



School Trips Policy

School Ethos and Mission

Galway Educate Together Secondary School (GETSS) offers an inclusive, intercultural education rooted in respect for diversity, justice, and equality. Our co-educational, democratic environment supports every student in reaching their full potential while preparing them to become compassionate, active members of a culturally diverse society.

Adapted from the Educate Together Mission Statement

Rationale

School trips are considered a vital component of student development at GETSS. They enrich classroom learning and foster personal and social growth. Many curricular areas require off-campus activities such as field studies, tours, games, and recreational outings.

All educational tours must align with the Department of Education's Circular Letter M20/04, which emphasises that school trips should extend and reinforce classroom learning. This policy applies to all staff involved in trip planning, and to students and their parents/guardians, ensuring health and safety for all participants.

Purpose of School Trips at GETSS

Trip planning should reflect the school's ethos. In practice, this means:

- Minimising the carbon footprint of all activities.
- Prioritising public transport and local destinations where appropriate.

- Considering sustainability and ethical practices, including fair trade and worker rights, when selecting suppliers.
- Reducing resource consumption and waste.

Trips should:

- Align with the school's stated values.
- Be local when feasible.
- Be affordable to encourage broad participation.
- Offer unique experiences that highlight social issues and foster meaningful conversations, rather than standardised commercial tours.

Trip planning should also reflect the four pillars of Educate Together:

- Student-Centred: Trips should offer a balance of fun and challenge, engaging students meaningfully.
- Democratic: Where possible, students should collaborate with staff and the school community in planning trips.
- Multi-Denominational & Equality-Based: All students should have the opportunity to participate fully. Accessibility and affordability are key considerations.
- Co-Educational: Trips should be inclusive and challenge gender stereotypes.

Procedures for School Trips

Day Trips

Teachers and School Staff

- Teachers will notify the Principal or Deputy Principal as soon as possible - at least two weeks in advance for non-sports trips, and one week in advance for sports activities.

- A Calendar Event Request Form will be submitted for approval by the organising teacher. Requests for substitute cover will also be submitted as soon as possible via the school's digital Planned Absence Form.
- Full trip details will be shared with senior management (and Programme Coordinator, if applicable) at least two days prior.
- If private transport is required, the organising teacher should liaise with the school secretary and complete Bus Form, so that a recognised coach company can be hired.
- Communication will be sent to parents/guardians by the organising teacher, outlining details of activities, arrival and departure times, costs, required items (appropriate clothing, outerwear, sunscreen, food, etc.) and other relevant information.
- Trips and events may extend beyond the regular school day.
- Arrival times may vary; management will inform parents of delays.
- Teachers will leave subject-related work for students remaining at school.
- Full trip details will be shared with senior management (and Programme Coordinator, if applicable) at least two days prior.
- Students with Special Educational Needs will be considered, with input from the Learning Support department or SENCO. If an SSA is required to attend a trip or event, this should be highlighted in the Calendar Event Request Form.
- Accurate attendance will be updated on MIS by the organising teacher.
- Staff-to-student ratios should meet Board of Management guidelines (typically 1:15). Mixed-gender overnight trips require both male and female staff.
- 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.
- Trip organisers should be aware of students' medical needs and check that necessary medications are brought. Trip organisers will communicate necessary health and safety information to other trip leaders.
- Accident/Incident Report forms must be completed for any incidents.
- 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 attendance at A&E is required, adequate supervision will be organised for remaining students.

- 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.

Parents/Guardians

- Absenteeism on the day of the trip must be communicated to the school office by parents/guardians via the school app.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for transport to and from the school/drop-off point.
- Alternative drop-off/collection points may be arranged with prior parental permission and school approval in advance of the trip. Permission should be sought from parents/guardians via the school app or email. This must be approved by the school in advance of the event and may not always be possible. Staff will not be responsible for the safety of students once they have left the group under these circumstances.
- If permission forms are required, students who have not returned permission forms may not participate.
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child has all necessary medicines/toiletries which may be required on the trip.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to have all the required items listed by the organising teacher (appropriate clothing, outerwear, sunscreen, food, etc.)
- If students are unable to attend a school trip due to financial reasons, parents/guardians should contact the school office.

Students

- The school's Code of Positive Behaviour, Substance Use Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, and all other relevant school policies apply to all outings and trips unless otherwise specified. This includes adherence to all school rules, such as prohibitions on smoking, alcohol consumption, vaping, and the use, possession, or supply of illegal substances, even in countries where different age limits or laws apply. Mobile phones should be used strictly in accordance with teacher instructions.

Overnight and International Trips

- All day trip procedures apply.
- Proposals must be submitted to the Board of Management, including educational benefits and risk assessments.
- The Board will consider DES guidelines, staffing, financial controls, and insurance.
- Only licensed tour operators will be used, per the Aviation Regulation Act 2001.
- Staff-student ratios must be age appropriate and follow travel agency recommendations.
- Staff selection will consider group size, gender balance, and trip-specific needs. All members of staff involved in the trip will be expected to share the workload during the planning stages and during the trip.
- Class-time protection and in-school cover will be considered when deciding what staff can be released.
- The organisers reserve the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- Valid passports (minimum six months post-trip) must be submitted.
- Parents are responsible for all documentation (visas, travel permissions).
- Non-EU passport holders may require visas.
- Students must carry a European Health Insurance Card for EU travel.
- Parents will be informed of required inoculations.
- In the case of trips involving an overnight stay or longer, a meeting of parents/guardians with students may be required. Students and parents/guardians must attend all briefings and comply with trip requirements. Such a meeting will be coordinated by the staff members involved in the weeks prior to the trip and overseen by the Principal.

Sport & Inter-School Competitions

- Coaches are responsible for carrying an appropriately-equipped first-aid kit. Minor injuries may be treated with first aid on site; serious injuries may require medical attention.
- 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 will travel with a team.

- Supervising staff will appraise students of the necessary safety equipment for each respective sport.
- Staffing depends on in-school needs; typically, two staff members accompany teams.
- Participation is encouraged, but final decisions rest with parents/guardians.
- 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 or participation.

Guidelines for the Use of Private Transport

- Coaches must have a valid PSV License and Certificate.
- Emergency exits must be pointed out before departure.
- Aisles and exits must remain clear.
- Students must remain seated and use seat belts where available.
- In emergencies, students should evacuate quickly and reassemble for a headcount.
- Any concerns about coach safety or student behaviour must be reported to the Principal.

Financial Guidelines

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

- Separate financial records will 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/guardians will be informed as early as possible of the full cost associated with the trip.
- Trip organisers will clearly outline what the cost includes and advise on any potential additional expenses during the trip. Initial communication to parents/guardians should include itinerary, payment details, and deposit terms.
- Full insurance cover must be in place for all school trips
- Payments to tour operators must follow FSSU recommendations.

- Deposits may be requested, and while every effort will be made, refunds cannot always be assured in the event of withdrawal. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or safety reasons may not be entitled to a refund.
- Teachers are not required to pay for trips. The cost of teacher travel should be taken into consideration when planning the trip.

Oversubscription

If a trip is oversubscribed, priority will be given to students studying the relevant subject. Remaining places will be allocated by lottery, and a record of the draw order will be kept. Two lists will be prepared: one for successful applicants and one reserve list. Should a student withdraw, the first person on the reserve list will be offered the place.

Right to Refuse Participation

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 Positive Behaviour on trips in the past, or whose behaviour has posed a threat to the health and safety of themselves or others.

Communication and Supervision

- Teachers will have access to parent contact numbers via the school's MIS, to be used in case of emergency.
- Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the trip may be necessary. A school mobile phone will be provided to trip organisers for overnight and international trips which can be used for communication between students and staff. Teachers and staff will not use personal phones to communicate with students. A list of students' mobile phone numbers will be compiled and carried by the teacher. Students may also be provided with the trip leader's contact number (i.e. the school phone)

- Overnight trips do not include 24-hour supervision. 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. If a search is deemed necessary, the student will be asked to empty their own pockets. Staff will not have any physical contact with a student's clothing.
- Serious breaches of school policies will be reported to the Principal, who will contact their parents/guardians. This may result in the student being asked to return home at the parents' expense.

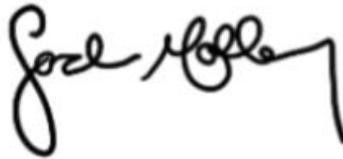
This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of November 20th 2025

Signed by Chairperson:



Brian Hughes

Signed by Principal:



Sarah Molloy