

ABBEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

School Tour Policy

Definition: A School Tour is defined as any group travel involving at least one overnight stay.

Policy Statement: it is the policy of the Board of Management/Principal/Deputy Principal to encourage, where appropriate, extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities which further the broader educational development of students.

Approval:

- The Tour Leader(s) must obtain permission from the Board of Management (BOM), Principal/Deputy Principal to take students on a school tour. A general outline of the tour, including travel dates, tour company details, travel insurance, the total tour price and the general tour itinerary, should accompany the request for permission. If possible permission should be sought from the September BOM meeting.
- Prior to seeking permission, the Tour Leader(s) must enter into discussions with the Principal/Deputy Principal to ensure that the proposed tour dates do not impinge upon the normal teaching routine of the school year.
- All school tours must conform to the criteria as set down in the Kilkenny V.E.C School Tour Guidelines and Department of Education and Science circular M20/04 relating to Educational Tours by School Groups (inside and outside of the State).

Tour Team:

- A Tour Team, led by the Tour Leader(s) should be put in place as soon as possible. A reserve list is advisable in case a member of the team should subsequently be unable to travel,
- The Tour Team may come from different departments within the school structure. If a sufficient number of Team members are not available within the school, other adults wishing to travel may come from outside the school. Tour Team members may include: (a) Teaching Staff (b) Special Needs Assistants (c) Secretarial Staff (d) Caretaking Staff (e) Parents.
- The Tour Leader(s) should meet the full Tour Team at the outset so as to discuss individual duties.
- Ideally all members of the Tour Team should be involved in organising the tour i.e. taking up duties in one of the following areas:
 - Tour Finances – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader
 - Passports – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader – for reasons of privacy some students may obtain their own passports
 - E111 forms – any member of the Tour Team
 - The Tour Itinerary – cultural passes, internal tours – any member of the Tour Team
 - General needs – medical kit, home contact numbers, medical services, and contacts in area to be toured etc. – any member of Tour Team.

Tour Finances:

All income and expenditure related to the Tour should conform fully to the accounting practices of the school. The Tour Leader is responsible for the following Financial Procedures:

- Collect the money in installments, on specific dates. All money should be kept in the school safe, deposited there on a daily basis if necessary.
- Pay the deposit, other interim payments and the final payment to the tour company, by the various due dates.
- Keep in mind the economic position of students and ensure that a varied installment system can be implemented if problems arise during the period of payment.

Notice to Parents:

- Once permission has been granted by the BOM the parents/guardians of the selected group/year/class should receive a circular outlining the general nature of the proposed tour. In as far as possible all the students in the target group should receive the circular on the same day.
- The circular should specify;
 - the objectives of the tour.
 - the itinerary and duration of the tour.
 - the full costs involved and the method of payment (deadlines etc.).
 - information regarding insurance and indemnity.
 - the general rules of behaviour to be observed.
 - that the numbers may be limited and a deposit is required to secure a place.

(These places will be awarded on a first come, first served basis on a designated date and time to ensure fairness. Disciplinary records may be taken into account as to tour participation.)

Parents should also be made aware, through the circular, of their duty to inform the school of any relevant Health or Safety issues which might affect their children while on tour.

The signed consent/permission of parents/guardians and students is an essential pre-requisite for the participation of any student on the tour.

Before Departure:

Preferably in the week before departure, a meeting of all students going on the Tour should be held. Where possible all staff travelling should attend this meeting.

Students / parents should be given the following:

- A detailed itinerary – dates, times, locations, hotels, addresses, contact phone numbers etc.
- Advice on a reasonable daily allowance, in the currency of the country to be visited, for each student to bring.
- Advice to students as to how best students can safeguard their money when on Tour.
- Remind students that their passports are their responsibility while on tour.
- Remind students of the school rules and behaviour while on tour.

Medication:

- Where a student requires constant or regular medication specific written details must be given to the Tour Leader. Parents/guardians may request a private meeting to inform the Tour Leader about the illness and the manner in which the medication should be administered.
- The Tour Leader should establish if a non-medical person can administer the medication.
- Each parent/guardian must inform the tour leader, if the medical condition of a student travelling requires contact numbers, allergies or medication to be taken. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that a student has medication sufficient to last the entire Tour.
- In the event of a medical emergency/dental emergency while on Tour it may be necessary for a member of the Tour Team to act in loco parentis. The following agreement should be issued to all parents/guardians and must be signed prior to the tour.

e.g. We, the tour leaders (named below) will act on medical advice presented to us if in the event of an accident or emergency where it is not possible to contact parents, guardians or next of kin either by phone or due to time considerations.

Before the tour leaves parents/guardians must specify in writing the person/s they wish the Tour Leaders to contact in the event of parents/guardians being unavailable. In the event of emergency parents/guardians will always be contacted first.

Contact Information:

The Tour Leader must ensure that complete contact information is left on file in the school office, available for use in the event of an emergency.

The list should include:

- Names, addresses and home contact numbers of all those going on the Tour.
- Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
- A contact number, day or night, for the Tour Leader(s).

On Tour Supervision:

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. It is the responsibility of each Group Leader to:

- Call his/her group together at specific times in busy areas (bus depots, airports etc.)
- Count the group members on and off planes, ships, trains, buses etc.
- Arrange specific meeting points and times to meet students when on day tours (city landmarks, cafes, ski slopes etc.)

Teaches or accompanying adults should have a Supervision Rota for use in the various types of overnight accommodation used. Students should be made aware that corridors are being supervised.

The Tour Leader should:

- Ensure nightly corridor supervision.
- Ensure that all accommodations are checked on arrival and on departure by the supervising adults. This is to speed up the return of any deposit taken by the hotel on arrival.
- Ensure teachers are on corridor duty as required.

It is not recommended that personnel other than current school staff are engaged in chaperoning or supervising students in their overnight accommodation although in certain instances this may be necessary.

Student Code of Behaviour:

The Code of Behaviour is to be observed by all students. The Code itself should be positive and consistent with the objectives of the Tour.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the students prior to departure and outline the Code of Behaviour as follows:

- Students must adhere to the school rules at all times where they are applicable.
- Students must adhere to the Tour dress code as set down by the Tour Leader.
- Students must follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
- Students must be well behaved on public and/or private transport while on tour.
- Students are responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
- Students are responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy.
- Students are responsible for their own property, passports and money.

The Tour Team should check all rooms before students have access to them and make a note of any damage done prior to their arrival. Vacated rooms should also be checked for damage.

Sanctions on Tour:

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

- The student missing out on a specific tour activity. This student or students must be supervised at all times.

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.

Examples of ‘serious misbehaviour’ include:

- Use/possession of alcohol.
- Use/possession of illegal substances (drugs etc.)
- 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.
- Serious problems with punctuality.... etc.

Where a student is guilty of ‘serious misbehaviour’ the Tour Team 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.

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

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.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal on return to school.

Reporting Back to BOM/Principal/Deputy Principal:

Within two weeks of the Tour party’s return, the Tour Team should provide the school management with a general report outlining:

- The achievements/success of the Tour.
- Details of any incidents which required the imposition of sanctions while on Tour.
- An assessment of the School Tour Policy and suggestions for ways to improve or strengthen it prior to future School Tours.