



St Paul's Secondary School

Care - Inclusion - Respect

EDUCATIONAL OUTINGS & TOURS POLICY

Ratified: 17 May 2011

To be reviewed: October 2021

Educational Outings and School Tours Policy

General

This policy is drafted in the context of Circular Letter M 20/04 issued by the Department of Education and Skills which states that:

The objective of an educational tour should be that it should provide a significant benefit to the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of pupils in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour and which benefit cannot be provided by in-school activities alone.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members of St. Paul's Secondary school who take students off site.

It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

This policy is formulated in the context of the school's Code of Behaviour; it also takes account of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, Substance Use Policy, Safety & Health Policy and other relevant school policies. These apply to all students and to all school related activities which take place during or outside of normal school hours, whether or not an overnight stay is involved.

The policy applies both on and off the school grounds and anywhere students are clearly identified or identifiable as students of St Paul's Secondary School.

Rationale

St. Paul's Secondary School is committed to the education, in the broadest sense, of all students who attend the school. The school recognises that exposure to a range of experience and culture is part of a holistic education.

The curriculum content of some subjects requires field studies/trips/recreational and sporting activities which take place both on and off the school campus.

School trips assist in:

- broadening cultural and intellectual experiences;
- fostering independence, maturity and team-building;
- enhancing students' social skills ;
- improving language acquisition and skills ;
- promoting greater understanding among different cultures ;
- providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.

There should be a balanced programme of outings and trips for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.

Aims of the Policy

The overall aims of the policy are:

- that the health, safety and welfare of the students are safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the careful assessment of any dangers to which the students may be exposed and the demands on the physical resources of the pupils, having regard to their age and capacity;
- that staff are assisted in the planning of trips and outings;
- that trips and outings are managed efficiently and with a level of supervision firmly established within accepted guidelines;
- that expectations of behaviour are clarified for all trips;
- that students meet clear criteria before they are deemed eligible to take part in certain out of school activities and in particular any trips involving an overnight stay.

Procedures for Tours

Day Trips

Day trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours.

The approval of the Principal must be sought and as much notice as possible should be given.

The written permission of Parents/Guardians is required for any trip.

Before a student with a medical condition is allowed to participate in a trip, the school authorities must be confident that the needs of the student can be managed without compromising the health and safety of the student in question, the other students participating, or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents/guardians.

Before a student is allowed to go on a trip her record of behaviour in school or on previous trips may be taken into consideration.

Once the Principal has approved a trip, the organiser will:

- inform parents/guardians of the purpose, date and cost of the trip and Parents/Guardians will be required to sign a consent form;
- forward brief details of the trip on the Yellow Outing Sheet to the Deputy Principal for inclusion in the term tracker/calendar/Week Ahead in St. Paul's (WASP);
- ensure that a list of students participating in the trip is placed on the Staff Notice Board and that a copy is available at Reception.

There must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff travelling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students participating.

On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver.

Day trips may involve a financial cost to the student. In the case of financial difficulties, application for assistance may be made to the Principal by the Organiser on behalf of the student.

The school will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the coach company, the trip organiser and any other staff members involved. The trip organiser(s) will ensure that they are in possession of the school mobile to facilitate ease of contact with the school in cases of delay or emergency.

On occasion it may be suitable for Senior Cycle students (Fifth and Sixth Year and Transition Year students, in certain circumstances) to travel independently to and/or from an event. In such instances, the Organiser of the trip must advise parents in advance. Junior Cycle students may not travel independently.

For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their daughter's travel to and from the School.

A member of staff should travel alone with a student only when specific parental permission has been obtained or in the case of an emergency (e.g. ambulance or taxi for a wheelchair bound student).

An Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include:

- persistent lateness at the rendezvous point;
- not staying with the group;
- rudeness to teachers;
- serious breach of school rules.

Overnight trips, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overnight and or overseas trip, must submit their request for approval and an outline of the proposed trip to the Principal and Board of Management.

The number of students and staff participating will depend on the nature of the trip and the age of the students concerned.

In the case of trips being oversubscribed, priority is given to those students who are studying the relevant subject and on the basis of their record of behaviour in school. Behaviour on previous trips may be taken into consideration and the school reserves the right to refuse any student a place on the trip.

Before a student with a medical condition is allowed to participate in a trip, the school authorities must be confident that the needs of the student can be managed without compromising the health and safety of the student in question, the other students participating, or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents/guardians.

Prior to Tour

The initial letter to parents/guardians should contain a brief outline of the trip, dates and costs of the tour, the deadline for registering and the payment of a non-refundable deposit.

Following receipt of the deposit, each student and her parents/guardians will receive a Permission Form outlining the rules, regulations and special requirements of the tour. The student and her parents/guardians shall be required to sign that they understand the rules etc. and that they are willing to abide by them at all times. The completed agreement form must be returned to the Organiser by the specified date.

Details of accommodation, travel arrangements, any special local conditions, personal items that the student needs to bring, guidelines for spending money and money for extras such as meals and excursions will also be sent to parents/guardians prior to departure.

Parents/guardians must be made aware that the Organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

If a passport is required parents/guardians should ensure that passports are valid for at least six months following the trip.

Visas may be necessary for the destination and some countries require them to be processed together as a group. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.

Students must have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.

It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their daughter has all necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the trip.

Parents/Guardians should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended vaccinations required for the destination. It is important that parents understand that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their daughter to receive all the necessary vaccinations.

Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.

Mobile phone communication between teachers and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participants' mobile phone numbers (as given on the Permission Form) and students may be given (if appropriate) the mobile phone number of the Organiser - to be carried with them while on the trip. A mobile phone is available from the school for this purpose, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.

The trip Organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

During the Tour

Should it be necessary, two members of staff may carry out an inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc.) with the student present. This will only be done for good reason and on reasonable grounds, such as concern for safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns.

If a student is found to be in serious breach of the School's Code of Behaviour, the trip Organiser should contact the Principal. If deemed necessary the parents/guardians will be informed.

Where sanctions are imposed, procedures shall be applied as per the schools Code of Behaviour.

General Guidelines for Sporting Trips

Each teacher is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to his/her match.

If a minor accident occurs the teacher will assess it on the spot. In the event of a serious accident, medical assistance will be called immediately. The school authorities will be informed and parents/guardians will be contacted.

Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded on the school Accident Report Form, a copy of which is submitted to the Principal. The teacher(s) will apprise students of the necessary safety equipment for each respective sport.

The teacher should organise transport to and from all matches using a recognised coach company. In the case of local venues, parents/guardians may be asked to provide transport.

When an 'away' match is organised during school hours while classes are scheduled for other students, the number of staff travelling must be dependent upon the staffing requirements of the school. Generally one teacher will travel with a team. The needs of the students in school must receive priority when organising such matches.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated as necessary.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 17th May 2011