

Portmarnock Community School Extracurricular Policy-Tours.

Introduction

School tours have the potential to provide students with experiences that complement and supplement their curricular and extracurricular experiences – aesthetic, cultural, emotional, sporting, social and personal development. Tours also enhance the collaborative relationships between staff and students and foster positive communication across classes and year groups. As such, tours significantly enable Portmarnock Community School to achieve its goals for the holistic development of its students. It is also recognised that teachers who organise tours do so in their own time and therefore are to be fully supported in their endeavours by the board, management, staff, students and parents/guardians.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff members, students and parents/guardians of students of Portmarnock Community School who organise and participate in off campus, overnight tours.

Rationale

Tours 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 the criteria contained in this circular.

Portmarnock Community School exists to provide an effective and broad education to *all* of its students. It provides an academic education while also recognising that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures is part of a holistic education.

Objectives

- To assist staff in the planning of tours so that they are aware of all necessary precautions to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.
- To ensure that tours are organised efficiently and that the standard of supervision is within the guidelines and standards set by the Department of Education and Science.
- To clarify expectations of behaviour and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.
- To involve all members of the school community in ratifying this policy in order to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of an active, living policy.

Content

Planning

Members of staff who wish to take students on an overnight tour must submit a completed **Proposal Form** to the Board of Management by the end of the previous September. The Principal will distribute and receive the Proposal Forms on behalf of the Board. Forms should include as much relevant information on the tour as possible at that time. Curriculum based tours do not need to submit Proposal Forms. A copy of the form is attached.

Where possible tours should be planned well in advance of tour dates. The full **cost** of the tour should be communicated as early as practicable. Every effort should be made to allow maximum pupil participation and the maximum amount of time to prepare financially will facilitate this.

The number of students participating will vary depending on the nature of the tour and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency.

Procedure

The **initial letter** to Parents/Guardians should contain a draft itinerary, a deadline for registering and payment of deposit, details of a parents' information night and a copy of the school's tour policy which must be signed and returned. It will also be stated in the letter that a non-refundable deposit of 30% to 50% of the total cost must be paid. Deposits will be accepted within a specified timeframe. If the tour is oversubscribed selection will be by lottery. A waiting list will be created.

Appropriate **insurance** cover should be obtained for all overseas tours.

The right to exclude a student from a tour is reserved to a **committee** comprising of the Principal, the appropriate Deputy Principal and Year Head, and the trip organisers. The Year Head will consult in advance with the relevant tutor and counsellor when appropriate. The payment of a deposit does not constitute a contract as any breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour or issues that may emerge relating to our Health and Safety Policy may result in exclusion from the tour.

Criteria for exclusion will include: persistent minor breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour; suspensions arising from major breaches of the school's Code of Behaviour; any drugs/alcohol/smoking related suspensions; students who have shown themselves to be unwilling or unable to take instruction. In all cases the frequency, seriousness and how recently breaches of the Code of Behaviour took place will be factors. Behaviour on previous school trips will also be a factor and a separate file for reports on incidents concerning trips should be kept in the office for ease of reference.

Health and safety related criteria will be decided on a case by case basis taking into account supervision issues and the safety of the entirety of the student and staff body travelling. The committee will also take into account our Health and Safety, Child Protection and Extracurricular Policies.

Full **disclosure** of all medical, dietary and behavioural issues by parents/guardians is required. Permission will be sought for the administration of general anaesthetic and surgical procedures.

Communication

A list should be compiled of participants' mobile numbers and students should have the school mobile phone number which will be provided for each trip. Emergency contact numbers of Parents/Guardians and all personal information relating to students including copies of passports, EHIC cards etc. should be available to staff at short notice during the trip.

The tour organiser should have the emergency contact numbers of the Principal and one of the Deputy Principals.

Documentation

Students must organise their EHIC cards for travel within the EU.

Passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip and will be photocopied by the organisers. The onus is firmly on parents/guardians to ensure that their son/daughter has all necessary, up to date documentation in advance of the tour including visas and inoculations if necessary.

Incident reports and accident reports should be filed on return.

Behaviour

Teachers and other designated adults supervising the trip are in loco parentis and therefore have the responsibilities and rights of a prudent parent. Health and Safety, Child Protection and Extracurricular policies also apply to supervision on trips. Teachers give up their free time voluntarily to give their students opportunities they might not usually be able to take and Parents/Guardians and students should show their appreciation of this by co-operating fully with those teachers.

Students are expected to behave in a courteous, co-operative and considerate manner. They must abide by the teacher's decisions and directions in all matters.

The school's code of behaviour applies on any school trip in addition to the particular code of behaviour to any trip. The full penalties for breaching either code will apply on the trip and/or upon return to school depending on which is most applicable and practical.

Serious breaches of trust may result in parents/guardians being contacted and requested to arrange and finance the return of their son/daughter.

Should a teacher suspect breach of regulations he/she has the right to ask the student to empty pockets/baggage/containers/items of clothing to ascertain if illicit articles/substances are present. Staff may carry out an inspection of rooms or personal property with the student present if there are reasonable grounds for concern for safety or use/possession of a banned substance etc.

Any students possessing, consuming, passing or promoting the use of alcohol, drugs, solvents or other such dangerous substances while on the school tour will be liable to the severe penalties as in the School/Tour code of Behaviour including suspension, expulsion and reporting of the offence to An Garda Síochána.

School authorities reserve the right to implement these regulations and by signing the acceptance form parents/guardians accept this. In addition they accept as a responsibility the obligation to ensure that their son/daughter is fully aware of the consequences should he/she be found in breach of those regulations.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management:

- To ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated from time to time.
- To approve the policy.
- To consider reports from the Principal on the implementation of the policy.

Principal and Deputy Principals:

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
- To monitor the implementation of the policy.

Teachers/Organisers of the School Tour:

- To implement the policy and to provide feedback to management that may assist the review process.
- To instruct students and parents/guardians as to what is expected of them in relation to preparing and participating in the tour.
- To keep accurate records of the above.

Parents:

- To support the policy in all of its aspects.

Students:

- To accept the policy and abide by the conditions.

Implementation

- Management and all teachers involved in school trips will monitor the implementation of this policy.
- The full co-operation of students and parents/guardians is expected for all tour activities.
- Parents/Guardians must encourage their son/daughter to uphold the standard of behaviour required on all tours.

Success Criteria

- Management, teachers, parents and students are satisfied with the effectiveness of the policy.
- The planning, organisation and carrying out of tours have proceeded effectively.
- Any unforeseen event was dealt with promptly and in line with this policy.
- All staff members and students have returned safely having experienced a worthwhile learning experience.

Monitoring Procedures

- Ongoing monitoring will take place through informal discussion with all parties.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the tour organiser after each tour to discuss the effectiveness of the policy.

Review

- The policy will be reviewed if the need arises or after two years, whichever comes first.

Timeframe

- This policy was ratified on 22 September 2009 and will come into force on 23 September 2009.

Signature of Parent/Guardian _____

Portmarnock Community School Tour Proposal Form.

Tour Proposer: _____

Dates of Tour: _____

**Destination and
Itinerary:** _____

**Cost and Deposit
Amount:** _____

**Reasons for
Tour:** _____

**Participants and Number of
Places:** _____

**Teachers on
Tour:** _____

Principal's Signature: _____
Date: _____

