

Presentation Secondary School Clonmel

School Tours Policy March 2020.

Introduction

It is school policy to organise outings for the benefit of students when this is deemed appropriate by the teaching staff, in consultation with the Principal. Presentation Secondary School Clonmel recognises the benefits of outings to complement normal school work, for educational or sporting purposes.

This policy applies to all members of the staff of Presentation Secondary School Clonmel who take students on school trips. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

The Code of Behaviour of Presentation Secondary School Clonmel applies to all students of Presentation Secondary School Clonmel and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off the school grounds and anywhere students are clearly identified or identifiable as students of the School.

The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to trips, whether or not they involve an overnight stay

- Before a student is accepted for a trip, her previous behaviour may be taken into account
- Parents/guardians will be notified, in advance, of all trips and both parents and student should sign the appropriate consent form. In this way parents, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behaviour at all times. Sports trips are excluded unless there is an overnight element.

Rationale for having trips/outings and the need for a relevant policy

- Presentation Secondary School Clonmel strives to provide an effective education for all its students and is committed to the education, in the broadest sense of the word, of all students who attend the School. Presentation Secondary School provides an academic education, which also recognises that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures, is part of a holistic education.
- The curriculum content of some subjects requires field studies/trips/outings/recreational activities, which take place off school grounds.
- Trips assist in bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.
- There should be a balanced programme of outings and trips for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.
- **All educational trips must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Science in Circular Letter M 20/04.**

All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria contained in this circular.

- To assist staff in the planning of trips and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary precautions which must be observed to provide for the health and safety of staff and students. It also ensures that trips and outings take place efficiently and smoothly and that the standard of supervision is firmly within guidelines and standards.
- To clarify expectations of behaviour for all trips and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.

Procedures to be followed for school outings/trips:

- The School Outing Request Form must be agreed by Principal and Teacher.
- Adequate notices to be given to school management and parents (10 days).

Check list:

1. List of students, by class, of those participating. (Addresses and phone numbers for overnight stays only)
2. Display on Staff Room Notice Board and lodge copy in the General Office.
3. Permission/Consent Forms signed by organising teacher/Principal and filed safely until after trip.
4. Copy of Itinerary and Rules for Outings/Trips must accompany the Consent Form to parents.
5. Brief Principal re Outing/Trip on return.

Health and Safety

Health and safety of students and supervisors is always a priority when organizing and taking a school trip or tour. Teachers taking any trip will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise.

The staff are aware that in general the degree of care required of them should be that of a “careful parent” which would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student.

This policy is in keeping with the Child Protection Procedures as adopted by the Board of Management.

b) Overnight stays or trips abroad.

Other trips may be over-night expeditions or of longer duration. These may be co-circular activities organised by subject departments, or trips arranged for Year Groups, or ones that are part of the Outdoor Education Programme. Some examples are:

- ✓ Irish trips - e.g. Gaeltacht
- ✓ Exchange programmes involving a group of students and teacher(s)
- ✓ European Trips- e.g. Germany, France, Spain, etc.
- ✓ Outdoor Education Centres

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

The number of students participating varies depending on the nature of the trip and the staff/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 will be expected to share the work load beforehand, where necessary 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 particular trip e.g. Irish teachers on a trip to the

Gaeltacht, French and/or German teachers on a trip to Europe, teachers with outdoor qualifications on adventure trips, Year Heads with year group, Form Teachers with classes on hikes and so on.

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

Boards must ensure that all the requirements outlined in these documents are adhered to.

1. Approval should be sought for all school tours and school outings from Principal/Secretary of the board of management.
2. The tour authorisation form in Appendix 1 of the circular letter M20/04 must be completed for the foreign trips.
3. The board should be notified of planned school trips prior to arrangements being made with students and parents.
4. All foreign trips must be booked through a bonded tour operator in line with Aviation Authority regulations.
5. **Booking and Collection of Payments stipulates that money for travel and accommodation must be paid directly to the school tour company and not to the school. Other costs should be routed through the main school bank account.**
6. Separate financial records should be maintained for each school tour and provided to board of management members.
7. A summary report of the trip/tour should be prepared by the teachers who organised the tour and given to the Principal. This report should be presented to the board of management. The report should outline - Date of the tour/trip - Number of students participating - Number of adults (teachers/non-teachers) accompanied the students - Achievements of the tour - Financial summary of the tour - Any difficulties/problems which arose during the tour
8. The board should be notified of overnight school trips within Ireland prior to arrangements being made with students and parents.
9. Receipts must be issued for all money collected in a school

The circular makes the assumption that all tours organized for school groups are educational in nature. The circular states that “the objective of an educational tour should be that it should provide a significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of pupils in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour and which benefit cannot be provided by in-school activities alone.”

- Other criteria which should be satisfied before authorisation for a school tour is granted by the Board include the following:

- A school tour should enhance the learning process for students by providing educational experiences which the classroom cannot provide.
- The full cost of the tour should be communicated to parents at the earliest opportunity.
- A school tour should be arranged to coincide with normal school holiday periods. Exceptions to this requirement are single day tours and activities listed in the circular such as student exchanges or attendance at a music or drama festival.
- Proper insurance cover must be in place and written parental approval received for each student participating in the tour. Students not participating in a tour taking place during school time must be adequately catered for while teachers are away.
- Appropriate arrangements must be made for the classes of any absent teachers in line with Circular PPT 01/03 (Supervision and Substitution Scheme). The absence of accompanying teachers during school time must be kept to an absolute minimum.

Legal Requirements for using Licensed Tour Operators

- The Commission for Aviation Regulation was set up under the Aviation Regulation Act 2001 and is now the licensing authority for Travel Agents and Tour Operators in Ireland. In addition, it has the power to prosecute illegal travel agents or tour operators selling travel to destinations outside Ireland in its own name in the District Court.
- The primary purpose of the legislation requirement to have a licence is to protect consumers. Accordingly, licensed traders have a bond in place equal to a percentage of their annual turnover. This money is then available to the Commission to refund or reimburse consumers in the event of a Tour Operator or Travel Agent collapsing. This protection is not available to persons dealing with illegal operators.

- it is obligatory under this legislation for schools to use the services of a licensed tour operator or travel agent when bringing any group of students or adults outside the State.

- **The board of management, Principal and staff should carefully consider**

- The appropriateness of the proposed tour in terms of the Department of Education and Science Circular M 20/04.

- The legal requirements around the organisation of school tours going outside the State.

- The staffing arrangements for the tour and for the school.

- The financial controls in place for the tour and the need for accountability.

- At least two teachers should be involved in the financial administration of a school tour. This is an important protection for all concerned where money is collected from students.

- Separate financial records should be maintained for each school tour. A detailed record of all participating students and the amounts paid should be retained.

- Parents should be informed as early as possible of the full cost associated with the tour. Written permission should be received from the parents of all tour participants and a receipt for all money paid should be issued.

- Proper and full insurance cover must be in place for all school tours.

- All money collected for a school tour should be lodged as soon as possible in the main school bank account.

- All financial transactions relating to the tour should be recorded in the school's accounts using the tour codes on the accounting system. Invoices and receipts should be retained to support all payments. Where this is not possible or practical, a written record showing details of the payment or receipt should be retained.

- Any deficit or borrowing to support a school tour must be avoided at all costs. All tours should be self-financing.

Booking & Collection of Payments

This guideline is to provide information to school management and school personnel involved in the organisation of school tours outside of the Republic of Ireland.

Below is an extract from communication received from the Aviation Regulator regarding school's tours: 'This letter is being issued to assist schools in ensuring that pupils and staff who are travelling on foreign school trips are aware that the protection under the legislation in repatriating passengers and providing refunds to those prevented from travelling abroad only comes into operation where bookings are made directly with licensed travel agents and/or tour operators. The legislation provides that it is a requirement that any person or legal entity that sells travel out of Ireland must hold an appropriate license to do so.

Under the provisions of the Transport (Tour Operators and Travel Agents) Act 1982 a travel agent is defined as: "a person other than a carrier who as agent sells or offers to sell to, or purchases or offers to purchase on behalf of, any person, accommodation on air, sea or land transport commencing in the State to destinations outside the State or Northern Ireland or who holds himself out by advertising or otherwise as one who may make available such accommodation, either solely or in association with other accommodation facilities or services"

Under the Act a tour operator is defined as: "a person other than a carrier who arranges for the purpose of selling or offering for sale to any person, accommodation for travel by air, sea or land transport commencing in the State to destinations outside the State or Northern Ireland or who holds himself out by advertising or otherwise as one who may make available such accommodation, either solely or in association with other accommodation facilities or other services"

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.

The event must be covered by the relevant bond held by the tour operator or travel agent with the Commission for Aviation Regulation as part of the annual licensing requirement, if for any reason the license holder ceases to trade. It is imperative that the tour operator or travel agent chosen to arrange the overseas trip holds a current license. The full list of all current license holders is available on www.aviationreg.ie

2. Procedure In order to ensure that schools are compliant with this legislation, we advise the following:

1. All school tours travelling outside of the Republic of Ireland must be booked through a bonded licensed travel agent or tour operator from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie and Payments from students should be made directly to the travel agent or tour operator and not collected through the school. Where it is not possible for payments to be made directly to the travel agent the Aviation Regulator has confirmed that a school is in compliance with relevant legislation where cheques made out to the bonded travel operator are collected by the school. These cheques can be forwarded to the bonded tour operator by the school. The school must store the tour cheques in the school safe until they are forwarded to the travel operator. **It is important to note that these cheques must be made payable to the bonded tour operator, not to the school.**

2. Many tour operators and travel agents can accept payments electronically or by cheque and cash. We advise schools to work closely with the tour operators in establishing procedures to ensure the school retains full control of the tour.

Annually, the Board of management will review their current practices in relation to school tours to ensure that they are in line with the guidance referred to above.