

OLM Drimnagh

SCHOOL TOUR POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members of OLM Drimnagh who take students off site, to the students participating in the activity, and to their parents/guardians.

This policy is formulated in the context of the school's Safety & Health Policy and Code of Behaviour. It also takes account of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, Substance Use Policy, and other relevant policies. These apply to all students and to all school related activities which take place during or outside of normal school hours, whether or not an overnight stay is involved.

The policy applies both on and off the school grounds and anywhere students are clearly identified or identifiable as students of our school.

Aims of this policy

- That the health, safety and welfare of the students are safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the careful assessment of any dangers to which the students may be exposed, and the demands on the physical resources of the pupils, having regard to their age and capacity;
- That staff are assisted in the planning of trips and outings;
- That trips and outings are managed efficiently and with a level of supervision firmly established within accepted guidelines;
- That expectations of behaviour are clarified for all trips;
- That students meet clear criteria before they are deemed eligible to take part in certain out of school activities and in particular any trips involving an overnight stay;
- That parents are given sufficient advance notice of any planned trips, and are fully briefed in advance and helped give a full and informed consent to their child's participation.

Rationale

School trips are a central and valued part of education in OLM Drimnagh. They serve to significantly enrich both the academic curriculum as taught in school and the cultural and social development of pupils who participate in them.

Eligibility to participate

- Participation in school trips is not a right but a privilege, enabled by staff time and energy and, in the case of tours, significant financial investment by parents.
- Some trips/tours may be restricted to a particular year-group or to students taking a particular subject.
- Pupils will not be eligible to participate in a school tour unless all standard moneys have been paid to the school (eg, voluntary contribution, book rental fees, etc). We expect

parents/guardians to prioritise these ahead of optional spending on expensive tours.

- The school reserves the right to cancel a student's place if consistently bad behaviour is observed in school. Given the importance of student safety while on a trip or tour, teachers will not be asked to be responsible outside the school for students who have shown they cannot follow instruction and behave in an acceptable manner while in school.

Educational objectives

All school outings have an educational purpose – whether related to the academic curriculum or to the social and personal development of the pupil. To help maintain this focus, the accompanying teachers will

- Before the event, reflect on the learning goals for the trip and make notes. A brief summary should be included in the “expected benefits” section of the prior approval form.
- Consider what prior teaching, if any, may be helpful to ensure pupils gain maximum benefit from the trip.
- Consider what educational materials, if any, it may be beneficial to bring on the trip to help enhance student learning. (eg, factsheets, phrasebooks, participant diaries or reflection sheets, etc).
- As part of the post-trip review, reflect specifically on the student learning aspects and record in the post-trip review form.

Parental briefing and consents

We will give good advance notice to parents of all school trips, especially any involving extra cost; 6 months minimum notice for foreign trips 1 month at least for overnight trips. We will provide full briefing to parents/guardians in advance covering all details of the planned trip/tour, and obtain their full informed consent through the use of a detailed consent form.

Short local school trips.

The parental consent signed by all parents/guardians as part of the normal enrolment process includes the following consent to short local trips.

“I give permission for my son/daughter to leave school on a local school activity under teacher supervision. In the case of more distant or significant trips, a further special parental consent will be requested in advance.”

The following procedures are in place to ensure as far as possible the care, welfare, and safety of pupils in an out-of-school context.

Procedures Prior to the Tour

Organising teachers will allow themselves plenty of preparation time to ensure all necessary points can be considered and addressed.

Staff members considering organising a school trip will:

(the level of detail required will depend on the nature of the particular trip)

1. **Obtain all necessary permissions** and complete Part-1 of the trip/tour template.
2. **Brief staff members** likely to be affected.
3. **Brief the students in the target group.**
In the case of optional trips, students will be asked to complete an “Expression of Interest Form” at this stage.
4. **Brief parents.**
In the case of overnight trips or foreign trips, this initial parent briefing will include an information pack which sets out the objectives, proposed itinerary and practicalities of the trip, in addition to an application form for completion and return. The cancellation policy applying to the particular event will be made clear (where relevant).
5. **Select participants**, in consultation with the principal, year-heads, etc. In the case of trips being over-subscribed, priority will be given to students most clearly meeting the eligibility criteria. The school reserves the right to refuse any student a place on a trip.
6. **Brief parents further** in the case of overnight trips or foreign trips, by way of an information meeting.
7. **Arrange for other staff members to join the team**, in consultation with the Principal. The number of adults to travel will be carefully considered, taking into account the nature of the trip and the age of the students concerned, to ensure adequate cover from the safety point of view. We provide for possible contingencies; such as one of the adults becoming ill, or a pupil becoming ill and needing continuous attention. We have a spare adult on standby to step in at short notice should one of the adults be unable to travel at the last minute. The school will cover the cost involved.
8. **Hold a planning meeting** of the adults travelling, to clarify all necessary details and in particular to specifically consider all health & safety aspects of the trip including appropriate risk assessment.

Contingencies

Advance preparation will include providing for possible contingencies. For example, the costing of longer trips will include provision for some “rainy-day money”, available for use should the planned programme have to be changed. (Any such money left over will be spent on some treat for the pupils.) It will also be arranged that accompanying teacher/s will have access to more significant school funds in case of emergency.

Code of Behaviour during a trip or tour

The normal terms of the school’s code of good conduct will apply. In addition:

- Full and whole-hearted participation in the schedule of activities is expected, to help ensure the success of the tour for everyone.
- Student safety is of utmost importance, as is due respect for the authority of the accompanying adults who are responsible for the safety of the entire group. Any behaviour which constitutes a risk to the pupil’s own safety or to the safety of others will be regarded as a very serious discipline offence. Safety breaches will attract significant sanctions, up to and including being sent home directly at the expense of parents/ guardians.
- Students must never wander off alone. It is advised that students stay within a minimum group of four during periods when they are given free time.

- Students must strictly adhere to meeting points and time allocation to avoid unnecessary concern.
- No purchase of alcohol, illegal substances, weapons or fireworks is permitted. Any such will be confiscated and handed over to the local authorities for safe disposal.
- Respect for local customs and laws is important, especially when abroad.
- Respect and obedience for cabin crew, fellow travellers, drivers, instructors, guides, accommodation staff, other guests, etc is expected, as well as for fellow students and teachers, so that everyone can enjoy a hassle-free trip.

Checklist

For Parents' Information Meeting

parents/guardians will be given

- copy of the School Tour Policy,
- detailed breakdown of the proposed itinerary,
- final details of the cost of the trip including the necessary arrangements regarding deposits and pocket money.
- Emergency mobile number of the tour leader.

(plus, for foreign trips)

- practicalities surrounding passports, visas (should these arise), insurance (including European Health Insurance Cards).
- information concerning room allocation

parents/guardians will be asked to supply

- details of any specific concerns such as medical conditions, dietary requirements, special needs and phobias.
- pupils' mobile numbers
- parent/guardian contact details, with at least one phone number guaranteeing 24-hour access in the case of emergency.
- consent form to be signed by both a parent/guardian and the pupil.

For travelling pupils' briefings

- Room allocation
Student will be invited to say with whom they would like to share, but allocations will be at the final discretion of the Tour Leader.

Part 3 – post-trip review stage

*Not required by the DES Circular
but is required by our school policy.*

To be completed by the lead-teacher, following a review meeting of all the teachers who participated. In the case of foreign trips, a review meeting with a group of the students who took part might also be held.

General comment on the outcome of the trip:

Extent to which it achieved its goals in terms of student learning:

Critique – to draw lessons for future such trips

Learning: *(eg, next time, could possibly be enhanced by.....)*

Organisational arrangements:

Staff oversight & supervision:

Anything else?

Health & Safety issues:

Any risks/hazards identified?

Any unexpected events/circumstances?

Signed by Lead-Teacher: _____ Date: _____