

# St Kevin's College



## Policy on School Tours and Trips

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2026

## Introduction

The School Tours and Trips Policy of St. Kevin's College aims to encourage students to take part in school trips of a various nature and to offer them opportunities to learn and enjoy positive experiences with their peers and teachers outside the classroom. School trips and tours are regarded as important parts of the student's educational and social development. As per the DES Circular M20/04, " the objective of an educational tour should be that it should provide significant benefit in educational, cultural and social development of pupils taking part in the tour and which cannot be provided by in-school activities alone".

For this document, the term 'school tour/trip' refers to all outings or excursions held during school hours, outside school hours and overnight(s).

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, musical events, etc., or longer-term educational tours either in Ireland or abroad. These events significantly enrich the academic curriculum as taught in school and the social and personal development of those students participating in them. The organisation, particularly of school tours and Transition Year activities, requires a significant investment of staff time and energy. Planning of tours and trips must include consideration of the health and safety of students and staff, the application of the school's code of behaviour in an out of school context, and the loss of normal teaching time both for the participating students and for those students whose teaching is disrupted due to the absence of the participating teachers.

These trips/tours are made possible thanks to the goodwill and commitment of staff and the support of students and parents. They supplement the learning in class and the student's social development. In many cases, the trips/tours are directly related to the curriculum. In other cases, they are part of an overall programme such as TY/ LCA or LCVP/ AEN and are undertaken to enhance the general experience of the students.

Our school tours policy is formulated within the context of our mission statement, circular M20/40, and in line with our schools' Code of Behaviour. It operates within a legislative framework and adheres to all associated school policies, regulations, and Government directives.

This policy applies to all our students while on all school-related activities and is underpinned by the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **Objectives of this Policy**

- To assist staff in the planning of tours and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary precautions to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.
- To ensure that tours and outings are organised efficiently.
- To clarify the roles and responsibilities of teachers and students.
- To clarify expectations of behaviour for all tours and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.
- To clarify possible sanctions should these rules not be respected.
- To involve all members of the school community in ratifying this policy on tours/outings to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of an active living policy.

## Procedures and Planning for Tours

1. Staff involved in organising a school tour, outline the proposal to the senior management team seeking approval in principle. It is preferable that all trips involving more than a two-night stay are planned a year in advance. This gives students the opportunity to budget for the tour.
2. Appendix 1 is completed in consultation with school management and presented with the tour proposal to the Board of Management for approval.
3. The tour should be offered to students, and full details should be supplied in the form of a correspondence to be sent home. This should clearly state the educational benefits of the trip. This correspondence should include how to apply for a place on the trip, the full cost of the trip, timeline and method of payment should a place be secured on the trip. The School Tours policy will also be outlined, read and agreed to upon acceptance of a place on the trip. It should also detail how the places for the trip will be allocated.
4. An expression of interest should be elicited from students. This list should be reviewed with the principal, the deputy principal, year head(s) and form teachers before any offer of a place is made. The inclusion of a particular student in a school tour shall be at the discretion of the school principal in consultation with the management team. Disciplinary, attendance records and health and safety concerns may be considered at this point.
5. In the event of oversubscription students and parents/guardians should be informed of the procedure for selection of students. A proportion of places may be held for students who meet the criteria to go and who have not been on a tour before. A lottery for all other places will be held where the applications for places is more than the number of places available. A waiting list will then come into effect as per lottery for students not offered a place.

6. It is preferable that teachers are engaged to chaperone or supervise students. Nevertheless, on occasion personnel other than teachers e.g. Special Needs Assistants, PMEs, past staff members, supervisors or parents will accompany the group if they have received Garda clearance. Non-teaching staff will act in a purely supervisory role. Non-teaching staff, therefore, will not engage with disciplinary actions other than to inform the teacher present of any situation that may arise.

7. There is no ratio recommended by the school insurance for trips and therefore the ultimate decision rests with school management.

8. Parents should be made aware prior to the trip that some specialised activities may require students to work with accredited instructors or guides and without direct school staff supervision.

9. Remote supervision may have to take place on occasion; cafes, down time, shopping etc. Parents/ Guardians will be made aware of this in the itinerary shared at the information evening. Students should be advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 students, as appropriate, and adequate arrangements should be made regarding checking in with supervisors at given times.

10. When accepting a place on a tour it is understood that all students will endeavour to participate fully in all tour activities. Recommendations for particular tours and guidelines for participation in activities will be shared at the information evening and through communications from the tour leaders prior to the trip.

11. Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a twenty-four-hour basis for the duration of the tour. A mobile telephone will be supplied to tour leader for school tours. The number of the phone will be

given to parent(s)/guardian(s) and students prior to departure for use only in case of emergency.

11. A risk assessment must be completed by the tour organiser (Appendix 2).

## Finance

1. The full cost of the tour should be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity.

2. It is expected that students and parents make every endeavour to meet deadlines for paperwork and payments to facilitate the organisation of the tour.

3. Each tour/trip to a destination outside of the country must be organised through a registered tour provider. The school is bound by the Guidelines from the Financial Services Support Unit of the Department of Education who issued a document in September 2015, updated in 2018, which is an appendix to this policy and states in part; "Any school wishing to organise a school tour abroad must do so using a licensed tour operator or travel agent to arrange the travel package including accommodation and other services. All monies must be paid directly to the tour operator or travel agent, not to school staff or event coordinator." Proper and full insurance cover must be in place for all school tours.

5. Students are responsible for their own spending needs and spending money. Advice may be given in specific trip guidelines.

6. Costs of trips may include monies collected for contingencies. Parents/Guardians will be notified of the contingency amount required. All monies and receipts will be accounted for.

7. Refunds can only be given in accordance with the contract made with the travel company. Payments are made directly through a travel agent via a portal and are subject to terms and conditions specific to the agency. The conditions which are set out as such are outside of the school's control.

8. Trips not paid for in full by the due date may result in loss of place on that trip. The school does not bear liability for financial losses incurred due to this.

### **Passports/Travel Documents**

1. All students/staff are responsible for obtaining their own passports for overseas trips. It is the responsibility of the student, parent/guardian, that passports are valid and have adequate time left on them before they expire, well in advance of school tour.

2. For certain destinations, a visa may be required. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa.

3. Students other than Irish nationals holding an Irish passport should be made aware that they may require and, in this event, take responsibility for a separate passport and/or visa/ESTA and accept that this student may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group. Please visit the following websites for further information.

<https://www.dfa.ie/travel/know-before-you-go/advice-for-school-trips/>

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/> It is the parents' responsibility to secure these visas/waivers if necessary.

4. If a student is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that Social Services consent to any proposed trip. If a student is a Ward of Court, it may be necessary to seek advice from the Court in relation to trips abroad well in advance.

5. Emergency medical facilities are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in EU countries to EU nationals. The European Health Insurance Card from the local Health Service

Executive is the means of entitlement and it is highly recommended that this card should be carried by all those travelling to ensure students can access medical services and avoid possible associated medical bills.

## Student Medical History

1. Any information about a pupil which may be deemed relevant such as allergies, serious medical problems or special needs should be provided by parents / guardians and potential problems and responsibilities highlighted in advance of any school trip.
2. Arrangements regarding a student's attendance on a school trip must be in line with health and safety guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of both student and staff. In some circumstances it may be necessary for a parent to accompany their child.
3. Underlying medical conditions need to be notified to the insurance company by the parent/guardian as supplementary payments may be needed to obtain full insurance.
4. In the event of an emergency, the parents/guardians will always be contacted at the earliest opportunity. 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 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. The Board of Management also accepts that staff may have to make these decisions to the best of their ability and in the best interest of the child.
5. In the event of an accident or emergency, where it is not possible to contact parents, guardians or next of kin, tour leaders will act on medical advice presented on the ground and information shared by the parents prior to the tour. Details of emergency contacts are to be included in the student's information form.

6. Any/all medical costs (including transportation and prescription charges) paid by the tour leader are to be repaid by parents/guardians within a period of three weeks after the return of the trip. On occasion it may be necessary to request immediate payment from a parent.

## **Provision for Students with Special Additional Needs**

We promote the inclusion of pupils with special needs on trips and we endeavour, when possible, to facilitate all our pupils' needs. We recognise the social as well as the cultural benefits that students derive from such trips.

1. Where students with special educational needs are involved in a group who are going on a school trip, it may be necessary for parents / guardians, management and the organising teacher to discuss arrangements in advance. This is done to ensure the enjoyment, health and safety of the student and the whole group whilst being mindful of the specific strengths and vulnerabilities of the student in question.

2. For trips including students requiring an SNA, the group leader should endeavor to ensure that the SNA becomes a tour leader. Should the SNA be unavailable, one of the tour leaders will be assigned the SNA duties.

3. The school is not obliged to provide SNA care on overnight trips. Where a student with access or shared access to an SNA wishes to participate in an overnight trip, the school is willing to consider alternative solutions proposed by parents/guardians. All arrangements for a student with an SNA will be made prior to the trip by the organising teacher in consultation with the principal and students care team in school.

## **Conduct of Students and Discipline**

1. The school Code of Behaviour will apply at all times throughout any school trip. School sanctions as outlined in the Code of Behaviour will apply.
  
2. Students should treat people with respect throughout the trip. This includes peers/ teachers / organisers/ leaders / drivers / tour guides and anybody they may encounter. Students are expected to work together in the spirit of inclusion reflected in our school ethos and for the benefit of all attendees.
  
3. No smoking, vaping or inhalation of any substance, no alcohol or any other illegal substances are to be carried, purchased or used. This is in accordance with normal school policy. There will be no exceptions. These are deemed as serious breaches of the code of behaviour.
  
4. Students will be held responsible for the condition of their rooms. Each room will be checked upon entry and students will be liable for any subsequent damage.
  
5. Students must never leave their group without permission and must observe all curfews.
  
6. It is expected that students' use of mobile phones will be responsible and in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy. Posting/sharing photos of others (students or staff members) without their consent is expressly forbidden. The tour group leader may have a specific mobile phone use policy depending on the location and nature of the trip.
  
7. Students should respect any cultural, environmental or social sensitivities or hazards that may be encountered when on tour.
  
8. Students take personal responsibility for their health and safety by making themselves aware of emergency exits, fire assembly points and firefighting equipment. Students must also wear seat belts when provided.

9. A meeting with the students, parents/guardians and the staff going on the tour must take place before the tour where expectations for the tour will be outlined. A meeting of the staff going on the tour should take place before the tour so that there is a clear understanding of the itinerary, expectations and roles. It is an expectation having accepted a place on this trip that parents and students will attend all meetings.

## **Sanctions**

1. Any student who does not follow the rules of the trip as per the school's Code of Behaviour and specific rules outlined at the information evening will be subject to a level of disciplinary action in line with the school's Code of Behaviour. Parents of the students in question will be informed at the earliest opportunity and within a reasonable timeframe. Should it be necessary that sanctions be applied by the tour leaders while travelling, the nature of these sanctions will be communicated to students and parents/guardians prior to commencement of the excursion.

2. If additional sanctions are required upon return to school this will be imposed by school management/relevant year head in consultation with the tour leader.

3. Serious breaches of discipline may result in a student being sent home and parents/guardians will have to cover the expense. This will be done in consultation with the tour leader and the principal, the overall decision will rest with the principal.

## **Emergency Procedures**

1. In the event of a serious incident/accident as many members of staff as is possible/practical in the circumstances shall come together and decide on a course of action. The details and the decision(s) taken shall be put in writing as close to the event as is reasonable. The Board accepts that in cases where there is lack of consensus over the course of action, the tour leader (where available) has the final decision.

2. 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 be present. 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 may follow, as well as a sanction in line with school rules.

3. The tour leader shall be given a sum of money (amount to be decided by the Board) which may be used in the event of an emergency.

## **Other Trips**

Trips form an important part of the Transition Year programme. The Board of Management is grateful to the TY coordinator and others who organise and participate in such trips.

1. Written consent of parent(s) / guardian(s) is a prerequisite for participation.
2. A high standard of behaviour is expected of the participating students as described in the Conduct of Students and Discipline section of this policy.
3. A sufficient number of teachers must accompany the students to guarantee adequate supervision.
4. The teachers on the trip shall take such care to ensure the health and safety of the students as is reasonable in the circumstances.
5. They shall also take reasonable precautions, as they would when in school, to protect their own good name and reputation if dealing with students in one-to-one situations.
6. The classes of the teachers on a trip shall be covered in accordance with the prevailing agreement on such cover (windfall cover or S&S scheme).
7. Prior to departure, the principal shall be given a detailed itinerary and list of participants.

## **Field-trips/Outings**

As fieldtrips form an integral part of the school curriculum in a number of subject areas, such as Science, History, Geography, Art, and PE they shall be encouraged and facilitated, if possible.

1. Proposed trips must be discussed with the Deputy Principal to ensure the proposed date is available and the school has adequate cover for the teachers attending the trip.
2. Written consent of parent(s)/guardian(s) is a prerequisite for participation.
3. A high standard of behaviour is expected of the participating students as described in the Conduct of Students and Discipline section of this policy.
4. A sufficient number of teachers must accompany the students to guarantee adequate supervision.
5. The teacher(s) on the fieldtrip shall take such care to ensure the health and safety of the students as is reasonable in the circumstances.
6. The classes of the teachers on the trip shall be covered in accordance with the prevailing agreement on such cover.

Occasional class or year-group outings, not necessarily linked to any subject area, may be facilitated as they help to foster a positive attitude among the participating students. These may be organised by the Year Head or Positive Behaviour Team. They may on occasion involve trips to support the school sporting teams should they reach a final for example. The requirements for such outings are similar to those for fieldtrips.

## **Insurance Cover**

Officially organised standard tours, trips, outings and fieldtrips are covered by the school's insurance policy.

Foreign trips require additional insurance as well as activities like skiing etc. This is to be arranged with the tour operator.

**This policy has been ratified by the school Board of Management:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairperson of the BOM**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1 – Details of Tour Template

### School Tour Template Form

Name of School	Address	Roll No.
<b>Tour Dates</b>		
From	To	Number of School Days
<i>//</i>	<i>//</i>	
<b>Brief Outline of Tour</b>		
Number of Students Participating	Total number of students in relevant class	
<b>If some students are not participating, outline the reasons why</b>		

<b>Adults accompanying the students</b>		
<b>Class Teacher</b>	<b>Number of other teachers</b>	<b>Number of other adults</b>
<b>Confirmations</b>		
<b>That appropriate arrangements are made for those classes whose teachers are absent with the tour</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	<b>No:</b>
<b>That adequate insurance is in place to cover all risks while on tour</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	<b>No:</b>
<b>That parental permission has been secured for each student who is to participate on the tour.</b>	<b>Yes:</b>	<b>No:</b>

