



## **School Trips Policy**

Galway ETSS offers parents the choice of an education based on the inclusive intercultural values of respect for difference and justice and equality for all. In our school, every child will learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each child to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.

*Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement*

### **Rationale**

Galway Educate Together Secondary School considers school trips to be an integral part of school life. They enhance classroom learning and add to the personal and social development of the student. The curricular content of many subjects requires field studies/ tours/ outings/games/ recreational activities, which take place off campus.

All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education in Circular Letter M20/04 (particularly that school tours should be an extension and reinforcement of classroom activities.) All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all criteria in this circular.

This policy is applicable to all members of staff in the planning of such trips and to the students – and their parents/guardians - to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.

### **The purpose of School Trips at GETSS**

- The organisation of the trips should reflect our school's ethos. In practice this means that:
- The carbon footprint of all activities should be considered and minimised
- School trips will use public transport for the most part and will consider local destinations, where appropriate, for the required learning experiences.
- Sustainability and ethics, including trade justice and fair treatment of workers will be considered in the selection of suppliers and services required for school trips.
- School trips will minimise consumption of resources and production of waste.

Every effort will be made to ground our school trips in our ethos so that:

- trips are consistent with our stated values
- trips are local when possible and appropriate
- trips are affordable, so that more students can take part
- trips are different to 'off-the-shelf' trips organised by tour agencies, in that they draw attention to social issues, start conversations and give students unique experiences.

Those planning school trips should also reflect the four pillars of educate together:

#### **Student-Centred**

Trips should include a mix of fun and challenging experiences that the young person can engage with.

#### **Democratic**

Where possible students or groups of students should be involved in jointly plan trips with staff and others in the school community

#### **Multi-denominational & Equality-Based**

Every effort should be made so that all students have the option of full participation in each trip. Access and affordability are core concerns.

#### **Co-Educational**

Trips should be planned in a way that caters for all of our students and in a way that challenges stereotypes about activities seen as being associated with any particular gender.

## Procedures to be Followed when Organising School Trips

Every effort should be made to ensure that trips are cross-curricular in nature (incorporating at least two subjects). Appropriate links should be made to subject specifications and learning outcomes and consideration should be given to the ethical curriculum.

### (a) Day Trips

Day Trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours. Any teacher planning to organise a day trip or a non-sports outing during class time, must inform the Principal or Deputy Principal of the intended date, at least one month in advance of the proposed event. Sporting activities that are scheduled during class times must be agreed with the Principal/Deputy Principal at least one week in advance. The teacher must complete a 'Trips Proposal Form' (see Appendix 1). The trip must be approved by the Principal.

Teachers absent due to a trip/school event will leave subject-related work for any students who remain at school.

Full details, including date, time and names of participating students must be communicated to senior management (and Programme Coordinator, where applicable) by the organising teacher at least two days before the event. MIS attendance must be updated by the organising teacher.

Students with Special Educational Needs require additional consideration on all trips and if necessary, the organising teacher should liaise with the Learning Support department to identify these specific needs.

On all trips there must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff travelling, in accordance with criteria agreed by the Board of Management in advance. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip, the age of the students travelling, Special Educational Needs and safety requirements. The typical ratio of teachers-students is 15:1. On mixed sporting events or mixed trips that involve an overnight stay, a male and female teacher should accompany the students.

If circumstances permit, students may arrange an alternative drop-off or collection points. Permission will be sought in advance from parents/guardians via email. This must be approved by the school in advance and may not always be possible. Staff cannot be responsible for the safety of students once they have left the group under these circumstances. drop-off points will need to be agreed with the teachers involved and the bus company from a traffic safety point of view. A member of staff may agree to allow a student to leave a group at a different place, with parental permission.

The organising teacher will input the names of students involved in trips on VShare so teachers will know in advance which students are attending the school trip. Absenteeism on the day of the trip must be communicated to the school office by parents/guardians.

Students who have not returned permission forms may not participate in the trip. Staff should either arrange with the School Secretary to take a school mobile telephone with them or ensure they have a personal mobile phone in case of emergency.

Students with medical conditions require additional consideration. Trip organisers should be aware of students with medical conditions and be familiar with any medication requirements. Trip organisers will provide trip leaders with a list of students with medical needs/allergies on the trip. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child has all necessary medicines/toiletries which may be required on the trip.

Trip organisers are asked to ensure the costing covers the entire cost of the proposed trip. If students are unable to attend a school trip due to financial reasons, parents/guardians should contact the school office.

The full **Code of Positive Behaviour, the Substance Use Policy, the Acceptable Use Policy and all other school policies** of Galway Educate Together Secondary School apply to all outings and trips unless otherwise specified. This means that all School rules apply (including smoking, consuming alcohol, vaping, use, possession or supply of illegal substances even in countries with lower age limits or different laws).

An Accident /Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which may have occurred on the trip. (See Appendix 3). In the event of a serious accident or injury, the Principal or Deputy Principal should be informed as soon as possible. Parents will be contacted

if necessary. If a visit to A&E or doctor is required, adequate supervision will be organised for remaining students.

While every effort will be made to adhere to arranged times on trips, in particular the arrival time back at school, the school cannot guarantee such times. The organising teacher will notify School Management if they are returning home later than planned. Management will inform parents of this. For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to organise alternative transport to/from the school.

The organising teacher must phone/text the Deputy Principal or Principal after returning from a trip to inform them that all students have been safely collected by parents/guardians.

### **(b) Overnight Expeditions or Trips Abroad**

The above procedures to be followed for Day Trips also apply to overnight trips or trips of a longer duration.

Trips may be overnight expeditions or of longer duration. Staff who wish to take students out of the country must submit their request for approval to the Board of Management. The proposal should outline the educational or other benefits of the trip, including links to specifications. **Insurance concerns including a risk assessment needs to be included.** The Board of Management will consider the following when reaching its decision

- The appropriateness of the proposed trip in terms of DES Circular M20/04.
- The staffing arrangements for the trip and for the school
- The financial controls in place for the trip and any insurance or Health and Safety issues.

The school will only use the services of licensed tour operators/travel agents when organising trips outside the state, as per the Aviation Regulation Act 2001.

The staff to student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency.

Staff will be informed of planned expeditions and invited to indicate to the teacher in charge if they are interested in being a member of the staff team that will accompany the students. All

members of staff involved in the trip will be expected to share the workload during the planning stages and during the trip. Decisions about which members of staff join a trip will depend on such factors as the size of the group, the gender balance, requirements specific to the trip e.g. Irish teachers will attend a trip to the Gaeltacht, teachers with outdoor pursuits qualifications on adventure trips, where possible, and so on.

Cover for students remaining in school, and protection of class contact time will also be considered when deciding what staff can be released.

### **c) Inter-School Competitions**

Coaches/organising teachers are responsible for taking an appropriately equipped first-aid kit to matches and events. If a minor accident occurs the coach will treat it on the spot. In the event of a serious accident the coach will ring an ambulance directly. Any accident is recorded on an accident report form, a copy of which is submitted to the Principal. Supervising staff will appraise students of the necessary safety equipment for each respective sport.

The organising teacher must organise transport to and from all matches, using a recognised coach company. When an away match is organised during school hours, the number of staff traveling will be dependent upon in-school staffing requirements. Generally, two members of staff will travel with a team.

It is school policy that all students are encouraged to participate in team competitions. However, the school recognises that parents'/guardians' will make a decision around their child's level of participation.

### **(d) Coach Trips**

Members of staff taking students in coaches should apply the following:

All coaches used by the school must have an up to date PSV License and Certificate. Before setting off, the emergency exits must be pointed out to students. Central aisles and access to exits must be kept clear at all times. Students must be advised to remain seated facing forward and not to have unnecessary movement during the journey.

Where seat belts are fitted, these must be used.

In the event of any emergency, students should leave the coach by the nearest exit as quickly as possible and re-assemble at a given area where a head-count can be quickly made. Students should not go back to the coach for any reason until the all clear is given.

If the teacher in charge considers that there was anything the matter with the coach, or that the behaviour of students was not appropriate, a full report must be given to the Principal as soon as possible after returning to the school.

## Financial Guidelines

The following general financial guidelines should be followed when organising a trip

- Separate financial records should be maintained for each school trip
- A detailed record of all participating students and the amounts paid should be retained using or electronic payments system
- Parents should be informed as early as possible of the full cost associated with the trip.
- Proper and full insurance cover must be in place for all school trips
- Some trips will be organized through Tour Operators and in this case all money will be paid to the company involved as recommended by FSSU

Students may be required to pay an initial deposit, followed by the remainder of the money within a stated period. Students who withdraw from a trip after a deposit or full cost has been paid may not be entitled to a refund. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or safety reasons may not be entitled to a refund.

Teachers will not be required to pay for school trips. This cost should be taken into consideration when planning the trip.

The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering, details of payment and reference to a non-refundable deposit. Parents should be made aware that the organisers reserve the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

## Oversubscription

In cases where the trip is oversubscribed, students who study the applicable subject will be given priority. The names of other applicants are drawn by lottery. A record will be kept of the order in

which the names are drawn. Two lists will be prepared – a list of the successful applicants and a list of those selected (the reserve list). In the event of a student withdrawing from the trip, the place is offered to the first person on the reserve list.

## **Trip Cancellation**

If the School Management or Board of Management decide to cancel a trip at short notice due to unforeseen circumstances, a full refund cannot be guaranteed and insurance may not cover such a cancellation. The BOM/Management reserves the right to cancel any trip in such circumstances.

Parents are advised to consider a trip cancellation insurance policy for expensive/foreign trips. Advice will be given on this as part of the process.

## **Trip Requirements**

If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's passport will be requested by the organising teacher. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip. The school will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling as a result. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that all paperwork (visa, passport, permission to travel alone etc.) is provided in a timely manner.

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. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.

Students must have their European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.

Parents will be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. The onus is on them to make arrangements for their son/daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.

Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip. Parents must sign permission forms specific to the trip for students up to the age of 18

## **Informing Parents**



Notification to parents should include details of proposed itinerary, dates, the cost of travel, insurance, food and accommodation. Guidelines for spending money and money for extras such as meals and excursions will also be communicated to parents.

In the case of trips involving overnight or longer, a meeting of parents/guardians with students may be required. This is to be decided in consultation with the principal and to be coordinated by the staff members involved in the weeks prior to the trip.

## Right to Refuse

The BOM reserves the right to refuse any student permission to attend the trip. This may apply to students who have been in breach of the Code of Behaviour on trips in the past, or whose behaviour has posed a threat to the health and safety of themselves or others.

Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the trip may be necessary. A list of students' mobile phone numbers should be compiled and carried by the teacher at all times during the trip. Students should also have the mobile phone number of the trip leader – to be carried with them at all times while on the trip. A mobile phone will be made available from the School, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.

Teachers should also carry a list of contact details of parents/guardians at all times in case of emergency. The trip organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal as well as the Emergency Number provided by the Travel Company.

Students on trips which involve an overnight stay will not be supervised on a 24 hour basis. Parents who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should take this into consideration when permitting their son/daughter to take part in such trips.

If necessary, two members of staff may carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases, etc.) with the student present. This will only be done for good reasons based on reasonable grounds, such as concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns. Staff should not have any physical contact with a student's clothing.

If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty his/her own pockets or to search the clothing that he/she is wearing.

If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the school's Code of Positive Behaviour, the staff in charge will contact the Principal immediately and the Principal will then contact the parents/guardians. This may result in the student being asked to return home at the parents' expense.

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Signed by Chairperson:



Brian Hughes

Signed by Principal:



Sarah Molloy









