

# Coachford College Policy on School Outings



## 1. General

### 1.1 Scope

This policy applies to all students of Coachford College, to school staff and volunteers who take students off campus, and to their parents/guardians. It is also applicable to staff who are involved with the organisation of and participation in school outings.

### 1.2 Context

This policy has been devised in consultation with all members of the school community and in keeping with the school's characteristic spirit. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Health and Safety Statement, Wellbeing Policy, Appropriate Behaviour Policy, Suspensions and Expulsions Policy, Extra-Curricular Activities Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement/Risk Assessment, Safety Statement, Substance Abuse Policy, Acceptable Use of Technology Policy, Attendance Strategy, Critical Incident Policy, Volunteer Travel Policy, Data Protection Policy, the requirements of Garda Vetting and other relevant policy and guidelines. Coachford College encourages the pursuit of excellence and strives to create an environment conducive to the highest standards of achievement in a community in which mutual respect is shared in a positive environment. Individual potential is developed in all fields, and student wellbeing is at the core of that is pursued. In order to achieve such goals, it is expected that students participate fully and safely in all outings organized to support their learning and wellbeing.

### 1.3 Objectives

The objective of educational outings is to promote the intellectual, cultural and social development and wellbeing of students, to re-inforce learning and to promote optimal physical and mental health through involvement in sport. School outings are categorised under two headings: those which are demanded by the particular curriculum subject, such as field trips and those which deepen the student's knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social and physical aspects of the regions visited. School outings allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced educational process. School outings require good preparation and organisation to optimise the learning experience for students. This policy aims to ensure the effective planning and safe execution of outings organized to support student learning and wellbeing.

## **1.4 Rationale**

Some outings are organised as part of the course to be followed in a subject area and as such may be compulsory. Other outings and trips are additional to the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity.

School outings afford students the opportunity to engage in experiences not available in the classroom, help develop a student's imaginative skills, encourage greater independence and to enhance the student's social and cultural development and wellbeing. Outings assist in bonding between students, as well as affording staff an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.

## **2. Planning and organisation of school trips**

There should be a balanced programme of outings for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.

Field trips and outings are organised by teaching staff in consultation with the Principal. The outing, including all information and documentation to be provided to parents/guardians, must be approved in advance by the Principal.

Consent is required from a parent/guardian before a student may participate in a school outing. It is understood that students who play as part of a team representing the school have on-going parental consent to travel to all away matches/competitions.

Students are excused from classes to participate in sports, co-curricular and extra-curricular day outings with the prior consent of the teacher(s) whose classes will be missed, and with a commitment to complete all school work for the period missed.

Some school outings (following risk assessment) may require prior consultation with the school's insurers before approval for participation can be granted. As part of the planning process, organisers should give consideration to any potential hazards that may arise and allow sufficient time for communication and discussion with the school's insurers.

Where appropriate (e.g. where a proposed activity is considered potentially hazardous) organisers must obtain written confirmation from any venue that it holds the appropriate insurance cover. This confirmation (normally a statement from an insurance company of the level of public liability held) should be provided to the Principal.

School outings of a longer duration are sanctioned by Cork Education and Training Board (CETB) and by the College's Board of Management in accordance with the Department of Education's guidelines (Circular letter M20/04). Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas outing, must submit their request for approval to the Principal for consideration by CETB at least 9 months in advance of the proposed departure date. Included in the proposal, should be the year group(s) for which the trip is intended and the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip. An overseas outing must be organised through a bonded travel company in accordance with CETB's procurement guidelines.

Parents and students are advised that if demand exceeds places, then once application forms are received by the advised deadlines, places will be allocated by drawing names from a hat, provided all conditions are satisfied. In the event of a health and safety concern being linked to a student's participation in a given outing, Coachford College reserves the right to delay and/or refuse permission to participate in a school outing.

Adequate arrangements for supervision of all students should be arranged as well as appropriate insurance. Parents/volunteers may be invited to participate in/supervise on school outings. CETB Guidelines on Volunteers and the requirements of the Garda Vetting Act shall be observed.

Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the outing with rules, regulations and special requirements of that outing. Parents/guardians shall be given an outline of the purpose, itinerary, dates and costs of the outing before a deposit is sought. Each student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be provided with the rules, regulations and special requirements and they shall be required to confirm that (i) they understand the rules and (ii) they are willing to abide by them at all times.

A list of all students intending to travel must be submitted to the Principal prior to booking. The inclusion of particular students in any school outing shall be at the discretion of the school authorities.

### **3. Financial aspects of school trip planning**

In general, day and overnight outings occur in addition to the normal academic and extra-curricular programmes of the school. An additional charge is generally incurred.

The school office must be notified when an outing, which involves a cost to parents/guardians is being planned and this must be done in advance of any notification being sent out to parents/guardians.

The full cost of the outing and the method of payment required, should be communicated to parents/guardians at the planning stage. This will have the added advantage of facilitating financial preparation with a view to allowing maximum pupil participation.

The income and expenditure must conform fully with the accounting practices of Cork ETB.

Students who withdraw from an outing after a deposit, or full monies, has/have been paid, are not entitled to a refund. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or health and safety reasons will not be entitled to a refund. A full written account of income and expenditure shall be submitted to the Principal on the conclusion of each overnight school tour.

### **4. Documentation required for overseas trips**

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians, in conjunction with students, to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad (e.g. passport, identity card) are up to date and in order. If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's valid passport (where available and in the absence of a passport, the exact passport name of the student) must be included with the deposit. Any deviation from this provided name may result in a name change fee to be borne by the parent/guardian. A list of required documents shall be communicated to parents/guardians at the planning stage.

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. Students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries. Students must have a valid European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU as it provides necessary protection not provided in the tour company insurance. A copy of same should be provided to the tour leader prior to travel.

The school cannot take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result. Refusal of entry at a border/entry point which results in the student having to return home may result in extra cost to be borne by the student/parent/guardian for unforeseen transport or accommodation. The school shall not be liable for such extra costs.

Students must carry their own passports through security at airport and ferry terminals.

For overnight trips the trip organiser must ensure that at least one week prior to departure a trip information pack is lodged with the school office (for the attention of the Principal/Deputy Principal) confirming:

- full itinerary showing all relevant dates and times;
- name and contact details for travel company (if overseas);
- transport information e.g. flight numbers (if overseas), bus company details etc.
- names and classes of students travelling;
- names and contact numbers of accompanying staff;
- address and contact details for all accommodation;
- any other information considered relevant.

## **5. Behavioural expectations on school outings**

In the case of a student being found to be in breach of the Appropriate Behaviour Policy, staff will inform the Principal immediately.

Punctuality is to be observed at all times and students are expected to meet all time deadlines set for the outing. Students may not absent themselves from the school group at any time without prior consent of the group leaders. Infringement will result in withdrawal from activities or being removed from the outing at a cost to parents/guardians.

Transport should be suitable, well-maintained and adhere to all health and safety requirements. It is the responsibility of each student not to endanger him/herself and/or others while participating in school outings. Buses should be left in the condition in which they were received. Notwithstanding exceptional cases in which prior consent of the organizing staff member, students remain on the bus until it returns to the school/agreed location.

Students may use digital entertainment items including a camera phone on school trips in accordance with school policy and with prior consent from staff. The taking or sharing of images considered inappropriate is not permitted. Unauthorised recording of staff or student, transfer of images of staff or students, or using the phone to harass others will be considered a serious breach of discipline. Students are prohibited from posting images of staff/students on social networking sites without prior consent. It

should be noted that it is not advisable to bring valuable personal property e.g. jewellery, etc., on outings where the loss of same is likely to cause upset. Insurance cover for such items, where such exists, may be limited.

The participating student and his/her parents/guardians are required to guarantee that when the student reports to assembly for the start of a school outing, he/she does so free of illegal substances or items, banned substances and/or items of concern either on his/her person or in his/her luggage.

Costs incurred due to the removal of a student while the outing is in progress, e.g. for behavioural or Health and Safety reasons, shall be borne by the parents/guardians. Students may also be excluded on a temporary or permanent basis from activities on the tour if deemed necessary.

Random bag/personal property/room searches are carried out in the presence of the student throughout the duration of any outing.

## **6. Health and Safety**

An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed by teaching staff immediately on return (or sooner if requested by the Principal) for any accidents or incidents which poses a Health and Safety, behavioural, or other legitimate concern.

The number of staff which accompanies a group on a school trip will be influenced by a number of factors including:

- the number of students travelling;
- the age and gender of the students;
- the location of the trip,
- additional supervision which may be provided at the trip destination,
- if the group will be dividing into smaller groups, each requiring supervision,
- the type of transport used.

On overseas trips the number of staff accompanying students is often determined by the allocation provided for by the travel company. Notwithstanding this the Board of Management reserves the right to stipulate the number of supervisors accompanying a trip entirely at its own discretion.

The health and safety of students and supervisors is a priority when organizing and taking a school outing. Staff taking any outing will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise.

Staff are aware that in general the degree of care required of them should be that of a "careful parent" which would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student. However, should a student infringe any of the conditions laid down, staff cannot be held responsible. Certain outings may facilitate shopping or recreation which may not be directly supervised. This situation will be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians receive a written overview/itinerary of overnight outings and are required to give written consent to their son/daughter taking part in the outing. When doing so, cognisance should be

taken of any dangers associated with activities mentioned in the itinerary (e.g. skiing, go-karting, etc.). It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that the organizer of a tour is aware of any special needs, medical or dietary issues, or any activities in which they do not wish their son/daughter to participate (although parents/guardians should be aware that it isn't always possible and students may have to participate in a limited capacity in the activity). Parents/guardians must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

It is a requirement of parents/guardians to complete a Consent to School Outings Form. This should be completed for and with each student in the group. Where relevant, it is also a requirement of parents/guardians to complete the Authorization for Medical Treatment Form, a Student and Parent/Guardian Contact Details Form, a School Rules Form and an Immigration Consent to Travel Form. Prior to consenting to travel, parents/guardians should ensure the information provided to tour leaders adequately outlines:

1. Any medication the student is taking;
2. Any recent illness suffered by the student;
3. Any special medical or dietary requirements;
4. If the student suffers from travel sickness;
5. Any other information which may be relevant;
6. The parent's/guardian's mobile phone numbers and address;
7. An alternative contact phone number;
8. Any special requirements relating to students with disabilities or special needs as related to the trip.

Medical consent and immigration consent will form part of the parental consent form for international and residential trips. Parents/guardians will be asked to agree in writing to the student receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If the parents/guardians do not agree to this, the student will not be permitted to participate in the outing, given the additional responsibility this would entail for the school. Doctors in another country may be reluctant to operate on a student unless assured of parental authorisation for such treatment.

Students may not purchase or bring medication (prescription or other) unless the group leader is fully informed and then such medication may be held by that member of staff.

Students should not share medication. Students who use an inhaler must carry it with them at all times.

Basic first aid kits are available from the school office and when deemed appropriate, staff should carry same on trips. Expert medical attention is sought should this be thought necessary. On return from, or during, any tour, staff may advise a parent/guardian to seek medical advice, should they deem this

appropriate. Parents/guardians should be aware that they will be liable for any charge accrued which cannot be claimed through insurance.

In the event of a serious accident occurring during a school trip of any duration the following will be the standard arrangements. The staff member(s) involved will immediately seek the appropriate medical/emergency assistance. Once that has been done contact will be made with the school office (or Principal/Deputy Principal outside of school hours) and hence or otherwise with the parents/guardians of those involved. A list of contact numbers of parents/guardians will be carried by staff for this purpose. Parents/guardians shall be required to provide the organisers with all phone numbers at which they can be contacted during the trip, and are expected to be available on a 24-hour basis for the duration of the trip. If a student requires hospitalisation then they will be accompanied by a member of staff who will remain with them as appropriate or until a parent (or another adult nominated by a parent) can replace them. The School Accident Report Form must be completed as soon as possible after the event.

Coachford College requires that all students are covered under the school insurance policy. Specific activities are excluded from this policy and parents/guardians may request to see these. Additional insurance for activities not covered or for longer trips will be organised by the school where considered appropriate in such cases. Parents/Guardians must sign that they have read and understood the conditions under which their son/daughter is insured.

Parents/guardians will 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 child to receive all necessary inoculations.

Tour leaders and all members of staff accompanying the tour must ensure that, if it becomes necessary to question a student about a potentially serious matter, another adult will be present. In addition to the Discipline Policy, 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.

In the case of sporting day trips, the school's Guideline for the Organization of Sports Outings shall be adhered to.

## **7. Uniform and Dress**

Students will be required to wear full school uniform on outings unless otherwise authorised by the tour leader.

## **8. Post trip Review**

Following an outing, and where there is an obvious need to do so, staff should relay both verbally and in writing any comments/concerns pertaining to venue, organisation, tour operator, suitability of itinerary etc. to school management so as to inform subsequent trip preparation. Similarly parents/guardians may relay any feedback, positive or negative, to the school for the attention of the staff member in charge and/or school management.

A post-trip report should be written to include:

- A review of the educational benefit to students;
- A financial statement;

- Achievements and highlights;
- Any difficulties/problems encountered during the tour.

## 9. Role of Board of Management

School trips outside the state must be authorized by the College's Board of Management. It is the responsibility of the Board to:

- Ensure that the trip offers a worthwhile educational experience for the students;
- Ensure that students who are not participating in the event are adequately catered for while their teachers are away, in accordance with Circular PPT – 1/03;
- Consider the timing of the event so that there is minimum impact on the normal work of the school
- Consider the number of events which take place during the course of the year.

This Policy was reviewed on May 22nd 2023, following consultation with all school partners. It will be reviewed on an annual basis and/or as deemed necessary.

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

Signed by



Chairperson of the Board

Date: *22/05/2023*



Principal

Date: *22/05/2023*