



SCHOOL OUTINGS (Trips & Tours) POLICY

Meán Scoil Mhuire Longford

Chairperson: Ms. Karen Clabby
Principal (A): Ms. Mairéad Lyons
Date: 20th June 2024

School Outings (Trips/Tours) Policy

Mission Statement

Meán Scoil Mhuire is a voluntary Secondary Catholic School. It is a centre for the holistic formation of girls and young women.

- (1) We respect the dignity of each person with her unique background, talents, traditions and beliefs.
- (2) We provide a pleasant disciplined atmosphere in which students can grow spiritually, morally, academically, socially and culturally.
- (3) We expose all to a rich cultural heritage and help them to acquire the knowledge and skills, which enables them to understand, appreciate and respect themselves, others and their environment.
- (4) We foster positive Christian values and self-esteem so that our students leave school with a sense of self-worth and self-esteem and are well equipped for the challenges of life.
- (5) We encourage partnership at all levels between the management, staff, parents, students and the local community.
- (6) Meán Scoil Mhuire has not only a highly respected academic tradition. We also develop creativity, leadership and social skills by promoting involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Introduction

In keeping with our mission statement, our school community provides a caring, happy and safe environment, which strives to foster a love of life-long learning. We endeavour to develop each person's academic, physical, moral, cultural and spiritual potential based on mutual respect, fairness and honesty. We want our students to emerge as confident, adaptable, responsible and caring citizens. This is in line with best practice outlined in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

Rationale

Meán Scoil Mhuire is committed to the broad educational development of all our students. 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 trips to be organised and as such may be compulsory.

Educational trips (day, overnight, overseas and field trips) assist in:

- supporting the curriculum content of some subjects through extending and reinforcing classroom activities;
- enhancing the learning process by providing educational experiences which the classroom alone cannot provide;

- broadening cultural and intellectual development;
- developing and enhancing students' social and interpersonal skills;
- fostering independence, maturity and team-building;
- improving language acquisition and skills;
- promoting greater understanding among cultures.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all members of the staff of Meán Scoil Mhuire who take students off site on outings/ trips/ tours. It is applicable to the staff and 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 Misuse policy and all other relevant 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. It applies on and off school grounds and anywhere students are clearly identifiable as students of the School.

Purpose

- To establish protocols and procedures to effectively monitor and manage school trips or tours.

Aims/Objectives

- To ensure the health, safety and welfare of our students is safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision required, the venue and the means of transportation.
- To ensure that students gain maximum benefit and enjoyment from all trips/outings e.g. broadening their cultural and intellectual experience; fostering independence/ maturity/ team building; enhancing communication and social skills; improving language acquisition skills, creating positive memories of school; promoting a greater understanding between different cultures; encouraging travel/ studying abroad and promoting involvement of all students.
- To ensure staff are aware that the degree of care required of them should be that of a 'careful parent' which would vary given the circumstances and the age of the student.

Procedures

- The curriculum content of some subjects require field studies/trips/outings/recreational activities, which take place off school grounds.
- All school trips must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Science in Circular letter M20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria contained in this circular.

- The Board of Management must grant approval for an overnight school outing in the state or any outing outside the state for any duration of time. Approval will be granted upon consideration of the number of proposed events to take place during the course of the year, that the outing conforms with the criteria of Circular M20/04, the timing of the event, the implication for normal teaching, the suitability of the travel and accommodation arrangements and health and safety considerations..
- A minimum of two teachers/ staff members/adult approved by the BOM must travel. Other staff will be released from timetable duties depending on the numbers of students travelling and the type of outing/trip/tour. This will be arranged in consultation with the Principal.
- Before a student is accepted for an outing/trip/tour her previous behaviour will be taken into consideration. It should be noted that continuous breaches of the Code of Behaviour, repeated misdemeanours or suspension may result in a student being excluded from school related activities including school tours as per Code of Behaviour.
- Parents/ guardians will be notified, in advance, of all outings. No student may travel on any trip/tour without a permission slip signed by the parent/guardian.. In this way, parents/guardians, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behaviour at all times.

School Tours and Overnight trips, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

- Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Principal. Included in the proposal should be the educational or other benefits that the students derive from the trip.
- The number of students participating may vary depending on the nature of the trip and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group as recommended by the travel agency but there will be a minimum of two staff members.
- Meán Scoil Mhuire will organise trips/tours abroad using a licensed tour operator or travel agent. This company will arrange the travel package including accommodation and other services. All monies must be paid directly to the tour operator or travel agent, not to the school staff or event co-ordinator. Refer to the FSSU Financial Guidelines 2017/18/07 School Tours Bookings and Collection of Payments.
- The initial letter to the parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of a non-refundable deposit. Parents/guardians must be aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary. The responsibility to observe deadlines set for payments lies with the parents/guardians.
- If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's passport must be included with the deposit. All passports must be valid for at least 6 months following the trip.
- Visas may be necessary for the destination and some countries require them to be processed together. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa. Parents/Guardians should be informed that non- EU passport holders may need visas for EU countries. It is parental/guardian responsibility to apply for and acquire any necessary visa, the school has no part in this process.

- Students must have their European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries within the EU.
- It is important to impress upon parents/guardians 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 inoculations for the destination. It is important for parents/guardians to realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.
- Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.
- Parents must attend any information sessions organised regarding foreign trips and to keep themselves informed of information disseminated at such meetings or given to their daughter to relay.
- Following payment of the deposit, parents/guardians will receive a Permission Letter and form, all sections of which must be completed and returned to the organiser by a 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.
- Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors 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 should have the mobile phone number of the trip leader- to be carried with them at all times while on the trip. A mobile phone is available from the School, 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 Deputy Principal.
- In the event that a room inspection or an inspection of personal property (bags, suitcase etc.) being necessary, two members of staff are required to carry out the inspection together in the presence of the student/s concerned. This will only be done for good reasons based on reasonable grounds, such as concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns.
- If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty her own pockets, suitcase/ bags or to search the clothing that she is wearing.
- If a student is found to be in serious breach of any rules in the School Code of behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.
- An Accident or Complaint/Incident Report must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous points; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; any serious breach of the school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- To ensure the School Outings (Trips & Tours) Policy is developed and evaluated.
- To approve the policy.
- To ensure that all aspects of the policy are adhered to prior to and during the outing/ trip/tour.

Principal/ Deputy Principal

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- To monitor and support the implementation of the policy
- To promote and foster school outings/trips/tours.

Outing/ Trip/Tour Leader

- It is recommended that one teacher be nominated as the leader/ director of the outing/trip/tour. This person will be expected to ensure that the outing is conducted in accordance with agreed standards.
- When the proposal is sanctioned by the Principal/Board of Management the tour leader will inform the students and parents/guardians concerned. When numbers are confirmed, in consultation with the Principal, she/he will invite staff members to join the team. A Tour Template should be completed by the Tour Leader and signed by the principal in accordance with recommendations outlined in Circular M20/04. (Appendix 2).
- Prior to leaving for the trip/tour each teacher should be assigned a small number of students and be known to the students as their Group Leader. If possible these groups should remain unchanged for the duration of the tour.
- The Trip/Tour Leader should place teachers on a Supervision Rota for use in the various types of overnight accommodation.

Professional Responsibilities of the Tour Team

- Teachers will act in a responsible and professional manner at all times, according to the Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.
- It is important that the rules, agreed by teachers and parents and signed by students, are followed and enforced by all teachers while away with students.
- The organising teacher must ensure that adequate travel and school insurance is in place.
- Teacher/s must discuss with and inform the Principal of his/her tour intentions, proposed itinerary, dates of departure and return, age-group of students (year) and estimated cost of the trip, before informing students, other staff members or parents/guardians.
- Provide information regarding the cost of the trip, pocket money and any additional costs which may arise.

- Discuss the Code of Behaviour with the students.

Parents/ Guardians

- A signed consent form is an essential pre-requisite for the participation of their daughter in any school outing/trip/tour.
- A signed Parent/Student Tour/Trip Contract is essential for participation of their daughter in any school outing/trip/tour involving and overnight stay or foreign trip. (Appendix 1)
- Inform the Tour Leader of any medical condition/s of which the leader should be aware of, to ensure the health and safety of their daughter and all students while in the teachers' care. Parents must refer to the Administration of Medicines Policy if applicable.

Parents should be made aware of:

- The objectives of the tour.
- The itinerary and duration of the tour.
- The costs involved and the method of payment.
- The rules and behaviour to be observed.
- Information regarding insurance and indemnity.

Students

- Will sign and adhere to the Parent/Student Tour/Trip Contract (Appendix 1) as appropriate.
- Will adhere to the school rules.
- Will respect all staff members and other students at all times.
- Will obey staff members at all times.
- Will not wander off or break away from the party without permission.
- Will adhere to the dress code as set down by the Tour Leader.
- Will participate fully in activities of the tour.
- Will show respect for all other people they come in contact with e.g. drivers, guides, cabin crew, fellow travellers, those sharing transport, those sharing accommodation etc.
- Will behave during leisure time if the pupils are not under the direct supervision of teachers' e.g. shopping time in groups, in bedrooms during rest times etc..
- Will act in a responsible manner leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
- Will leave their bedrooms tidy.
- Will have respect for and comply with local customs and laws, particularly when travelling abroad.
- Will be responsible for their belongings.
- Will respect all equipment used on trips.

- Will use mobile phones only with the permission and under the direction of the Tour Leader or teacher in charge.

Students are expected to behave responsibly and obey the Code of Behaviour on all school outings and trips. Lack of compliance will result in sanctions being applied.

Sanctions for Misbehaviour

Minor Misbehaviour

Should a student be guilty of minor misbehaviour, the incident should be dealt with in a swift and firm manner, a verbal warning may be all that is needed. The Tour Leader may however feel that specific sanctions are required such as:

1. The student missing out on a specific activity,
2. The student missing an evening activity.

If a sanction is being applied it must be made clear to the student why it is being imposed. A student prevented from attending an activity must be supervised by staff of the Tour Team for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school e.g. the student may be banned from further involvement in future tours.

Serious Misbehaviour

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

In ongoing and extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour a student may be sent home at the expense of their parent/guardian.

In the event of this happening, the parents/guardians will be informed and if necessary a teacher will travel home with the offending student. Parents/guardians will be responsible for the cost of this additional expense. The Tour Leader will decide which teacher accompanies the student home.

In the case of a serious/criminal incident (shop-lifting, a violent attack etc) the parents/guardians will be informed immediately and the matter will be handed over to the local police authorities.

Sporting Trips/Activities

- Prior notice of games/matches/activities must be given to the principal.
- Names of accompanying teachers- for substitution purposes.
- Accurate lists of students participating and/or attending must be provided to the school secretary and Deputy Principal(s) provided at least 2 days in advance of the event.
- Roll call taken and list amended prior to departure from the school.

- Each coach/teacher is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to his/her match/tour/trip.
- If a minor accident occurs the coach will treat it on the spot. In the event of a serious accident the coach will contact an ambulance, the school and parents/guardians or other mode of transport directly and act in accordance with our First Aid Policy.
- An Accident Report Form will be filled for all accidents that occur.
- A Complaint/ Incident Report Form must be completed for all incidents which have occurred.
- The Code of Behaviour applies to all students.

Associated Official Documentation

- The Children First Act 2015
- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017
- Circular M20/04
- FSSU Financial Guidelines 2017/18/07 School Tours Bookings and Collection of Payments.
- Teaching Council Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers

Links with Other Policies

- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- First Aid Policy
- Health & Safety Policy/ Statement
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Supervision Policy

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored, reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

Implementation

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management and is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

Appendix 1-Parental/Student Contract for Overnight/ Foreign Tours/ Trips Outings

Appendix 2- Tour Template in accordance with Circular M 20/04

Appendix 1

Parental/Student Contract for Overnight/Foreign Tours/Trips Template

Meán Scoil Mhuire Longford

To enhance the learning experience of our students, various out of school trips are organised. Meán Scoil Mhuire recognises the benefits of outings to compliment normal schoolwork, for educational or sporting purposes. Such trips include visits to outdoor education centres, theatres, field trips, sports events, school tours and trips abroad.

The management of such trips places a great onus of responsibility on supervising teachers. In these circumstance, it is important that they are reasonably happy that the students in their care can follow guidance and instruction and do not pose a potential threat to the safe conduct of the tour. School trips, outing and tours are a privilege reserved for students who meet minimum standards of behaviour while at school.

Consequently, for any student going on a school outing, the following general rules apply:

- Students who do not meet the standards of behaviour, as decided by the management, may be refused permission to participate in a school outing. The school reserves the right to disallow a student from participation in a school trip if the health and safety of the student or other students or teachers is at risk. Therefore, if a student has shown a poor attitude to the Code of Behaviour or has refused to co-operate with an investigation into breaches of discipline the student will not be permitted to travel.
- Any student who has committed a serious misdemeanour prior to departure dates, notwithstanding that the student may have paid in full for a ticket, the student will not be permitted to travel.
- On outings, students are expected to represent the school in an exemplary way and behave in a reasonable manner at all times to school staff and anyone they may come in contact with.
- Travel only by means of transport organised by the school, unless the school has been otherwise advised in writing by the parent/guardian.
- Full uniform must be worn by students unless otherwise informed.
- The school Code of Behaviour applies in all circumstances on school tours/trips, including the rules in relation to mobile phone use, smoking/vaping and the use of alcohol/ drugs which is totally forbidden.
- The decision about the interpretation of these conditions will rest with the principal in consultation with the organising teacher and supervising teachers. Parents and students should be aware that the permission to travel on a school-related activity is conditional on strict adherence to the Code of Behaviour. This applies to all school events whether during the school day or outside the school day.
- Students will not be permitted to travel in situations where a signed consent form is required and the student/parent fail to submit it by the required deadline.

Meán Scoil Mhuire has an excellent record of behaviour and co-operation from our students who have travelled away on tours, trips and a variety of school activities and sporting events. The future involvement of staff depends very much on the continued good behaviour and co-operation of students and the support of parents. Guardians.

I accept the above conditions of participation in *[specify Event/ Tour/ Trip/Activity/Outing]*

Signed:

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Student: _____ Date: _____

Principal: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2: Tour Template

Details of School Tour		
Name of School Meán Scoil Mhuire	Address 5 St. Joseph's Road Longford N39 H6R2	Roll No. 63760E
Tour Dates		
From	To	Number of School Days
Brief Outline of Tour		
Number of Students Participating	Total number of students in relevant grade	
If some students are not participating, outline the reason why		
Expected benefit to accrue from the tour		

Why is the tour deemed to be necessary		
Adults accompanying the students		
Tour Leader	Names of other Adults	
Confirmations		
That appropriate arrangements are made in accordance with circular PPT 01/03 for those classes whose teachers are absent with the tour.	Yes:	No:
That adequate insurance is in place to cover all risks while on tour.	Yes:	No:
That parental permission has been secured for each student who is to participate on the tour.	Yes:	No:
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; padding: 10px;"> <div style="width: 60%;"> Signature of Principal: </div> <div style="width: 35%;"> Date: </div> </div>		