

***Presentation Secondary School
Ballingarry***



***SCHOOL TOUR
POLICY***

INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Presentation Secondary School, Ballingarry is committed to incorporating educational visits into its curriculum, providing that they will enhance student's relevant understanding and experience and are seen as a valuable addition to the regular school experience. They should promote the mission statement of the school and form an integral part of a student's journey through school. The aim of a school tour is to provide an educational, cultural and personal experience for everyone involved.

Educational trips and visits provide an excellent opportunity for the personal growth and development of students. They can have a positive effect on students' self esteem and can significantly improve many skills including their ability to work with others, using their initiative, powers of investigation and improved understanding of their surroundings. Educational visits provide rich experiences that cannot be created in school and many students will cherish them for a long time to come.

Below is an outline of advised procedures regarding the effective organisation of a tour. All points are valid for international tours. For Irish tours including overnight stays emphasis is primarily on points D and E and relates to parent meeting and expected behaviour.

A. DESTINATION / DATE

The nominated school tour leader (who should also appoint a deputy leader) will in advance of application to the board/publicity to students discuss with the Principal the proposed destination/dates. Factors involved in preliminary discussions include:

- a) Educational Value
- b) Price and Overall Value for Money
- c) Suggested Itinerary
- d) Staff Availability/Interest
- e) Safety of Location/Established structure in place to cope with school groups.
- f) Investigation of facilities and supports required for any special needs student intending to apply for a place on the tour.

At this early stage, it is essential that a number of teachers commit to participation so that a core group may share the planning involved. A definite commitment from all participating teachers will be required eight weeks before the trip to facilitate airline ticket/rooming arrangements and a special meeting will take place for all teachers involved to discuss and plan such issues.

The recommended ratio of teachers to students is 1:10 though different circumstances may influence the actual ratio.

At this stage, an application to operate the tour will be made to the Board of Management.

B. SELECTION OF STUDENTS / APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A meeting will be held for the relevant students who may wish to go on the proposed school tour. A letter will be given to the students with brief details of destination / itinerary / estimated price (dependent on ultimate uptake) / payment dates etc.

This letter aims to establish level of interest and does not in itself constitute an offer of a place on the tour.

The Leader and Deputy Leader will decide which students are to be offered a position on the school tour. They will consult and meet with the Principal and Year Head (of a particular year group) to discuss the behavioural record of the relevant group.

At this stage some students may be excluded due to their behavioural record.

Those students going on tour will be given a specific time and place to pay a non-refundable deposit (usually between €100 - €150) to the school tour leader or the deputy leader. All students will be given a receipt, acknowledging the deposit paid.

The exact passport name of the student must also be given and both the deposits and names will then be forwarded to the travel company. Students will also be informed that any subsequent name change will result in fees levied by the airline, and are outside the control of the tour organiser or the travel company.

C. PAYMENT

After paying the deposit students pay instalments over the remaining months.

Students can either pay in cash or cheque (payable to Ballingarry) and will always receive a receipt upon payment which they are to retain as proof of record of payment.

All monies will be lodged to the School Tour Account as soon as possible and subsequently paid to tour operator/bus company at relevant times.

This arrangement may be subject to change as Tour Companies may request payment directly through local banks. Balance of cost is usually due 8 weeks in advance of school tour. All monies paid out for the tour will be subject to approval by the School Tour Leader and School Principal.

D. PRE – TOUR MEETING FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

A meeting will be held in advance of the tour at which a parent/guardian of each participant must attend. Non attendance may result in offer of tour place being withdrawn as the main emphasis of the meeting is health and safety. At this meeting a presentation will be made to the parents/guardians and the parents/guardians will get an opportunity to meet with the School Tour Leader, the Deputy Leader and the other teachers involved. The following issues will be examined and discussed:

- a) Detailed Itinerary
- b) Extra Costs (e.g. lunch not included, recommended spending money etc.)
- c) Contact Numbers
- d) Expected Standard of Behaviour (see below).
- e) Supervision (see below).
- f) Insurance (see below)

E. EXPECTED STANDARD OF BEHAVIOUR

Presentation Secondary School, Ballingarry has **very high expectations of behaviour**, and we expect such standards to be maintained during all extra curricular activities. Participation in a school tour is a huge vote of confidence in a student on behalf of the school and requires every student to act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. Normal school rules apply (except for uniform) and special emphasis is put on the following.

- a) Students should not smoke, drink alcohol or take illegal drugs. In the event that the tour leader suspects that a student possesses items deemed unsuitable, a search of bags/rooms may be made. In such a case, students will be asked to empty contents themselves while a teacher observes. In this situation male teachers will supervise male students, female – female.
- b) Each pupil is responsible for his / her own property, e.g. luggage, money, etc. All personal belongings should be clearly marked. The school cannot accept responsibility for pupil's property.
- c). Pupils are expected to treat each other with respect. Fighting or abusive language will not be tolerated. Pupils are to show respect to all property that will be used over the school tour e.g. hotel property, the tour bus, etc.
- d). Students should not enter another student's room (male or female) at any time, day or night.
- e). Students should obey instructions of teachers whose role is that of loco parentis for the duration of the trip.

- f). Pupils are expected to behave in a mannerly and punctual way at all times and are expected to attend all organised activities and may not leave the tour group at any time unless agreed by the teachers.
- g). Guidelines on the use of electronic equipment inc. mobile phones and social media applications will be given prior to the tour (Pre-Tour Meeting)

Sanctions deemed appropriate by the tour leaders may be implemented during the tour. If a student misbehaves in a serious manner where the health and safety of other students or teachers is jeopardised it may be felt appropriate to send a student home. In such a situation a teacher will accompany the student, **and the parent/guardian will be liable for the potentially substantial costs involved.** Sanctions may also be implemented on return to school regarding such offences. For less serious breaches of rules, parents may be contacted by phone where details will be given and full support requested.

For local tours a letter should be sent home, outlining details of the tour, cost, rules, arrangements for collecting their son/daughter, etc. This letter should be signed by the parent/guardian and retained by the relevant teacher.

F. EXCLUSIONS SUBSEQUENT TO APPLICATION

Students who misbehave in a manner deemed serious by the school authorities may be deprived of their place on the tour. This is in the interest of safety to themselves and other students / staff. In such a case, refunds, depend entirely on the conditions of the travel company and depends on the actual date of cancellation of the place. In the case of a late exclusion and subsequent cancellation, a refund will not usually apply.

It is important that the School Tour Leader highlights this point to students and parents / guardians before a student submits an application.

It is the policy of Presentation Secondary School, not to discriminate against any student. Every application will be given due consideration and the following criteria will apply when considering an application –

- Previous behavioural record
- Health and Safety of each individual student
- Health and Safety of the group of students.
- Health and Safety of the accompanying staff.
- When a student requires special considerations re accommodation or transport a reasonable effort will be made to provide these.
- When a student requires individual supports a reasonable effort will be made to provide these.
- If it is not possible to meet these special requirements it will be necessary to refuse an application.

G. SUPERVISION

For clarity of purpose, it is necessary to divide this section into two.

DAY – Students will be accompanied by teachers throughout the trip. However, it is usual that students are allowed free time for shopping, lunch etc. These free periods cannot be predicted in advance on a general basis as each tour's components will vary.

Students will only be left free in an area deemed suitable, and a prominent meeting place will be advised before the group breaks. Students, who misbehave, deviate from the recommended area, purchase or consume alcohol, cigarettes or drugs, do so entirely at their own risk and will face full rigour of school rules / laws of the destination country.

Students must at all times carry the number of the school mobile phone in case they get lost, need help etc and/or the hotel address and phone number.

They should also carry their own (switched on) phone during free time in case teachers need to contact them.

NIGHT – On return to the hotel each night students will go to their rooms. A check will then be made to ensure that everyone is in their designated room. A further check will be made after a reasonable duration after which time teachers who have had an exhausting day will retire for the night. The hotel will contact teacher's rooms in the event that students are causing a disturbance. Teachers will check bedrooms, each evening. In certain situations flexibility may be required to facilitate smooth operation. Thus a student may call on the nearest teacher to assist in a simple situation e.g. not able to switch on TV, air conditioning etc.

H. HOTEL POLICY

Hotels reserve the right to request a deposit from school groups (usually up to €20 per person). This is payable by students and is refundable on checkout. In the case of a particular room causing disturbance to adjacent (non school-group rooms), this room's deposit could be forfeited.

I. INSURANCE

Standard travel insurance is included in the tour price. Copies of this are available to parents at the pre tour meeting. Details of private health insurance will also be taken where available. All students will be given an EHIC form to complete and must take responsibility for processing this form and ensuring that they have a valid EHIC card prior to their departure which is always requested when seeking medical care in EU countries. Parents will also be required to complete a form giving details of medical problems/medication being taken and will give authorisation to the tour leader or his/her nominee to act on their behalf in a medical emergency.

An Accident /Incident Report must be completed for all accidents /incidents that occur on tour eg. Breach of school rules, lateness, rudeness, straying from designated group, refusal to obey instructions.

J. COLLECTION OF PASSPORT

The School Tour Leader will explain to the students that it is their responsibility to have their own valid passport ready prior to the departure date. The tour leader and the deputy leader will collect each student's passport four weeks before the departure date. The passports will be distributed and collected at the airport and will be kept safe while on the tour.

K. AFTER THE SCHOOL TOUR

For local school tours it is the parents/ guardians responsibility to ensure that they are there on time to collect their son/daughter from the school or another designated drop off point. On return to school, the School Tour Leader will give a report and verbal feedback on the tour to the school Principal (can be written if requested) and may complete a written evaluation for the tour operating company.

The relevant Year Head (s) should be informed of the conduct of the students so that appropriate comments / praise can be made.

Pictures of the school tour will be put up on the school noticeboard and on the school website and a power-point presentation will also be made of the school tour on Awards night.

L. CONTACT INFORMATION

The tour leader must ensure that complete contact information is left available in the school during the tour for use in the event of an emergency. This should include

1. A listing of all those taking part together with home contact details.
2. The itinerary to be followed and contact details.
3. A contact telephone number for the tour leader.

Mobile phone communication between teachers and students on the trip may be necessary. A list of participants' mobile phone numbers will be created and every student will be given a mobile phone number of the tour leader (A school phone will be supplied). This number must be carried by the students at all times.

The policy operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following...

- The Education Act, 1998
- The Education Welfare Act, 2000
- The Equal Status Act. 2000
- The Equality Act, 2004
- Circular Letter M 20/04 (DES)
- Child Protection Guidelines for Post – Primary Schools, 2004
- The Education for Persons with Special Needs, 2004

Signed : Veronica Maher Chairperson
 Angela Cahill Principal

Date : 01/10/2015