal reserves the right to disallow a student from participation in a school trip if, in his opinion, the health or safety of the student or other students or teachers is at risk. Students who withdraw from a trip after a deposit, or full monies, has been paid, may not be entitled to a refund. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or safety reasons will not be entitled to a refund. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad (e.g. passport, identity card, EHIC cards) are up to date and in order. The school will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result.**

All school rules and all school policies apply while on school trips. In particular, parents and students should be aware that permission to travel on a school related activity is conditional on strict adherence to the Code of Behaviour. All students selected for sports teams and who travel as part of a class group represent Roscommon Community College. The highest standards of behaviour and conduct are expected as a matter of course. Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the tour with rules, regulations and special requirements of that tour.

## **Procedures**

Permission must be sought in advance from the Principal before any trip is organised. In granting approval for a school trip, consideration will be given to:

- Conformity with the criteria in circular letter M20/04.
- The number of other proposed events to take place during the course of the year.
- The timing of the event and its effect on other school activities
- Its implication for the normal teaching routine of the school
- The suitability of travel arrangements.

Details of the trip will be given in writing, via email or via Microsoft Forms. It is understood that students who play as part of a team representing Roscommon Community College have on-going parental permission to travel to all away events. Every effort will be made to adhere to arranged times on trips, in particular the arrival time back at the school, this may not always be possible.

Students must have paid all monies due for the trip by the date(s) set out or may be subject to forfeiture of their place on the trip and/ or deposit(s) already paid.

It will be the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that the organizer of a trip is aware of any special needs, medical or dietary issues. Students will be reminded, prior to going on the trip that school rules apply on trips. A student may be sent home, at their parents' expense, if the conduct of the student warrants it. This will be explained to parents at the pre-departure information session organised by the Tour Leader in relation to residential trips.

## **Health and Safety**

Health and safety of students and supervisors is a priority when organizing and taking a school trip or tour. Teachers taking any trip will exercise due care, common sense and judgment when issues of health and safety arise.

Parents of students who have special needs, a medical condition, or who are on medication of any kind, should notify the teacher/s in charge of this and any medication being taken.

In case of an accident, staff will normally apply basic first aid only. Expert medical attention will be sought should this be thought necessary. On return from, or during, any trip staff may advise a parent/guardian to seek medical advice, should they deem this appropriate. Where a serious accident occurs, staff will seek medical assistance as a first priority and contact the school to inform them of events. The school will contact parents as soon as possible.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to sign a consent form (see Appendix) which will allow medical advice to be followed in the event of injury/illness and where it is not possible to contact them in the time available.

## Supervision

The number of staff which accompanies a group will be influenced by a number of factors including;

- The number of students travelling.
- The age and maturity of the students.
- The location of the trip.
- The availability of alternative adult supervision e.g. Special Needs Assistants / host families etc.
- Additional supervision which may be provided at the trip destination.
- If the group will be dividing into smaller groups, each requiring supervision.
- The type of transport used.
- The activities to be engaged in.

Certain tours/trips may facilitate shopping or recreation which may not be directly supervised. This situation will usually be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to parents/guardian. The school expects that all students travelling on a tour/trip will display a level of maturity commensurate with their age. **Students on tours which involve an overnight stay in Ireland or abroad will not be supervised on a 24 hour basis and all extended school tours will involve periods of time without direct supervision. Parents who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should not permit their son/ daughter to take part in such trips.**

## Rules and Regulations

Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, tour/trip rules, regulations and any special requirements of that tour.

Parents/guardians shall be given an outline of the purpose, itinerary, dates and costs of the tour/trip before a deposit is sought.

The inclusion of particular students in a school tour/trip shall be at the discretion of the school authorities. This will be dependent on students' behaviour, continuous adherence to school rules and staff expectations and general levels of maturity and respect. Students who have been suspended are prohibited from participating in the next relevant school tour, school trips which are not mandatory components of a programme of study nor are they permitted to represent the school.

The Board of Management specifically wishes to draw attention to the following:

- Students must always follow instructions of members of staff on school trips and must be courteous friendly and cooperative.
- Students must stay with the tour group. A student may not go off anywhere alone.
- Students must show courtesy and respect to others while on tour, including adherence to cultural norms and expectations in trips outside of Ireland.

- Students are expected to respect property while on tour. This includes all transport (buses, airplanes, subway etc) the hotel / hostel and all other facilities. Students will be expected to answer for and make good for any damage caused.
- Students are expected to be punctual.
- In accordance with Code of Behaviour and Substance Use Policy; Students are forbidden from: purchasing, possessing, supplying or consuming alcohol, tobacco or drugs (medically or non-medically prescribed) On such a suspicion, the tour leader may involve the local police to search bags and/or rooms.
- Students are not permitted to have piercings or tattoos applied whilst on tours or trips.
- The Board of Management requires parent(s)/guardian(s) to guarantee that when their son/ daughter comes to the school to assemble for the start of a school tour, free of alcohol, tobacco and illegal substances either on her person or in her luggage.
- A student may be sent home, at their parents' expense, if in the opinion of the leader, the conduct of the student warrants it. It is the wish of the school that all involved should have an enjoyable experience on the school tour, however sanctions may be applied for misbehaviour.

Non-adherence to these rules may incur sanctions during the tour, including restricted participation in tour events.

If a student misbehaves in a serious manner or in a manner that jeopardises the safety and wellbeing of the group, it may be necessary to send him/her home. In such a situation a teacher may accompany the pupil and the parent/guardian will be liable for the potentially substantial costs involved. Sanctions may also be implemented on return to school for such offences.

**Additional rules in relation to residential trips:**

- Students must not enter another guest's hotel / hostel room or allow anybody into their room.
- Once the group has retired at night, no student has permission to be in another student's room, on the corridors or in any other area of the premises.
- In addition to the Code of Positive Behaviour and school tour/trip rules, students must adhere to the law of the country which they visit. In the event of a breach of this, due process of law will follow.
- While staying with host families, students must follow household rules set by host parents.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad e.g. passport, identity card are up to date and in order. Roscommonn Community College will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result. Students on tours within the European Union shall be required to have a completed EHIC and a valid passport.

Parents will be required to sign a Travel Contract agreeing to all of the above prior to departure on residential trips.

### **Costs and accountability for finances**

In general, trips and tours occur in addition to the normal academic and extracurricular programmes of the school. There is normally an additional charge.

Students who withdraw from a tour/trip after a deposit, or full monies has been paid, may not be entitled to a refund. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or safety reasons will not be entitled to a refund.

The overall cost of a school tour/trip will be agreed in advance and will consider the ability of students and their parents to pay. As a DEIS school, tour coordinators will strive to keep costs to a minimum.

The income and expenditure of funds associated with the tour/trip will conform fully to the accounting practices of the school and the GRETB. A full account of income and expenditure is reported to the Principal and to the Board of Management.

In accordance with guidelines set out by the FFSU 2015/2016 Financial Guideline-05, all foreign residential trips must be undertaken using a licensed tour operator or travel agent to arrange the travel package including accommodation and other services. As such, all travel expenses must be paid directly to a tour operator or travel agent and contracts for travel will be between parents and the travel agent. Travel insurance and indemnity will be included in the price set out by travel agents. However, students are also required to hold a valid European Health Insurance Card. In some circumstances, Tour Leaders may collect localised travel expenses to cover day-to-day travel on the ground. When doing so, at least two teachers should be involved in the financial administration of a school tour. This is an important protection for all concerned where money is collected from students.

**APPENDIX**

**CONSENT FORM**

To be read and signed by pupil and parent/guardian

School field trips and tours offer valuable opportunities for pupils and staff. The success of such events depends, to a large extent, on responsible behaviour, co-operation and a willingness to join in positively. Normal school rules and procedures will apply and pupils are expected to support the policies outlined in the Code of Behaviour. These trips often take place in unfamiliar locations and may involve an extra degree of risk. There may be some free time which will not be directly supervised. We anticipate the full co-operation of your son /daughter throughout the trip.

**BEHAVIOUR**

It is important to understand the following; a pupil who is guilty of serious misconduct while on a trip e.g. consuming alcohol, drug abuse, involvement with any items prohibited in school, refusal to obey instructions, may be subject to disciplinary actions on the trip and/or on returning to school or prevented from participating in some aspect of the trip or tour or sent home at the parents' expense or subject to disciplinary measures, in accordance with the Code of Behaviour, including suspension and expulsion.

**MEDICAL**

Please inform the group leader of any concerns or medical issues — asthma, medication, dietary or special needs:

Medical, dietary or special needs concerns:

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**SIGNED AGREEMENT**

We, the undersigned have read, understand and accept the principles included above.

Pupil's name (Block Capitals) ..... Year ..... ..

Signature ..... Date.....

Parent/Guardian name (Block Capitals) .....

Contact numbers: Home ..... Mobile .....

Family Doctor:



