



ASHBOURNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

SCHOOL TRIPS POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE:

Ashbourne Community School (ACS) believes that students can derive a great deal of educational benefit from participating in well planned school tours and field trips. Such activities give students the opportunity to engage in experiences not available in the classroom, help develop a student's imaginative skills, encourage greater independence and enhance the student's social and cultural development.

This policy is designed to help Board of Management (BOM) members, Principal, Deputy Principals, teaching staff and others to ensure that all participants stay safe and healthy as they enjoy the educational experiences of school tours and field trips.

Most school tours and field trips take place without incident and ACS is satisfied that its teaching staff is already demonstrating a high level of safety awareness. However, ACS is committed to further ensuring the safety of students. This policy is not designed to discourage teaching staff, but to ensure that good planning and attention to safety measures are in place to prevent accidents and incidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do occur.

ACS expects that all tours and field trips will be thoroughly planned. Reasonable care must be exercised in the nature of the trip that is chosen, the venue, the means of transport, cost, the level of supervision, the demands on the physical resources of the students, having regard to their age and capacity and the potential dangers to which they may be exposed.

This policy is drafted in the context of the Health and Safety at Work Acts 1989 and 2005 and Circular Letter M20/04 issued by the Department of Education and Skills. This policy should be read in its totality, as there may be some overlap in the requirements for planning specific trips and/or activities. For example, when planning a trip abroad, the section on Residential Trips will also be important. Educational tours of more than one day's duration should be arranged to coincide with normal school holidays as set out in CL M20/04.

If an educational tour/field trip is an integral part of a school programme the Board of Management of the school may grant permission for the tour/field trip to be held during term time and as per the requirements of CL M20/04. The Board of Management must ensure that students who are not participating in an educational tour/field trip are adequately catered for while their teachers are away on school tours/trips. Appropriate arrangements must be made for the conduct of all classes in accordance with Circular PPT01/03. In the planning of the tour/trip cognisance must be taken of the impact the tour/trip will have on the normal work of the school and the numbers of absent teachers should be kept to a minimum. Tours/trips should be discussed and agreed with the Deputy Principal with responsibility for managing the extracurricular diary.) Best practice also requires that an absence roster of students and co-ordinating staff is posted on the Staff Noticeboard and/or via staff email. Parental consent should also be received for all trips including local and one day/field trips/

events. Where demand for places on a trip exceeds supply of places, a lottery system operates and students' names are placed on a waiting list according to lottery.

While routine extra-curricular activities are covered under this policy, its main thrust is directed at events that entail a great deal of structured organisation such as residential, field and adventure trips as well as foreign tours.

Permission for students to participate in team sports and other activities that take place on a regular basis throughout the school year is sought on enrolment.

LINK TO THE MISSION STATEMENT:

This policy is agreed in the spirit of the school's Mission Statement which states:

- Our school a place where we foster such values as respect, inclusion and care as evident in our school policy and practice.
- Ashbourne Community School is a partnership of students, staff, parents and guardians, Board of Management and our local and global communities. We value the on-going input of all these partners in the life of the school.
- We pursue academic excellence while recognising the diversity of our student body. Through a relevant curriculum, designed to meet the needs of all, we endeavour to help all students realise their potential.
- Through positive staff and student relationships and a broad extra-curricular programme, we aim to develop in each student a confident, healthy self-image and a sense of personal, local and global responsibility.
- We recognise that each student's personal and spiritual growth is important. We endeavour to co-operate with parents and guardians and religious leaders of all faiths to encourage the development of religious and spiritual values in each student.

PROCEDURES FOR ORGANISING SCHOOL TOURS AND FIELD TRIPS:(See Appendix 6 for specific trips)
TRIP ORGANISERS MUST COMPLETE APPENDIX 7 FOR INCLUSION IN FINAL REPORT TO BOM AFTER THE TRIP HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

Approval of proposals

- Tour leader and/or Deputy Tour leader must obtain permission and seek approval in principle from the Board of Management/Principal to take students on a school trip. In order to plan for such extra-curricular activities during the academic year this permission should be sought at the September meeting of that academic year or earlier if possible. (See Appendix 1)
- Proposals to the Board of Management should include:
 - Objectives of the activity/tour
 - Likely date, duration and venue
 - Student group, age profile and supervision requirements
 - Resources required and estimate of costs
 - How the activity will be funded
- All trips should conform to the criteria in circular letter M20/04
- Tour leader and deputy tour leader plan dates of trip with Deputy Principal. In planning these dates, cognisance should be given to other proposed activities /events to take place during the course of the year and the effects of and implications on the normal teaching routine of the school year.
- A risk assessment should be carried out for residential/foreign tours when final details are agreed.

Supervision

ACS expects that all school tours, field trips and extra-curricular activities will be adequately supervised. In general a mixed trip (other than day trips) requires a ratio of male and female staff members. The ratio will vary depending on the age and maturity of students traveling and the activities to be engaged in. A team of persons who wish to travel should be established early on. A reserve list is advisable should an adult be unable to travel. Students should not be brought swimming or on adventure type trips without a qualified lifeguard or other suitably trained personnel.

It is not recommended that personnel other than teachers would be engaged to chaperone or supervise students. Sometimes this necessity may arise. In this regard, personnel other than teaching staff e.g. Special Needs Assistants, Administrative staff, School Supervisors, Caretaking staff, Members of the BOM should only accompany students if a suitably qualified teacher is also accompanying the group and if he/she is Garda vetted in line with ACCS guidelines. **Please note that forms are available from the main office and may take a number of weeks to process through ACCS.**

The group leader must ensure that all supervisors understand their roles & responsibilities at all times & that they are fully briefed as to the rules, regulations & requirements pertaining to the particular trip before departure.

The group leader must ensure that all supervisors are made aware of their duties & responsibilities vis-à-vis student health, safety & behaviour prior to departure.

All staff have a responsibility to act as positive role models for students in terms of their actions and behaviour and in particular in relation to smoking and consuming alcohol etc.

Regular head counting of students should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all students and adults involved in the activity. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the group.

Each adult travelling should be treated equally and bear equal cost. Responsibilities in relation to supervision and the imposing of sanctions should be the responsibility of the Tour leaders. The level of responsibility regarding supervision of students undertaken by non-teaching staff should be decided upon at the initial meeting with all involved staff. Each trip/activity merits separate/specific discussion on supervision and the imposing of sanctions.

Communicating with Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or tour unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum, which parents already know about on enrolment. Seeking consent at time of enrolment for such routine activities may be appropriate. Before residential visits or when students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities parents/guardians should be invited to attend a briefing meeting where details (oral and written) of the proposed trip should be provided. **(See Appendix 4)** There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend. Parents/Guardians need to be made aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the trip will be exercising the same care as a prudent parent or in 'loco parentis'. The Principal should ensure that parents/guardians can contact their child via the group leader or the school contact in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the trip or a late arrival home. A specific school mobile phone is available for use on school trips.

Parental/Guardian Consent

An application pack containing parental consent forms including medical consent, loco parentis form, code of behaviour for signing is issued to all students travelling on school trips. **If parents/guardians withhold written consent, a student will not be permitted to travel on the school trip. Medical consent forms part of the parental consent form for foreign and residential trips.** Parents/guardians are asked to agree to the student receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. **If the parents/guardians do not agree to this, the Principal may decide to withdraw the student from the trip – given the additional responsibility this would entail for the school.** Doctors in another country may be reluctant to operate on a student unless assured of parental/guardian authorisation for such treatment. The BOM may decide that students with certain medical conditions may not be brought on trips. Such decisions shall be taken on the basis of medical evidence and in the interest of the health and safety of the student and others.

Some students may suffer from an illness, which requires constant/or regular medication. **When contacting parents about other aspects of the trip, it is imperative that Tour Leader asks to be informed about any illnesses that a student may have.** Leave the school phone number and an invitation to ring the school to make an appointment. At a private meeting the parent/s can inform the Tour Leader/s about the illness and the administering of medication. **Each parent must fill in a form which includes medical history, contact numbers, allergies and medication to be taken.** Establish if a non-medical person is able to administer medication.

Dental Treatment: In emergency cases, students will receive dental treatment if advised by a medical practitioner.

Financial Matters

The overall cost of a school tour should be agreed in advance and should be such as to take into account the ability of pupils and their parents/guardians to pay. Planning should be done well in advance and a procedure should be put in place whereby students can pay for the trip over a period of time at an agreed rate. Consideration should be given to fundraising for the trip if it is a charity trip, in order to minimise cost to students and parents/guardians. When planning for a trip, group leaders should factor in all costs, including contingencies and should ensure that all charges are paid well in advance of departure. Contingency amount is at the discretion of the tour leader. Accompanying teachers will have access to more significant school funds in case of emergencies. The income and expenditure of funds associated with the tour should conform fully to the accounting practices of the school. The money should be collected in instalments with specific dates for payment. See Marion in the main office to discuss setting up the necessary account/documentation. A specific credit card facility can be arranged through the main office for use on trips by tour leaders. This facility should be organised with the Deputy Principal at least 14 days in advance. Cash and cheques are no longer acceptable in payment for school trips by order of the BOM. When on trip keep receipts of all money spent. If there is money left over, refund to students when they return to school. Students must sign for this refund and receipt of same from parents / guardians.

Some or all monies paid in advance will be forfeited if a student withdraws or is requested to withdraw from the tour, except where such funds are recoupable through the insurance policy, tour company or by replacing a student with another student. An application must be made to the BOM to seek a refund of such monies. A financial statement must be prepared by the tour leader to be presented to BOM within 14 days of return from trip.

Insurance Indemnity ACCS Guidelines (See Appendix 5)

School tours within Ireland by students and teachers from C & C schools are normally covered by the State Indemnity provided the BOM properly approves the tour. **Where, however, the tour is involved in an activity of a specialist nature, such as an outdoor Education Centre that requires supervision by trained professionals, the BOM may not rely entirely on the State Indemnity for insurance purposes.** In considering applications/requests from teachers to bring students on an outdoor activities type tour e.g. Transition Year Group for orienteering, canoeing, hill walking etc. activities the BOM should ensure:

- Written applications giving full details of the proposed tour are submitted to the BOM.
- The school receives a copy of the Outdoor Activity/Pursuits Centre Public Liability insurance certificate and notes any limitations stated in the policy.
- The school receives details of the professional qualifications/training of the Outdoor Activity/Pursuits Centre staff who will be leading/guiding the students in the specialist outdoor activities.
- Parents/guardians should be encouraged to effect Personal Accident Insurance cover for their students. The insurance company should also be contacted to ensure the students are covered for these specialist outdoor activities under the Personal Accident policy.
- The State Indemnity still applies to the teachers who accompany the students to the Outdoor Activity/Pursuits Centre in the performance of their normal supervisory and pastoral role

Where doubts remain then the BOM/School Management should seek and acquire appropriate insurance protection for the BOM, teachers and for students. Boards of Management/School Management should not approve the release of teachers to supervise and or the attendance of students on these specialist tours to Outdoor Activity/Pursuits Centres unless all aspects of supervision, training and insurance are clarified with all interests and noted. In the case of school tours outside the island of Ireland the BOM should not rely on the State Indemnity for insurance purposes. Appropriate travel insurance should be taken out to cover those embarking on the tour. **Parents/ Guardians should be advised that in general travel insurance only covers treatment abroad and not subsequent treatment which may be required on return to Ireland.**

Managing Behaviour on school trips:

Preparing students

Students who are well briefed about an activity **(See Appendix 2)** will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Students should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the activity will entail. They must understand what standards of behaviour are expected of them and why rules must be followed. Students should be made aware of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Students, whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential activities the group leader should consider whether such students should be sent home early. Parents/Guardians and students should be told in advance about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a student will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

Remote supervision may have to take place on occasion. For example, when students are on free time, certain adventure activities etc. Parents should be notified of this in advance. Students should be advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 students, as appropriate and adequate arrangements should be made re: checking in with supervisors at given times.

The code of behaviour to be observed by pupils during the course of the school tour is agreed and made known to pupils, parents/guardians and teachers in advance. Every effort is made to ensure that the rules of behaviour are positive and consistent with the objectives of the school tour and with the age and level of maturity of the participating students.

Sanctions

The imposing of sanctions should be discussed with parents/guardians at the meeting before commencement of the school trip. Should a student misbehave, the imposing of sanctions on the tour is at the discretion of the group leader. **(See Appendix 3)** Should situations of misbehaviour occur, they should be dealt with immediately in a quiet and firm manner. If a sanction is being imposed the student must be told why it is being imposed. Serious misbehaviour will be reported to the Principal and Deputy Principal immediately when it occurs or else upon return. A written report detailing a serious misbehaviour should be prepared for the Principal and Deputy Principal. In the case of a **serious/criminal incident** arising, parents/guardians, senior management and the Board of Management will be contacted immediately. The matter will then be handed over to the local authorities. **The group leader should inform parents/guardians that they will be required to fund the early return of a student whose conduct gives rise for concern on a trip.**

Reporting back to the Board of Management

Arrangements should be made for a summary evaluation report by the Tour leader to be submitted to the Principal and the BOM within 14 days of return.

This report should include achievements/accidents/incidents/concerns and a financial statement. The financial statement should include all details of income and expenditure in relation to the trip as well as a balancing statement. All accidents during the trip must be reported on official accident report forms for submission to the SCA. Under data protection records of school tours/trips including permission slips, samples of other communication to parents/guardians in relation to the trip, accident/incident reports, names of all personnel and students traveling on the trip, financial reports etc... must be retained and archived in a central place. See Appendix 7 for list to be included.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW:

The BOM, Principal, Deputy Principals and Staff of ACS are responsible for implementing this policy. The BOM will provide support, advice and training to all staff concerned as and when deemed necessary. This policy will be reviewed regularly and/or in light of any legislative or other relevant indications.

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management at its meeting on

_____/_____/2017.

APPENDIX 1

Planning and Preparation

- Select a reputable tour operator/service provider.
- Obtain a copy of the company's travel insurance documents. Ensure that it provides adequate cover.
- Contact venue and ensure that it is suitable for the group.
- Decide on travel/transport options.
- Complete risk assessment.
- Set the tour price. It is important at this stage to include extra expenses, such as meals, après-ski activities or admission to various institutions, which are not included in the tour price. Make provision for a contingency fund at the discretion of the tour leader.
- Decide on who will lead the group and level of supervision required. Ideally, all adults travelling should be involved in organising the trip. See Appendix 1.

- Ideally, all adults travelling should be involved in organising the trip.
- Areas of responsibility include the following:
 - (a) Secure signed parental/guardian consent forms.
 - (b) Oversee the collection of money. From 2016 this process will either be by direct debit or directly with tour operator. (Tour Leaders)
 - (c) If applicable, organise the group passport (Tour Leaders) if availing of a group passport. Due to privacy considerations, students in Ashbourne Community School generally obtain their own passports. If students are travelling on their own passport, the tour leader collects the passports before the trip commences for safe keeping and for ease of passage during the trip. Collect passports 3 to 4 weeks prior to departure. **The passports remain the responsibility of the Tour Leaders for the duration of the tour.** They are only given out when needed. They are immediately collected and held by Tour Leader/s or preferably in a hotel safe.
 - (d) If applicable, organise EHIC cards, if applicable.
 - (e) Organise cultural passes and internal tours.
 - (f) Information to and from parents/guardians
 - (g) Briefing meeting with parents/guardians and students
 - (h) Other responsibilities include details specific to the tour, i.e. first aid box, special medical needs of students, names and addresses of hospitals and doctors in the immediate area where the tour will take place, video camera, school camera, etc...

APPENDIX 2

Preparing students

Students who are well briefed about an activity will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Students should be addressed by principal or deputy principal before departure. For some students an overnight trip may be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other students. They should understand:

- The aims and objectives of the trip/activity
- Background information about the place to be visited
- Basic foreign words and phrases where appropriate
- Relevant foreign culture and customs
- How to avoid specific danger and why they should follow rules

- Why safety precautions are in place
- The standard of behaviour which is expected in line with the Code of Behaviour.
- Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct
- Who is responsible for the group
- If on a foreign trip, items not to be brought back to Ireland
- What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group
- Rendezvous procedures, including time keeping
- What to do if separated from the group
- Emergency procedures, including telephone numbers, etc.
- Pocket money and security of personal items
- Maps and town plans, as appropriate
- Limitations of movement, such as out of bounds areas
- Students must adhere to the school rules at all times, where they are applicable and must follow the rules of the hotel or hostel where they are staying.

As ambassadors of the school community, students must be well behaved on public or private transport while on the trip. They are responsible for leaving their seats on buses, trains, boats and planes tidy. They are responsible for leaving their hotel or hostel room tidy.

Spending Money

Bear in mind extra costs that the students may incur. Work out a reasonable daily allowance, i.e. twenty-five to thirty euros/pounds/dollars per day. Listed below are a number of guidelines to follow for minding money:

- Divide the money into equal amounts.
- Place the money in small plastic bags or small envelopes.
- Buy a money belt, which can be worn inside a tee shirt. Keep the money and nothing else in the money belt. Do not open the money belt in busy areas.
- When travelling to and from tour destination, have a small amount of money available in a safe place.
- Keep as much money as possible for shopping trips.

APPENDIX 3

Sanctions

Should a student misbehave, the imposing of sanctions on the tour is at the discretion of the teachers travelling. These sanctions may take the form of

- (1) A verbal warning
- (2) The student missing a half day's activities. A student should not miss a lesson on grounds of health and safety due to this sanction being imposed.
- (3) The student not taking part in a leisure activity such as bowling.
- (4) The student not being allowed to attend an evening activity.

Should a sanction be imposed on a student, the student must be supervised by a teacher. **Serious misbehaviour** may result in more than one of the above sanctions being applied.

- (1) A phone call home.
- (2) Sanction may be imposed on return to school.
- (3) In prolonged and extreme cases of dangerous and serious misbehaviour a student may be sent home. Should this situation arise, the parents must be informed and a student may have to travel home where any cost incurred is paid by the parent/guardian. The decision to send a student home with a student rests with the Tour Leader/s, senior management and the Board of Management.

Serious misbehaviour will be reported to the Principal and Deputy Principal immediately when it occurs or else upon return. The following list constitutes serious misbehaviour,

- (a) Use/Possession of alcohol/cigarettes
- (b) Use/Possession of illegal substances (drugs etc)
- (c) Misuse of legal substances, (tippex etc)
- (d) Female/Male students, in out of bounds areas at night.
- (e) Disruptive behaviour, on plane, boat, coach or in the hotel.
- (f) Lack of respect for rules of hotel or hostel,
- (g) Lack of respect towards supervising adults,
- (h) Theft or criminal damage to property of others.

The above list is not final and other behaviour/incidences may constitute unacceptable or serious misbehaviour.

APPENDIX 4

Communicating with Parents/Guardians

In the proposal letter or /and at the briefing meeting the following information on matters that might affect student health and welfare should be given to parents.

- Dates of the trip.
- Objectives of the trip.
- Times of departure and return – parents/guardians must agree to meet the student on return.
- The location where the students will be collected and returned.
- Modes of transport including the names of travel companies, etc.
- The size and gender breakdown of the group and the level of supervision, including times when remote supervision may take place.
- Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site.
- Names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults.
- **Details of planned activities and how any risks will be managed.**
- Standards of behaviour expected in respect of alcohol, sexual behaviour, smoking and general group discipline including prohibited items. This information may take the form of a code of conduct which parents may be required to sign.
- What students should not take on the trip or bring back.
- **Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents may need to arrange additional cover.**
- Clothing, equipment and items of personal hygiene to be taken.
- Money to be taken.
- Information regarding parental/guardian consent.

A parental consent form along with a fully completed application pack should be completed for each student in the group. Besides conveying the parent's/guardian's consent it may also be used for obtaining details required as follows:

- The parental/guardian home phone numbers and address.
- An alternative contact, phone number and address.
- Name, address and telephone number of family doctor
- Any allergies/phobias the student may have.

- Any medication the student is taking, what the dosage is and who is to administer it, or whether the student can administer it.
- Any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the immediate family during the preceding four weeks and any other recent illness suffered by the student.
- Any special medical or dietary requirements.
- Whether the student suffers from travel sickness.
- The student's ability to swim.
- Any other information the parent/guardian thinks is relevant.

The Principal should ensure that parents/guardians can contact their child via the group leader or the school contact in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the trip or a late arrival home.

Parents/Guardians should therefore:

- Know the destination details.
- Be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (particularly during holiday periods when the school may be closed) and at the venues the group will visit.
- Provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency.
- In the event of an emergency, parents should contact the group leader/school contact who will then liaise with the student.
- **In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so or as directed by the group leader.**

APPENDIX 5

Emergency Procedures

Teachers and others in charge of students during a school trip have a duty of care to ensure that the students are safe and healthy. They also have a duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school trip. If an accident/incident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation.
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
- Attend to the casualty.
- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know about the incident.

The group leader should take charge in an emergency and ensure that back up cover is arranged. All those involved in the school trip should be informed of the proposed arrangements in advance.

There should be a named school contact with all the necessary information about the trip. This person is the school's link with the group, the parents/guardians and the Board of Management (where appropriate), and to provide assistance as necessary.

If an emergency occurs on a school trip, the main factors to consider include:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that the group is safe.
- Establish the identity of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
- Ensure that parents/guardians are informed and in cases of minor injury adequate arrangements should be made, where appropriate, to get the student home, to liaise with the parents/guardians and to ensure that the injury is monitored.
- Ensure that all members who need to know are aware of the incident, and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.
- Ensure that teaching personnel accompany casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
- Notify the police if necessary.

- Notify the Irish Embassy/Consulate, if abroad and if appropriate.
- Inform the school contact
- The following details should be passed on to the school via the school contact:
 - Date and time and nature of the incident
 - Location of the incident
 - Names of casualties and nature of injuries
 - Names of others involved so that parents can be reassured
 - Names of witnesses
 - Action taken so far and yet to be taken and by whom
- Notify insurers, especially if medical attention is required. This may be done by the school contact.
- Notify the Travel Agent or transport operator. This may be done by the school contact.
- Ascertain telephone numbers for future calls. Landlines should be used, where practicable, to ensure quality of communication.
- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details, and preserve vital evidence.
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.
- Complete The Board of Management's accident report form as soon as possible. Copies should be brought on residential and foreign trips.
- No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to families. Media enquiries should be referred to a designated media contact in the home area.
- No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.
- In the event of an emergency at home, parents/guardians should contact the group leader/school contact, who will then liaise with the student.
- In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so, and only as directed by the group leader.
- **Students should be advised not to use social media e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc... as this may be picked up by Media and there may be a risk that family and friends become aware of the incident before being officially informed by the school.**
- Appropriate first aid equipment should be brought on all trips, as well as a person who is competent to use the contents of the first aid box.
- It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other students or staff in the school have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. It is advisable for schools to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the school as a whole to cope with the effects of a particular incident.

APPENDIX 6

Guidelines for specific trips/activities

A. Adventure Activities

The group leader should check and agree the provider's arrangements for supervision and recreation during the evenings and between adventure activities. The group leader should also provide any relevant information to the provider such as the group's age range, competence, accompanying adults, etc.

The group leader/teachers retain ultimate responsibility for students during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. This also applies to some residential and day trips. The provider is responsible for the safe running of the activity. Everyone, including the students, should have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school staff and the provider's staff.

The group leader/teachers should have sufficient information on what each activity involves before it takes place. They should approach the instructor at an appropriate safe interval if they are concerned that the students may be at unnecessary risk. Assurances may be sought that the provider has:

- Checked the suitability of staff/temporary workers to work with young people.
- Clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of its staff.
- The appropriate security arrangements.
- Appropriate Public Liability Insurance - €9.5 million is recommended.

The BOM should satisfy itself that:

- The group leader and other supervisors are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of students in a given activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant certification, where it exists.
- The group leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventure/activities/trips.
- An appropriate risk assessment has been carried out.
- The supervision will be appropriate.
- There is adequate first aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group.
- The emergency procedures include activity-specific measures and supervisors/providers are competent to carry them out.
- The equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition.
- Every student is suited to the activity and is properly briefed, prepared and equipped.

Some adventure activities, such as those under the Gaisce Awards, may require students to work without direct supervision. Particular attention should be given to the information and training provided to students before supervision can be withdrawn. Specific parental consent must be sought.

Appropriately qualified personnel should provide the information and training. The project leader should be satisfied that the students have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability, judgment and skills to be left without direct supervision.

The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four-stage process.

- Accompanying the group.
- Shadowing the group.
- Checking regularly at agreed location
- Checking occasionally at agreed locations.

Students should be familiar with all equipment used or taken without direct supervision, and in addition to training, an initial element of adult supervision in the use of equipment may be required. The condition and suitability of any equipment, particularly safety equipment, taken or used during these activities should be assessed separately.

B. Coastal Visits and Water (Geography Field Trips, etc.)

There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming.

The group leader should bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity:

- Tides, currents, weeds and sandbanks are potential hazards. Timings and exit routes should be checked.
- Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags.
- Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return, if separated.
- Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire, sewage outflows, etc.
- Some of the group's time on the beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds.

- Cliff tops/caves can be highly dangerous even during daylight hours. The group should keep to a path at all times.

Swimming in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities. They should only be allowed as formal or supervised activities preferably in recognized bathing areas, which have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. Students should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance. Where groups are using boats or other watercraft, lifejackets should be worn at all times.

The group leader, or another designated teacher in the group, should preferably hold a relevant current life-saving award, especially where lifeguard cover may not be available.

The group leader should:

- Be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers.
- Ascertain for themselves the level of the students' swimming ability.
- Be aware of the local conditions – such as currents, weeds, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom.
- Designate a safe area of water for use by the group.
- Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water.
- Ensure that students have not eaten (at least 30 minutes) before swimming.
- Ensure that the activity is safe for students, especially any with disabilities.
- Adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall.
- Ensure that the students behave appropriately in and out of the water.
- Ensure that proper changing facilities are available and that propriety is observed regarding gender separation. In mixed groups there should be at least one male and one female supervisor.

C. Farm Visits (Agricultural Science field trips etc.)

Farms can be dangerous, even for people who work on them. Taking young people to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with E.coli D157 food poisoning and other infections.

The group leader should check that the farm is well managed, that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good hygiene standards.

Students should be reminded:

- Not to place their faces against the animals
- Not to eat until they have washed their hands
- Not to drink from farm taps
- Not to ride on tractors or other machines
- Not to interfere with farm machinery.
- To stay away from hazardous areas such as slurry tanks etc.
- Not to wander away from the main group.

D. Field Studies

Field Studies associated with a range of subjects including Geography, Biology, History, CSPE etc. may take students to industrial sites and urban areas as well as into the countryside and to the coast. The scope of field studies means that the group leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, should also be competent to lead and instruct their students within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk.

E. Residential Visits

The group leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance. The entire group should be aware of the layout of the accommodation, fire precautions/exits, regulations and routine. There should be adequate lighting at all entrances, corridors and rooms.

Balconies should be stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe. The fire alarm and smoke alarms should be in certified working order throughout the building. The easy accessibility of medical personnel /facilities should be assured. There should be safe heating and ventilation. The group leader should confirm prior to departure that the hotel/hostel has proper and accessible fire exits and that it meets local regulations. After arrival, fire evacuation procedures should be checked by the group leader and outlined to the students. The group leader should also confirm prior to departure that the hotel/hostel meets all local hygiene regulations.

Where possible students should not be lodged in ground floor rooms. The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use. Locks on doors should be operable in all rooms, but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times. There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc. and for the safe keeping of valuables, e.g. safety deposit box. There should be provision for students with disabilities as appropriate. There should be recreational accommodation/facilities for the group.

There should be a reasonable pro-rata gender balance of teachers for mixed gender groups. The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the students. Ideally each room should have en-suite facilities, but as a minimum requirement there should be separate male and female bathroom facilities for students and for adults.

The manager of the accommodation should be asked, through the tour operator, for assurances that the staff including temporary workers have been checked as suitable for work with young people. Where the reception area in a particular building is not staffed 24 hours per day, appropriate security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors. The hotel/hostel management should undertake not to supply or sell alcohol or tobacco to students. There should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby every night. A curfew time of not later than 12 midnight should be set for students.

The Tour leaders and teachers should check all rooms and fittings before, allowing student's access to the rooms. This precaution is taken in the event of breakage or damage to property in the room prior to students entering the rooms and a note should be taken of any area of concern. On the final day the Tour leaders and teachers should re check the rooms after the students have departed.

F. Trips abroad

Travelling abroad can be hugely rewarding for students, but it is important that careful and detailed preparation takes place. All trips abroad, with the exception of school exchanges, should be booked through a reputable travel agency with experience in the organisation of trips for schools and young people.

The group leader should gather as much information as possible on the area to be visited from the tour operator / the provider of facilities at the location etc...

A minimum supervision ratio of 1 teacher to 10 students should apply. There should be enough teachers/supervisors in the group to cover an emergency.

Factors to consider for trips abroad include:

- Language – particularly common phrases
- Culture e.g. body language, rules & regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc.
- Airline and ferry regulations
- Food and drink
- Money – how to carry currency, money and valuables discreetly
- How to use phones abroad and the code for phoning home
- Drugs, alcohol usage
- What to do in an emergency

It is particularly important that parents/guardians are given the opportunity to meet teachers and others who will be taking the students overseas. It is desirable that one of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country.

The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip. A photocopy of each individual passport should be taken for emergency use. If a group includes students whose national or immigration status or entitlement to an Irish passport is in doubt, it is advisable to make early enquires to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice and Law Reform and the Passport Office. Students other than EU nationals may require a separate passport and/or visa and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group. If a student is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that Social Services consent to any proposed trip. If a student is a Ward of Court, the principal should seek advice from the Court in relation to trips abroad well in advance. The group leaders must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance. Emergency medical facilities are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in EU countries to EU nationals. The European Health Insurance Card from the local Health Service Executive is the means of entitlement and must be carried by the group leader. It is advisable for the group leader to take a contingency fund in case treatment has to be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later.

The group leader should ensure that he/she obtains and takes with him/her:

- Travel tickets, passports, visas, accident reports forms and other essential documentation. It is advisable to carry a separate list of the numbers of any travel documentation/passports and photocopies of the group's documents in a sealed waterproof bag.
- A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency and/or centre/hotel, if appropriate.
- Medical documentation e.g. EHCs and significant medical histories. The group leader should carry these at all times.
- Parental/Guardian consent forms and permission for the group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf.
- The phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the Principal and/or of the school contact.
- The names and addresses of parents and telephone numbers (home and work) where they can be contacted.
- Copies of a list of group members and their details.
- Details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number.
- Name, address & telephone number (incl. emergency number) of the Travel Agency.
- The name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation.
- Details of local hospital/medical and emergency services.

Full details of the trip must be retained by a designated person in the school while the trip is in progress. This should include:

- The itinerary and contact telephone numbers/addresses of the group.
- A list of group members and their details.
- Contact names, addresses, telephone numbers of the parents and next of kin.
- Copies of parental consent forms.
- Copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers, etc.
- A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency, centre/hotel etc., if appropriate.

It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that this information is available at all times. This is particularly important if the trip takes place when the school is closed.

The group leader must ensure that each student knows what action to take if there is an emergency or a problem. The group leader and supervisors should know where the nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number. The group leader needs to be aware that some diseases are more prevalent in some countries than in others and should know what action to take should a member of the group become infected, and what actions to take to prevent infections. Many of the health problems of pupils on longer trips are caused by lack of food, liquid or sleep. The group leader should plan to minimize these risks.

Group leaders should be aware that legal drinking ages may differ from country to country, to ensure avoidance of doubt students should be instructed to follow Irish law. Residential trips abroad afford an opportunity for a more informal, relaxed atmosphere between teachers and students. Staff and students must ensure that appropriate boundaries are maintained. In general students should be made aware that all school rules and policies apply equally when abroad including the Code of Behaviour, Anti-bullying, Substance Misuse and Acceptable User Policies.

The group leader should carry a contingency fund to cover the eventuality of a student running out of funds. This contingency fund should be used solely for the purpose of providing food and drinks for the student. If appropriate, parents/guardians should be asked to provide suitably factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses and students should be advised about the dangers of over exposure to sunshine. It is advisable, if appropriate, to check that the ship/aircraft or coach being used by the Travel Agency has a wheelchair service and lifting facility. The group leader should resist any attempts to split the group while travelling. If this has to be done then each group should have a separate group leader. The group leader should ensure that all supervisors are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the trip.

G. Exchange Trips

The success of an exchange trip depends largely on good relationships and communications with the partner school. School exchanges differ from other trips abroad in that students will spend most of their time with host families and are, therefore, not always under the direct supervision of school staff. The group leader should remember that host families are not subject to Irish law. Students must be made aware of behavioural expectations agreed with the host family. The group leader should ensure the following:

- A good personal knowledge of the host school and its environs.
- Satisfactory 'pairing' arrangements. The partner school should inform the host family of any special, medical or dietary needs of their guests, age and gender. Matches should be appropriate.
- Parents/Guardians, students and the host school should be clear about the arrangements for collecting and distributing students to families, and for transporting students throughout the exchange.
- The principal should retain a list of all the students involved and their family names, addresses and telephone numbers
- Students living with host families should have easy access to their teachers, usually by telephone.
- Parents/Guardians should be made aware that their children will be living with host families and will not always be under direct teacher supervision.

The group leader should ensure that host families are thoroughly vetted including criminal background checks insofar as these are available. The group leader should, as a minimum requirement, seek assurances from the partner school as to host family suitability. The exchange organiser should ensure that all necessary insurance arrangements are in place.

APPENDIX 7:

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT REPORT AND CHECK LIST FOR ALL SCHOOL RESIDENTIAL TRIPS TO BE SUBMITTED WITHIN 14 DAYS OF RETURN.

Action Required	Date	Signature
Approval of proposals: Tour leader and/or Deputy Tour leader must obtain permission and seek approval in principle from the Board of Management/Principal to take students on a school trip.	BOM approval: Date:	
Tour leader and deputy tour leader plan dates of trip with Deputy Principal.	Planning date:	
A risk assessment has been carried out for residential/foreign tours when final details are agreed if necessary.	Risk Assessment date:	
Supervision: Garda Vetting if required	Yes/No/n/a	
Communicating with Parents/Guardians A briefing meeting where details (oral and written) of the proposed trip is provided. Register of Attendance attached.	Date of Meeting :	
Record of alternative arrangements for parents/guardians who cannot attend. Register of Attendance attached.	Date of meeting:	
Parental/Guardian Consent An application pack containing parental consent forms including medical consent, loco parentis form, code of behaviour for signing and issued to all students travelling on trip is attached	Date of issue:	
All Parent/Guardian completed Consent Forms attached (Data Protection).	Yes/No	
Insurance Indemnity Appropriate travel insurance if required has been taken out to cover those embarking on the tour (details attached).	Yes/No	
Parents/ Guardians have been advised (via the information pack) in writing that in general travel insurance only covers treatment abroad and not subsequent treatment which may be required on return to Ireland.	Yes/No	
Preparing students Students have been briefed about the trip, activities and understand what is expected of them and what the activity/trip will entail. They understand what standards of behaviour are expected of them and why rules must be followed. Students have been made aware of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.	Yes/No	
Sanctions and all implications of these have been discussed with parents/guardians at the meeting before commencement of the school trip	Yes/No	
Completed Accident Report Forms (Trip and School State Claims Form) are attached	Yes/No	
Financial Matters: A summary evaluation report including a financial statement prepared by the tour leader has been submitted to the Board of Management within 14 days of return from trip is attached.	Date of BOM Meeting	

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Ashbourne Community School at its meeting on Monday, 26th June, 2017 (Ref. Meeting Nr. 226).

Date: _____

Chairperson
Board of Management
Ashbourne Community School