

St. Columba's College Stranorlar



**School Tours Policy
2017**

1. General Policy

This School Tour policy is informed by the Dept. of Education and Skills Circular Letter M 20 /04, and by the JMB's Financial Guidelines for schools.

The Board of Management of St Columba's College supports and encourages school tours. It 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".

School tours are categorised under two headings: those which are demanded by the particular curriculum subject, such as field trips and those which deepen the student's knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social and physical aspects of the areas or countries visited. Student tours to develop linguistic skills or knowledge of history are a good example of the latter.

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

The Board would hope that all school trips and tours would have a beneficial effect on pupils, enhancing both their academic prowess and their social skills.

1.1 Rules, Requirements and Student Conduct

Students and parents/guardians shall be informed, in advance of the tour, of rules, regulations and special requirements of that tour.

The conduct of all pupils on a tour or school trip shall be subject to the school code of behaviour and associated policies.

2. Procedures for Tours

To ensure that schools are compliant with legislation, the following will apply:

- **All school tours travelling outside of the Republic of Ireland must be booked through a bonded licensed travel agent or tour operator from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie and**
- **Payments from students should be made payable directly to the travel agent or tour operator by cheque/money order and will be collected by the tour leader.**
- **All payments of deposits and other fees made by parents/guardians will be receipted and forwarded directly to the approved travel company within 3/4 days of receipt by the school.**
- **The school will not accept any cash from parents/guardians, nor will the school make any payments on behalf of any party travelling on the tour.**
- **Schools are free to select any of the bonded tour operators from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie**

2.1. The approval of any school tour must be sought and obtained from the Principal in the first instance.

2.2. Board of Management approval shall be required for each tour in advance.

2.3. It is for the Principal to decide which teachers will organise the tour and accompany the pupils. Prior to departure, one teacher/teachers shall be appointed as tour leader(s). It is recognised that the organisation of or participation in any school tour is voluntary on the part of teachers.

2.4. Once the Board of Management has been appraised of all the details of a tour and has given its approval, then the tour leader(s) is/are fully empowered to proceed with the tour.

2.5. Adequate arrangements for supervision of all students should be arranged as well as appropriate insurance. The ratio of members of staff to students shall be one to ten, for trips or tours in Ireland or to Great Britain and one to eight for tours to the rest of Europe or farther afield. This ratio may be increased at the discretion of the Principal.

2.6. Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the tour with rules, regulations and special requirements of that tour. Parents/guardians shall be given an outline of the purpose, itinerary, dates and costs of the tour before a deposit is sought. Each student and her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to sign their agreement to abide by the rules, regulations and additional requirements outlined in advance of departure by the tour leader.

2.7. A list of all students traveling must be submitted to the Principal prior to booking. Permission to travel will be at the discretion of the school authorities.

2.8. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s) shall acquaint themselves with the school's Code of Behaviour and linked school policies.

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

(i) Students are expected to follow the instructions of staff in the interests of the smooth running of the tour and the health and safety and wellbeing of all.

(ii) Students must stay with the tour group. A student may not wander off anywhere alone: students are advised to be in groups of not less than three at any time.

(iii) Students must not purchase alcohol, drugs or tobacco products for any purpose at any stage of the tour, even if they have reached the legal age for purchasing same in the particular country.

(iv) The use of/possession of alcohol or other non-medically prescribed drugs by students on a tour is absolutely forbidden.

(v) In addition to the Code of Behaviour, 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.

2.9. Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to sign a consent form which will allow for medical treatment to be given in the event of injury/illness and where it is not possible to contact them in the time available. In the event of accident or injury, medical opinion will be sought immediately and best practice will be followed. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted as soon as is practically possible.

The school Code of Behaviour re use of mobile phones applies on all school trips. However, on foreign/overnight trips, students will be allowed use of their phones during the hours agreed in advance by the Principal, staff, students and parents.

2.10. Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a twenty-four-hour basis for the duration of the tour. The school mobile telephone will be supplied to the tour leaders for school tours. The number of the phone will be given to parent(s)/guardian(s) and students prior to departure for use in case of emergency.

2.11. Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be requested to inform the tour leader in writing of any special dietary requirements, medical needs or medication required by their child while on the tour.

2.12. Students on tours within the European Union shall be required to have a completed E111 form and a valid passport.

4. Emergency Procedures

- In the event of a serious incident/accident the school's procedures shall be followed. A report of the incident/accident and the decision(s) taken shall be put in writing as close to the event as is reasonable.
- The tour leader will liaise with the Principal as necessary.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management/Manager

Date: _____