



SCHOOL TRIPS AND OUTINGS POLICY

Our school community provides a caring, happy and safe environment, which strives to foster a love of life-long learning.

We endeavour to develop each person's academic, physical, moral, cultural and spiritual potential based on mutual respect, fairness and honesty.

We want our students to emerge as confident, adaptable, responsible and caring citizens.

School Mission Statement

Scope of Educational Outings and Trips policy:

This policy applies to all members of the staff of St. Colmcille's who take students off site. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

The Code of Behaviour of St. Colmcille's applies to all students of St. Colmcille's 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.

Outings and Trips

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, his/her previous behaviour may be taken into consideration.
- 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.

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

- St. Colmcille's 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. St. Colmcille's 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.

Links to Mission Statement

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states 'We endeavour to develop each person's academic, physical, moral, cultural and spiritual potential based on mutual respect, fairness and honesty.'

Objectives

- That the health, safety and welfare of our students is 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 demands on the physical resources of the students, having regard to their age and capacity, and the dangers to which they may be exposed.
- That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all trips/outings
- That staff are aware that 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.

Day Trips within Ireland

- Day trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours.
- Day trips must have the approval of the Principal.
- Members of staff who wish to take students on a day trip must make their request to the Principal. As much notice as possible should be given.
- Specific parental permission is required for any trip.
- Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from trips.
- Once the Principal has approved a trip, the organiser should:
 - In order to inform parents/guardians, forward brief details of the trip to the Deputy Principal for inclusion in the calendar and on the St. Colmcille’s website and/or plasma screen.
 - Place a list of students participating in the trip on the Staff notice Board and the Office Notice Board

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- On all day trips there must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff traveling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students traveling. Students in First Year will require most supervision. On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver.
- Day trips may involve a financial cost to the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of transportation to/from sporting events. In the case of financial difficulties, application for assistance may be made to the Principal.
- The School will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the Coach Company or staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.
- On occasion it may be suitable for Senior Cycle students (Fifth and Sixth Year students, and also Transition Year students in certain circumstances) to travel independently to and/or from an event. In such an instance, the organiser of the trip must advise parents in advance. Junior Cycle students may not do so.
- For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their son/daughter's journey to/from the School. The organiser of the trip must be informed in advance of these arrangements.
- A member of staff should only travel alone with a student when parental permission has been obtained.
- An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

Overnight trips, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

- Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Principal. Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.
- 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.
- In the case of trips being oversubscribed, priority is given to those students who are studying the appropriate subject. The school reserves the right to refuse any student they deem unsuitable for the trip. Those considered unsuitable would include:
 - students who in the past have proved unruly or undisciplined on trips
 - students who have a poor discipline record in the school
- Before a student with a medical condition is accepted to participate in a trip the school must be confident that they can manage the needs of the student without compromising the health & safety of the student in question, the other students participating or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents.
- The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of non-refundable deposit. Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- If a passport is required, parents/guardians should ensure that passports are valid for at least six months following the trip.
- 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 E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.
- It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their son/daughter has all necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the trip.
- Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents understand that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their son/daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.

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- Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.
- Following receipt of the deposit, parents will receive the Permission Letter and Form all sections of which must be completed and the form returned to the organiser by specified date. Details of accommodation, travel arrangements, any special local conditions, personal items that the student needs to bring, guidelines for spending money and money for extras such as meals and excursions will also be sent to parents.
- Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participants' mobile phone numbers (as given on the Permission Form) and students may be given (if appropriate) the mobile phone number of trip leader – to be carried with them while on the trip. A mobile phone is available from the School, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.
- The trip organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.
- If necessary two members of staff should 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 Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.
- An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

Transition Year Programme

The Transition Year programme at St. Colmcille's aims to give students a wide variety of experiences. Many of these experiences take the form of outings and trips.

At the start of the year parents will give advance permission for all such trips that have been approved by the Principal as part of the Transition Year programme.

Sixth Year Higher Options Fairs/Open Days

The Guidance Department works closely with the Senior Cycle students, in particular those in Sixth Year to support them in their preparation for Third Level. Guest speakers from Universities and Colleges are invited to speak to the students and all students attend the Higher Options Fair as a school activity. The school recognises that visiting a university /college campus is a worthwhile experience for students and an information leaflet is made available outlining the dates of the Saturday Open Days for all Colleges and Universities. Only in exceptionally circumstances will a student be given permission to attend an Open Day during school time. Any such cases will be dealt with on an individual basis and permission should be sought from the Principal / Deputy Principal.

Monitoring and Review

As part of the Development Planning process St. Colmcille's Community School will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedure on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

