

Coláiste Nano Nagle

School Tour Policy



2023

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

This policy is drafted in the context of the Circular Letter M20/04 issued by DES.

Introduction:

The organisation of out of school group activities has long been an integral part of school life. Such activities may include attendance at sporting events, visits to appropriate exhibitions, conferences, etc. and longer-term educational tours, either in Ireland or abroad. These events serve to significantly enrich both the academic curriculum as taught in school, and the social and personal development of those pupils participating in them.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Nano Nagle 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 deemed by the particular curriculum subject, such as field trips and those which deepen the student’s knowledge and understanding of cultural, social and physical aspects of the area or countries visited. Student tours to develop linguistic skills are a good example of the latter.

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.

Objective:

The objective of organising educational tours is to provide our pupils with opportunities to develop their educational, intellectual, cultural and social skills. Educational tours and field trips should:

- Reinforce classroom activities
- Enhance the learning process of as many pupils as possible by providing educational experiences which the classroom alone cannot provide
- Support the curriculum content of some subjects through field trips, tours, outings or other recreational activities
- Develop interpersonal skills of the students

Costs and Accountability:

- The overall cost of the trip should be agreed in advance and should consider the ability of parents to pay
- The income and expenditure must conform fully with the accounting practices of the school
- A full written account of income and expenditure should be reported back to the Principal

Role of Board of Management:

- To approve any trip outside the State
- To ensure that the trip offers a worthwhile educational experience for the students
- To ensure that pupils who are not participating in the event are adequately catered for while their teachers are away.
- To consider the timing of the event so that there is minimum impact on the normal work of the school
- To consider the number of proposed events to take place during the course of the year

Role of Principal:

- The Principal will seek the approval of the Board for any trips outside of Ireland
- The Principal will provide the Board with information consistent with M58/04
- A Tour Leader, whose role will be to ensure that the tour is conducted according to agreed procedures and standards, will be appointed by the Principal and provided with detailed information on procedures

The Principal will ensure that the following information is available in the school:

1. A list of those taking part together with home contact details
2. The itinerary to be followed and contact details of those involved
3. School mobile contact number for Tour Leader and teachers

Contact Information:

- The Tour Leader must have that contact details for school management and parents in the event of an emergency.
- The Tour Leader must carry all relevant personal details regarding each member of the tour i.e. health information, home contact details, approval for medical attention etc.

Teacher/Pupil Ratio:

The ratio of teachers to pupils should reflect the level of risk of the activity and should be increased as the degree of difficulty or danger increases. The following should be considered:

- Gender balance of staff to reflect the gender balance of the students travelling
- The age and maturity of the pupils involved
- The number of pupils travelling
- The location of the trip
- The length of the trip
- Additional supervision which may be provided at the destination point
- The type of transport used

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 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.

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 enough 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 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, Visas and other relevant travel documentation – the Tour Leader
- European Health Insurance Cards – the Tour Leader
- 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 instalments, on specific dates. All money should be kept in the school safe, deposited there daily 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 instalment 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 considered as to tour participation.)

Parents/Guardians 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 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.

Health and Safety:

- In case of an accident, expert medical attention will be sought should it be deemed necessary.
- On return from, or during any trip, staff may advise a parent/guardian to seek medical advice.
- Where a serious accident occurs, staff will seek medical assistance as a first priority and contact the school to inform the school management of events. Parents will be contacted by the school.

Child Protection

All supervising adults are Garda Vetted and aware of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

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.) Teachers 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.

Tour Leader:

- 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:

Students must follow the Code of Behaviour of the school and adhere to the rules and expectations of the trip at all times. The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the students prior to departure and outline the Code of Behaviour as follows:

General Behaviour:

- The good name of Coláiste Nano Nagle and the country must be respected at all times.
- Student must be courteous and show respect to other students and adults at all times e.g. bus drivers, cabin crew, fellow travellers, those sharing transport, those sharing accommodation.
- Students are expected to participate fully in all organised activities.
- Students must follow the instructions of all supervising adults on the trip. Decisions are made in the interest of safety, organisation, and efficiency of the trip as a whole. Students must listen carefully to instructions at all times and work as part of the team looking out for each other and inform adults of any issues which may arise.
- Students must not take any unnecessary risks or undertake any activity that might bring them or someone else into danger.
- Students must look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell their supervising adults about it immediately.
- Student must behave responsibly at all times.
- Students must not wander off or break away from the group at any time. If the group are given any free time for shopping etc they must stay with at least two other students and return to the arranged meeting point on time. Students must not interact with others outside of their own group.
- If a student is found to be guilty of a minor misbehaviour the accompanying teachers will decide on an appropriate course of action. A sanction may be imposed on the trip and/or when the student returns to school.
- If a student is found in serious breach of any expectations of the school and its rules for the trip and/or general code of behaviour, the Tour Leader will make the school aware and management will decide on the next course of action.
- In the case of a serious/criminal incident, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the principal will be informed immediately, and the matter will be handed over to the appropriate authorities.
- An accident or incident report must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include persistent lateness, not staying with the group, rudeness to other students or adults or breach of other rules.
- Student must not be in the possession of, or use tobacco/nicotine products, vapes, alcohol, drugs or any other illegal substance.
- Students may be sent home earlier from a trip in cases of serious misbehaviour and parents/guardians will be liable to pay the costs arising from this.
- Students must dress in an appropriate manner for the weather and a school trip.
- Student should respect and comply with the local customs and laws.
- Money and valuables are the student's own responsibility on the trip. Expensive digital equipment, clothing/footwear should not be brought on this trip unless the student is prepared to take full responsibility for its safekeeping.

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:

- Use/possession of alcohol.
- Use/possession of tobacco products/vaps
- 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. Parents are responsible for bearing the costs if such an incident occurs.

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.

Behaviour on Transportation:

- Students must obey all inflight instructions regarding seatbelts, use of electronics etc. Students should not move unnecessarily around the aircraft when travelling via plane and be respectful to other passengers and the airline crew.
- Students should not purchase or have on their person any item which could cause major security delays at the airport for their group travelling.
- Students are responsible for their own belongings. Bags should be clearly labelled and should not be left unattended particularly at the airport. Any non-essential valuable items should not be brought on the trip. Please adhere to the baggage allowance. Excess weight in baggage will be at the students and the parents/guardian's own expense.
- Student must wear their seatbelts on any transportation where it is required and follow all safety guidelines.
- Students are responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.

Behaviour in Hotel:

- Students must not vacate the vicinity of the accommodation at any stage without being accompanied by a supervising adult.
- Students must go to their rooms at the times decided by the supervising adults.
- Students must remain in their own room unless there is an emergency or essential need. Visiting other students' rooms is not allowed as supervising adults must know where the students are at all times.
- Students must follow the rules of accommodation.
- Students must leave their bedrooms tidy. Should any issues arise regarding the room/equipment, they should report this to a supervising adult immediately. Students and their parents/guardians will be financially liable for any damage caused by them.
- Nighttime supervision will be in place.
- Supervising adults will not enter student rooms without knocking first and receiving verbal permission.
- If necessary two supervising adults (one of whom must be a teacher) can carry out room or bag inspections in the presence of the student(s). This would only be done for good reasons based on reasonable ground, such as concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of banned substances or other concerns. Where possible, parents/guardians will be informed in advance.

Use of Phones and Social Media:

- Students must be contactable at all times. Mobile phones must be charged, carried by the student and on at all times to facilitate this. Students will be given a mobile phone contact number and must have this in their mobile phone contact list. This will allow them to always be in a position to contact one of the accompanying adults and be contacted by one of the accompanying adults.
- Student are not allowed to use their mobile phones during the school day or during organised educational activities unless it is with teacher permission for a teaching and learning purpose.

- Students are permitted to use their phones during their leisure time and during travel.
- All photos of the trip will be uploaded on the school's official social media platforms and shared with the group.
- Photos of the trip should not be taken by students unless permission is given by a teacher and the students in the picture all consent to it and consent to the platform it is being uploaded to. All members of the group (students and supervising adults) have the right not to have their images posted on line.
- Photos must never be taken in student bedrooms or of any member of the group without their knowledge.
- The misuse of mobile phones, camera phones for the capture or dissemination of inappropriate content will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy or any other relevant school policy.

Insurance:

Travel insurance will be put in place to cover the duration of the school trip.

All students will be required to have a European Health Insurance Card.

Uniform and Dress Code:

Pupils will be required to wear the official school uniform on all trips unless otherwise decided in advance by School Management.

Reporting back to BOM, Principal and 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.

Consultation and Communication Regarding the Policy

Staff were consulted and their views canvassed in the preparation of this plan.

Students and parent representatives were also consulted and asked for their comments.

Next date for updating of the plan is September 2024

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management of Coláiste Nano Nagle:

Tom O'Dwyer

Chairperson
Board of Management

Date: 18/01/2023