

1. General Policy

The Board of Management of Ardscoil Rís, Dublin 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:

- (1) those which are demanded by the particular curriculum subject, such as field trips and
- (2) 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 are a good example of the latter.

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 competency and their social skills.

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

2. Procedures for Tours

The approval of any school day-trip must be sought and obtained from the Principal.

Board of Management approval shall be required for any and all overnight tours or trips to a foreign jurisdiction, regardless of duration.

Tours will take place during weekends, midterm breaks or holidays with a maximum of 1 additional school day if required, subject to Board of Management approval. TY trips/tours may differ from this subject to the demands of the TY programme. Because of the scale and special nature of the Zambia Immersion Trip, different arrangements will also apply where a maximum of 1 week of term time may be used.

All foreign trips must be organised through a bonded travel agency. All monies will be paid by parents directly to the travel agency.

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

Once the Board of Management has been appraised of all the details of a tour and has given its approval, then the tour leader is allowed to proceed with the tour.

Adequate arrangements for supervision of all students should be arranged as well as appropriate insurance. A risk assessment should be completed, particularly in the case of higher risk activities e.g. a Skiing Trip.

The recommended ratio of members of staff to students shall be one to ten for overnight trips/tours. This ratio may be altered at the discretion of the Principal (while at all times adhering to Health & Safety guidelines and Insurance requirements).

Should demand exceed the number of places available on the tour, a lottery will be held to assign places and a waiting list, where necessary.

Students and parents/guardians shall be supplied in advance of the tour with itineraries, programmes, rules, regulations and any special requirements of that particular tour. Parents/guardians shall be given an outline of the purpose, itinerary, dates and costs of the tour before a deposit is sought. Written consent from parents/guardians must be given. A list of all students intending to travel must be submitted to the Principal prior to booking. The inclusion or exclusion of particular students in a school tour shall be at the discretion of the Principal.

It must be emphasised that travelling with any group is a huge responsibility that is taken very seriously. Therefore, a tour can only take place if the School is satisfied that the tour has the safety and welfare of the students at its core.

If for any reason a student's behaviour during the course of the year, gives rise to concern about their ability to behave appropriately while on the trip/tour, then their place on the tour may be reviewed. Please be aware that this may result in the loss of the non-refundable deposit and subsequent monies paid. This is in line with the School's Code of Behaviour.

Prior to the tour

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students will be required to attend the pre Tour Meeting prior to the tour where specific details of the tour & tour rules will be explained.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to sign a consent form which will allow medical advice to be followed 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 Board has full confidence in the staff and their decisions.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a 24 hour basis for the duration of the tour. A School Mobile telephone number must be supplied to parent(s)/guardian(s) and students prior to departure.

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

Students on tours within the European Union shall be required to have a completed E111 form and a valid passport (and an appropriate visa if the student does not hold an EU passport).

General Rules

The Board of Management specifically draws attention to the following:

- (A) Students must obey members of staff at all times.
- (B) Students must stay with the tour group. A student may not go off by themselves or wander off anywhere alone: students must stay in groups at all times.
- (C) Students must not purchase or attempt to purchase alcohol or tobacco products for any purpose at any stage of the tour. This also applies to Duty Free on the return trip.
- (D) The consumption of alcohol, tobacco, vapes, illegal drugs or illicit substances by students on a tour is absolutely forbidden and may result in serious consequences such as returning home immediately, referral to the relevant police authority, suspension and/or expulsion.
- (E) 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.
- (F) The Board of Management requires parent(s)/guardian(s) to guarantee that when their son comes to the school to assemble for the start of a school tour, that he does so free from illegal substances or any substance listed in D, above. In the most serious of circumstances, where suspicion arises, the Tour Leader has the authority to check luggage and belongings.
- (G) When on a tour, should a student be found to be guilty of serious misbehaviour the Tour Leader will contact the Principal. The student's parents/guardians will also be contacted. In an extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour or in the case of persistent serious misbehaviour, a student may be sent home. In the event of this happening, the parents/guardians will be informed and if necessary arrangements made for the offending student to travel home in line with Child Protection Guidelines at the expense of the parent/guardian.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21st November 2023.

Signed: Mary Fox
Mary Fox
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 21/11/2023

Signed: John McHugh
John McHugh
Principal

Date: 21/11/2023