



## **Policy on the Use of Volunteers Accompanying Foreign or Domestic Travel with Student Groups**

### **Scope**

This policy applies to situations where schools or centres wish to avail of the assistance of parents and/or guardians in accompanying student groups on foreign or domestic travel or activities, e.g. school tours. The policy applies to all schools, centres or services under the auspices of Cork ETB, and in particular, tours or outings comprising of groups of children (under 18s) or vulnerable adults.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of Cork ETB that schools, centres or services may, where insufficient staff members are available to attend, request volunteers (comprising parents and/or guardians of students/vulnerable adults participating in the activity) to assist in supervising groups. This applies on both domestic activities, e.g. school matches, day tours and on foreign travel, e.g. school tours. The following conditions must be met in such situations:

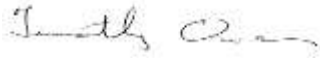
- Any proposed volunteers must be Vetted in advance of the tour or activity. No parents/guardians may accompany any student group in such activities without successful completion of Vetting in advance of the tour/activity.
- The ratio of staff to volunteers must be at minimum 1:1 i.e. one Cork ETB staff members to each volunteer. For foreign travel, the ratio of staff to volunteers must be 2:1 at a minimum, and preferably this ratio should be higher.
- The Principal/Coordinator/Manager should inform all parents/guardians at time of organising the tour/activity that volunteers may be required if this is a possibility, and what procedures will be followed if this is the case.
- An acknowledgement of the fact that supervision on the activity or tour may be provided by volunteer parents/guardians must be included on parental consent forms for tours to ensure that all parents/guardians are aware of same, and consent to it. It should be noted that such volunteers will be Vetted in advance and included on insurance arrangements.

- Where Volunteers are required, all parents/guardians of students involved in the tour/activity should be given the opportunity to be included. Where more people volunteer than is needed, the Principal/Coordinator/Manager shall decide who is to be included, having regard to factors such as the size of the group, the number of ETB staff taking part, gender balance, language or other requirements specific to the trip, e.g. knowledge of European languages would be beneficial in the case of a trip to a European country, other volunteer/activity based experience which might be of benefit to the tour etc.
- The School/Centre/Service should draw up a “volunteer specification” type document, clearly outlining the roles, responsibilities and limits applicable to volunteers accompanying the tour/activity. Such specification may vary from tour to tour, depending on the nature of the activity. Volunteers may be expected to assist in preparatory work before the tour/activity, and will be expected to share in the workload e.g. supervision duties, organisation and coordination duties, while accompanying the tour/activity. This document should be provided to all parents/guardians where a volunteer is being requested, and its conditions should be signed to indicate acceptance by any volunteers participating.
- Volunteers must familiarise themselves with the School/Centre/Service policies and rules for students/learners in relation to school tours or activities, and be aware of the standards of conduct expected.
- Volunteers must clearly understand that their purpose is to assist Cork ETB staff members in supervision of students/learners and accept in advance that they are under the direction of the staff members. No major decisions should be made by volunteers except in an emergency situation where no staff members are accessible in order to ensure the health and safety of students/learners.
- The Principal/Coordinator/Manager should ensure that appropriate travel insurance policies are in place for all participants, i.e. teachers, students and volunteers. If the travel is outside of the EU, or there are any concerns regarding insurances, ESS should be contacted well in advance for assistance.
- The Principal/Coordinator/Manager should liaise with appropriate Head Office departments well in advance of the proposed activity, to ensure that any necessary activities in preparation for the tour/activity are completed in a timely manner, e.g. Garda Vetting
- The Principal/Coordinator/Manager should notify any issues that arise in the course of the tour/activity to the appropriate Head Office functions during/after the tour/activity, as applicable.

## Review

This policy will be subject to review in accordance with organisational needs and/or where it is necessary to do so due to changes in DES regulations, legislation or other such situations.

Signed:



Date: 6/5/16

*Timothy Owens*

*Chief Executive*

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Coachford College on March 20<sup>th</sup> 2018.

The policy is available to all members of the school community and posted on the school's website. .