



Maryfield College

School Policy on Out of School Activities / School Tours

Rationale and Context

The school aspires “to create an educational environment where pupils come to learn and to understand themselves, their abilities and the world” (Mission Statement). This happens within the school itself and through various out-of-school activities. The school positively promotes and encourages students to participate in school trips.

As per the DES Circular M20/04, “the objective of an educational tour should be that it should provide significant benefit in educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of pupils in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour and which cannot be provided by in-school activities alone” (see appendix).

This policy is drawn up within the contexts of:

1. Department of Education regulations, specifically Circular M20/04 (see appendix)
2. Health and Safety Legislation
3. Child Protection Guidelines
4. Guidelines issued by the JMB
5. Curricular demands
- 6.

For the purpose of this document the term ‘*School Tour*’ refers to all excursions during school hours, outside school hours and over-night(s).

General Information:

1. All school tours will take place in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter M 20/04 (copy appended).
2. The school’s Code of Behaviour, where appropriate, applies to all school tours.
3. Parents/Guardians will be notified, in advance, of all tours pertaining to their daughters. Before a student is accepted on a tour parents/guardians must sign the appropriate consent form. The Consent Form must be co-signed by the student and received by the school not later than the specified date. (see appendix for sample Consent Form).

4. At the start of transition year students and parents are given a letter (see appendix) to permit them to be involved in out of school activities and school trips without consent forms for each one.
5. The school authorities retain the right to refuse a student permission to participate in a school tour.

Procedures for different types of tours:

a) Day Tours

1. Day tours may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours.
2. Any teacher planning to organise a school tour must first inform the Principal or Deputy Principal of the intended date and nature of the activity, its educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the tour.
3. Full details, including date, time and names of participating students must be posted on the staff room notice board by the organising teacher as soon as possible before the event.
4. The organising teacher takes the responsibility to give each student a letter to take home giving full details of the tour and a Consent Form to be signed by parents/guardians and students.
5. All students going on any tour during normal school hours must return the permission slip signed by parents/guardians, by the specified date, to the teacher in charge before the outing takes place. Students who have not returned permission forms may not participate in the tour.
6. On all day tours 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 tour and the age of the students travelling. On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver.
7. Day tours may involve a financial cost to the student.
8. The school will always have the mobile/contact details numbers of the Coach Company or staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.
9. For tours which extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their daughter's journey to/from the school or venue.

10. An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which may occur. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

b) Overnight Tours

Any member of staff who is considering taking students on an overnight tour must first discuss the proposal with the Principal.

Unless the trip is specific to a group (e.g. a language class) it should be open to all students in principle, within the year group.

The tour organiser must request in writing the consent of the Board of Management for the proposed trip by completing a Tour Authorisation form (see Appendix) as outlined in the JMB guidelines. The Board must be assured that the Travel Agents/Tour Operators are licensed under the appropriate legislation (The Aviation Regulation Act 2001).

Once consent has been received from the Board of Management the organiser may proceed as follows:

- 1) An initial letter to parents should contain an outline of the educational value of the tour, a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of non-refundable deposit. Parents must be aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- 2) The organiser has the right, before deposits are accepted, to refuse a pupil permission to take part in a school tour. This will follow consideration of the pupil's record of compliance with school rules and whether the pupil might prove to be a liability to herself or to others on health, safety or disciplinary grounds while on the trip. Such a decision will be made by the Principal in consultation with the teacher in charge of the tour, the year head and relevant staff. In some cases, numbers of students taking part in tours may be limited by logistics of travel. The decision of the school management is final.
- 3) If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's passport must be included with the deposit.
- 4) 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 should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.
- 5) Students must have their European Health Card for travel to countries within the EU.

- 6) The onus is on parents to ensure that their daughters have all the necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the tour.
- 7) Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their daughters to receive all necessary inoculations.
- 8) Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.
- 9) Following receipt of the deposit, parents will receive the Permission Letter and Form. All sections must be completed and the form 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.
- 10) Parents must advise the tour leader of any medical conditions, allergies or dietary requirements. It is also their duty to inform the school of any relevant health and safety issues which might affect their children.
- 11) Permission from parents/guardians must be sought, allowing students to participate in certain activities such as ice-skating.
- 12) Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the tour may be necessary. A list should be made of participants' mobile numbers (as given on the permission form) and students must 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 and this number may be used by parents if they need to contact the tour organiser, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile numbers to students.
- 13) The tour organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal, Deputy Principal or a member of the Board of Management.
- 14) If necessary two members of staff will carry out inspection of rooms, with the room occupants present. 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.
- 15) If it is deemed necessary, the student may be asked to empty her pockets, suitcase/bags.

- 16) If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the School Code of Behaviour, the matter will be dealt with by school management on the student's return.
- 17) An Accident/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 and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

Tour Organising Team

Tour Leader

- It is recommended that one teacher be nominated as the Director of the Trip. This teacher is responsible to ensure that tour is conducted in accordance with agreed standards.
- When the proposal is sanctioned by the Principal/Board of Management the tour organiser will inform the pupils and parents concerned.

Tour Team: Organising and Planning

- A Tour Team should be put in place as soon as possible. The tour leader will invite expressions of interest from the staff.
- The decision on the selection of staff members to form the tour team will be made by the tour leader in consultation with the principal. Following the consultation with the principal the staff members on the tour team will be informed. A reserve list is advisable in case a member of the team should subsequently be unable to travel.
- The tour leader(s) should meet the full tour team at the outset to discuss duties involved in organising and planning the trip. For example: tour finances, passports, European health cards, itinerary, medical kit, contact numbers, etc.
- Prior to leaving 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 throughout the tour.

Professional Responsibilities of the Tour Team

Mindful of the DES guidelines regarding Child Protection, the following must be observed:

- Teachers will act in a responsible manner (including the consumption of alcohol) having regard to the fact that they are in the company of and responsible for the care of young adults. Teachers will maintain the same standards of care as apply in a school situation.
- It is important that the rules agreed by teachers and parents and signed by students are enforced by all teachers while away, especially with regard to the consumption of alcohol by students.
- The organising teacher must ensure that adequate travel and school insurance is in place.
- Arrangements should be made for a summary report from the tour leader to the Principal and the Board of Management outlining: the achievements of the tour, any difficulties or problems which arose during the course of the tour.

Students

Students must obey, where appropriate, the school's Code of Behaviour and any rules laid down by the tour leader and teachers while away:

- Pupils must adhere to the appropriate school rules at all times.
- Respect for all staff members and other students at all times.
- Obey staff members at all times.
- Respect others at all times e.g. drivers, guides, cabin crew, fellow travellers, those sharing transport and those sharing accommodation.
- Students must not wander off or break away from the group without permission.
- The use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any other illegal substance is forbidden.
- Pupils must adhere to the tour dress code as set down by the tour leader.
- Pupils will participate fully in the activities of the tour.
- Pupils will behave appropriately during leisure time, if not under direct supervision of teachers.
- Pupils must follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
- Pupils are responsible for ensuring that all forms of transport are left litter free and are not damaged by them in any way.

- Pupils are responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy.
- Pupils must have respect for and comply with local customs and laws, particularly when travelling abroad.
- Pupils are responsible for their own belongings.

When a student is accepted to participate in a school tour, she is obliged to comply with the tour rules and to sign a copy of the rules pledging compliance.

Students must be made aware that there are sanctions for misbehaviour on a school tour.

Sanctions for Misbehaviour

If a student be guilty of minor misbehaviour, the incident will be dealt with in a swift and firm manner and a verbal warning may be all that is needed. The tour leader may feel that specific sanctions are required such as:

1. The student missing a half-day's activities (not however an activity relating to health and safety).
2. The student missing out on a specific activity e.g. bowling.
3. The student missing an evening activity e.g. disco

If a sanction is being imposed it must be made clear to the student why it is being imposed. A student prevented from attending an activity must be supervised by a teaching member 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 involvement in future tours.

Serious Misbehaviour

When a student is guilty of 'serious misbehaviour' the tour leader may decide to phone the student's parents/guardians to provide them with details of the incident/s.

In ongoing and extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour a student may be sent home (paid by their parents/guardians).

In the event of this happening, the parents/guardians will be informed and if necessary a teacher will travel home with the offending student. The tour leader will decide which teacher accompanies the student home.

In the case of a serious/criminal incident the parents/guardians will be informed immediately and the matter will be handed over to the local police authorities.

Examples of 'serious misbehaviour' include:

- Use/possession of alcohol.
- Use/possession of illegal substances.
- Use/possession of cigarettes.
- Misuse of legal substances (lighter fluid, tippex, etc)
- Disruptive behaviour on coach, plane, boat or in the hotel/hostel.
- Lack of respect for accommodation rules.
- Lack of respect for tour team or any other supervising adults.
- Theft or criminal damage to property of others
(this list is not exhaustive)

c) Sporting Events

1. Students who are participating in sporting activities which take place in other locations are not required to obtain written permission from parents/guardians (refer to policy document P.E. Department)
2. Each sports coach is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to the match.
3. If a minor accident occurs the coach will treat it on the spot. In the event of a serious accident the coach will inform the parents/guardians and ring an ambulance/or other mode of transport directly.
4. Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded.
5. Staff organise transport to and from all matches, using a recognized coach company. In case of local venues, parents may be asked to provide transport.
6. In the event of supporters attending matches a letter giving full details and an attached permission slip must be given to each student who wishes to attend. Students who have not returned their slips will not be allowed to attend the event.

Financial Guidelines for School Tour Activity (as per JMB Guidelines, see appendix)

- At least two teachers should be involved in the financial administration of a school tour. This is an important protection for all concerned where money is collected from students.
- All funds collected for activities must be administered through the school bank account.
- Cheques must be made payable to Maryfield College.

- Separate financial records should be maintained for each school tour. A detailed record of all participating students and the amounts paid should be retained.
- Parents should be informed as early as possible of the full cost associated with the tour. Written permission should be received from the parents of all tour participants and a receipt for all monies paid should be issued.
- Proper and full insurance cover must be in place for all school tours.

Appendix

- 2007/08 JMB Financial Guidelines 04: Educational Tours by School Groups.
- Department of Education Circular Letter M 20/04: Educational Tours by School Groups (both inside and outside the State)
- JMB Tour Authorisation Form
- Accident/Incident Report Form
- Transition Year consent letter for out of school activities

Maryfield College School Tour Consent Form

Parents: please read, sign and return this form to the school on or before _____

1. Is your daughter currently taking any medication? _____

If yes, please give details.

Teachers are not normally permitted to supply or administer any medication (including mild painkillers) to students.

2. Is your daughter allergic to penicillin? _____

3. Is your daughter allowed to go ice-skating and bowling? _____

Declaration by patents/guardians:

4. Should any medical treatment for my daughter be considered necessary during the school tour, I authorise a member of staff to seek medical intervention on her behalf.

I understand that no smoking or purchase/consumption of alcohol is allowed by any pupil at any time on the tour – regardless of the pupil’s age.

Finally, I accept that in the interests of safety and fairness, my daughter must comply without hesitation with the wishes of the Staff at all times.

Signed: _____ (Parent / Guardian)

Declaration by student:

I agree to abide by all the tour rules. I also agree to comply with the rules regarding smoking, the consumption and/or purchase of alcohol or illegal drugs during the tour. I understand that Staff members will act in *loco parentis* and I agree to accept their instructions and decisions at all times and without hesitation.

Signed: _____ (Student)

Date: _____