

Grange Community College International School Tour Policy

Title of Policy :

Grange Community College International School Tour Policy

1. Introductory Statement

It is the policy of the Board of Management/Principal/Deputy Principal to encourage, where appropriate, extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities which further the broader educational development of students.

2. Scope:

A School Tour is defined as any group travel involving at least one international overnight stay or a day trip.

3. Rationale

The need for this policy has been high-lighted by staff, students and parents.

It is necessary for health and safety for students on a tour.

It is necessary for the school to function effectively as a school community and as part of the wider society.

It will assist teachers a management in the planning and organization of tours.

4. Relationship to the School's Mission Statement

In the light of our Mission Statement this policy aims to establish and maintain effective procedures for school tour organization and implementation:

- which will foster an atmosphere which promotes self-esteem, honesty, justice and respect by introducing them to new people, places and cultures
- which will create a safe, healthy learning experience that nurtures

self-discipline and encourages our pupils to take responsibility for their own learning

5. Goals/Objectives

In our school we strive to teach students both curriculum and life skills. School tours both enhance students' learning of curriculum topics and life skills.

6. Policy Content

This section is in six parts.

6 A. Approval:

1. The Tour Leader(s) must obtain permission from the Board of Management (BOM) to take students on a school tour. A general outline of the tour, including travel dates, tour company details, travel insurance, the total tour price and the general tour itinerary, should accompany the request for permission.
2. Prior to seeking permission, the Tour Leader(s) must enter into discussions with the Principal/Deputy Principal to ensure that the proposed tour dates do not impinge upon the normal teaching routine of the school year and. A School Tour should be arranged to coincide with normal school holiday periods.
3. All school tours must conform to the criteria as set down in the Department of Education and Science circular M20/04 relating to Educational Tours by School Groups (inside and outside of the State). See Appendix 1
4. All tours must be organised using a licensed tour operator or travel agent. A list of these can be found on the Commission for Aviation Regulation Website: www.aviationreg.ie.
5. Proper insurance cover must be in place.

6 B. Tour Team:

1. A Tour Team, led by the Tour Leader(s) should be put in place as soon as possible. A reserve list is advisable in case a member of the team should subsequently be unable to travel.
2. The Tour Team may come from different departments within the school structure. If a sufficient number of Team members are not available within the

school, other adults wishing to travel may come from outside the school. Tour Team members may include: (a) Teaching Staff (b) Special Needs Assistants (c) Secretarial Staff (d) Caretaking Staff (e) Parents (f) Members of BOM (g) Staff Partners. Proper vetting procedures should be followed at all times.

3. The Tour Leader(s) should meet the full Tour Team at the outset so as to discuss individual duties. Ideally all members of the Tour Team should be involved in organising the tour, taking up duties in one of the following areas.
 - (a) Tour Finances – the Tour Leader or Deputy Leader
 - (b) Passport
 - (c) European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or travel Insurance– any member of the Tour Team
 - (d) The Tour Itinerary – cultural passes, internal tours – any member of the Tour Team
 - (e) General needs – medical kit, home contact numbers, medical services' contacts in area to be toured etc. – any member of Tour Team.

6C. Tour Finances:

All income and expenditure related to the Tour should conform fully to the accounting practices of the school and DDLETB Guidelines. A full account of income and expenditure should, at reasonable notice, be available to the Principal and the BOM. The Tour Leader is responsible for the following Financial Procedures:

1. All monies for the tour must be paid directly to the tour operator or travel agent.
2. Parents should be informed as early as possible of the full cost associated with the tour.
3. Pay the deposit, other interim payments and the final payment to the tour company, by the various due dates.
4. When on tour the Tour Leader should keep receipts of all money spent.
5. On completion of the Tour and all associated financial transactions, the Tour Leader must provide the Principal and the BOM with a complete Financial Statement.
6. Any deficit or borrowing to support a school tour must be avoided at all costs.

6D. Notice to Parents:

1. Once permission has been granted by the BOM the parents/guardians of the selected group/year/class should receive a circular outlining the general nature of the proposed tour. In as far as possible all the students in the target group should receive the circular on the same day.

2. The circular should specify:
 - ◆ The objectives of the tour.
 - ◆ The itinerary and duration of the tour.
 - ◆ The full costs involved and the method of payment (deadlines etc.).
 - ◆ Information regarding insurance and indemnity.
 - ◆ The general rules of behaviour to be observed.
 - ◆ If the numbers are limited and if a deposit is required to secure a place.
3. Parents should also be made aware, through the circular, of their duty to inform the school of any relevant Health or Safety issues which might affect their children while on tour.
4. The signed consent/permission of parents/guardians is an essential pre-requisite for the participation of any student on the tour.

Parents:

It is advisable in the week before departure, a meeting of the parents of all students going on the Tour should be held. Where possible all students and staff travelling should attend this meeting as well. The following information should be given to parents at this meeting:

1. A detailed itinerary – dates, times, locations, hotels, addresses, contact phone numbers etc.
2. Advice on a reasonable daily allowance, in the currency of the country to be visited, for each student to bring.
3. Advice to students, in the presence of parents, as to how best students can safeguard their money when on Tour.

Parents should provide the Tour Leader with written information on the form provided about the student/s medical background.

1. Where a student requires constant or regular medication specific written details must be given to the Tour Leader. Parents/guardians may request a private meeting at another time to inform the Tour Leader about the illness and the manner in which the medication should be administered.
2. The Tour Leader should establish if a non-medical person can administer the medication.
3. Each parent/guardian must fill in a form which includes medical history, contact numbers, allergies and medication to be taken. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that a student has medication sufficient to last the entire Tour.

4. In the event of a medical emergency/dental emergency while on Tour it may be necessary for a member of the Tour Team to act in loco parentis. The following agreement should be issued to all parents/guardians and must be signed prior to the tour.

“We, the tour leaders (named below) will act on medical advice presented to us if in the event of an accident or emergency where it is not possible to contact parents, guardians or next of kin either by phone or due to time considerations.”

Before the tour leaves parents/guardians must specify in writing the person/s they wish the Tour Leaders to contact in the event of parents/guardians being unavailable. In the event of emergency parents/guardians will always be contacted first.

6E. While on Tour

Contact Information:

The Tour Leader must ensure that complete contact information is left on file in the Office, available for use in the event of an emergency. The list should include:

1. Names, addresses and home contact numbers of all those going on the Tour.
2. Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
3. A contact number, day or night, for the Tour Leader(s).

On Tour Supervision:

Prior to leaving each teacher should be assigned a small number of students and be known to the students as their Group Leader. If possible these groups should remain unchanged throughout the tour. It is the responsibility of each Group Leader to:

1. Call his/her group together at specific times in busy areas (bus depots, airports etc.)
2. Count the group members on and off planes, ships, trains, buses etc.
3. Arrange specific meeting points and times to meet students when on day tours (city landmarks, cafes, ski slopes etc.)

The Tour Leader should place teachers on a Supervision Rota for use in the various types of overnight accommodation used. Students should be made aware that corridors are being supervised. The Tour Leader should:

1. Draw up a rota for nightly corridor supervision.
2. Draw up a rota for calling students each morning.

3. Ensure teachers are on corridor duty until 1am/2am or as required.

It is not recommended that personnel other than current school staff are engaged in chaperoning or supervising students in their overnight accommodation although in certain instances this may be necessary. If there are plans to use anyone other than staff personnel in this capacity, the Tour Team member will require Garda clearance to do so before the tour takes place.

All supervision of students must meet Child Protection Guidelines.

Student Code of Behaviour:

The Code of Behaviour is to be observed by all students. The Code itself should be positive and consistent with the objectives of the Tour and with the age and level of maturity of the students involved.

The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet with the students prior to departure and outline the Code of Behaviour as follows:

1. Students must adhere to the school rules at all times where they are applicable.
2. Students must adhere to the Tour dress code as set down by the Tour Leader.
3. Students must follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
4. Students must be well behaved on public and/or private transport while on tour.
5. Students are responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
6. Students are responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy.

The Tour Team should check all rooms before students have access to them and make a note of any damage done prior to their arrival. Vacated rooms should also be checked for damage.

Sanctions on Tour:

Should a student be guilty of minor misbehaviour, the incident should be dealt with in a swift and firm manner and a verbal warning may be all that is needed. The Tour Leader may however feel that specific sanctions are required such as:

1. The student missing a half-day's activities (not however an activity related to health and safety).

2. The student missing out on a specific activity e.g. bowling.
3. The student missing an evening activity e.g. disco.

If a sanction is being imposed it must be made clear to the student why it is being imposed. A student prevented from attending an activity must be supervised by at least 2 members of the Tour Team for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school e.g. the student may be banned from involvement in future Tours.

Examples of 'serious misbehaviour' include:

1. Use/possession of alcohol.
2. Use/possession of illegal substances (drugs etc.)
3. Use/possession of cigarettes.
4. Misuse of legal substances (lighter fluid, tippex etc.)
5. Disruptive behaviour on coach, plane, boat or in the hotel/hostel.
6. Lack of respect for accommodation rules.
7. Lack of respect for Tour Team or any other supervising adults.
8. Theft or criminal damage to property of others.

Where a student is guilty of 'serious misbehaviour' the Tour Leader may decide to phone the student's parents/guardians to provide them with details of the incident/s.

In on-going and extreme cases of dangerous and/or gross misbehaviour a student may be sent home.

In the event of this happening, the parents/guardians will be informed and if necessary arrangements made for the offending student to travel home in line with Child Protection Guidelines at the expense of the parent.

In the case of a serious/criminal incident (shop lifting, a violent attack etc.) the parents/guardians will be informed immediately and the matter will be handed over to the local police authorities.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal on return to school.

6F Post Tour Responsibilities

Reporting Back to BOM/Principal:

Within two weeks of the Tour party's return, the Tour Leader should provide the BOM/Principal with a general, written report outlining:

1. The achievements/success of the Tour.
2. A completed Financial Statement.
3. Details of any incidents which required the imposition of sanctions while on Tour.
4. An assessment of the School Tour Policy and suggestions for ways to improve or strengthen it prior to future School Tours.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff will be responsible for the implementation of the policy.

8. Links with other school policies

This policy must be read in conjunction with the school's current policies and any other policies as they are developed. This policy is particularly related to Child Protection Policy and the Code of Positive Behaviour.

9. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Under the direction of the Principal the policy will be monitored by the committee which drew it up.

This policy will be reviewed after two years or sooner if necessitated by legislation or requested by Staff Council or the Board of Management.

10. Ratification and Communication

This policy will be ratified by the Board of Management.

It will be made available to parents.

It will be published in the Staff booklet for current staff and a copy of this booklet will be given to new teachers coming into the school.

It will be published on the school's website.

11. Implementation Date

This policy will come into effect after being signed by the Board of Management

Signed..... Date.....
Chairperson of Board of Management

Appendix 1

Definition:

Parent - In this policy where parent is mentioned, it refers to parent(s), guardian(s), foster parent(s), or the primary carer for a student, as applicable.

APPENDIX 2

Circular Letter M 20
/04

To the Management Authorities of all Post Primary Schools

Educational Tours by School Groups (Both inside and outside the State)

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. Where a Board of Management is satisfied that a school tour meets the above criteria, such a tour may be undertaken **without seeking prior approval from the Department**. However, the template attached as appendix 2 should be completed by the Principal in the planning of a school tour and should be retained in the school for examination by a Departmental Inspector in the course of normal school inspection.

Authorisation to grant approval for educational tours by school groups both inside and outside the State is hereby devolved to the school board of management subject to the following criteria ...

- School tours should be an extension and reinforcement of classroom activities and should be designed to include the maximum number of pupils in a class. The tour should, accordingly, enhance the learning process of as many pupils as possible by providing educational experiences which the classroom alone cannot provide.
- Tours should be planned, in consultation with parents, well in advance of tour dates and preferably before the start of the school year. The full cost of the tour should be communicated to parents at the planning stage. This will have the added advantage of facilitating financial preparation with a view to allowing maximum pupil participation. Every effort should be made to ensure that the cost involved does not prevent any pupil or group of pupils from participating in the tour.
- By international standards, the school year in Ireland has long holiday periods. Educational tours of more than one days duration should be arranged to coincide with normal school holiday periods.
- Schools should ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place and that written parental approval is obtained for each pupil to take part in the tour. Such written approval must not seek to devolve any liability to the parent for any aspect of the tour. (Boards of Management of Comprehensive and Community schools should refer to appendix 2 of this circular regarding State Indemnity cover for out-of-school educational activities)
- The Board of Management must ensure that pupils who are not participating in the tour (including pupils from other classes who will be affected by their subject teacher's absence) are adequately catered for while their teachers are away on the tour. Appropriate arrangements should be made for the conduct of those teachers' classes in their absence in accordance with [Circular PPT 01/03](#). Schools should on all occasions take into account the effect that the absence of

accompanying teachers will have on the normal work in the school and numbers absent should be kept to the minimum level required.

Where school tours impinge upon the standard school year, the following guidelines are put forward as to the type of educational visit envisaged by the Department as acceptable for the purposes of regarding absence on such visits as school days:

- (a) Educational visit involving an exchange of groups of students with another school.
- (b) Educational visit involving attendance at a course of instruction.
- (c) Educational visit involving active participation in a music or drama festival.
- (d) Educational visit to a conference or exhibition of clear educational value (e.g. Young Scientist Exhibition, Higher Options Conference or Exhibition on Careers and Guidance Counselling)
- (e) An educational visit should be appropriate to the age group/grade concerned (e.g. The Higher Options Conference would be more appropriate for senior cycle students than for junior cycle students)
- (f) Educational visits (inside or outside the State) involving significant linguistic or cultural benefit to the maximum number of pupils.

This list is given by way of example and is not intended to be exhaustive.

This circular supersedes and replaces Circulars [M87/78](#), M62/83, 12/79 and Circular Letter to the Boards of Comprehensive and Community schools entitled "Out of School Educational Activities within the State" and dated 19 February 1987.

Mathew Ryan
Principal Officer
Post Primary Administration.

Appendix 3: Tour Template

Details of School Tour		
Name of School	Address	Roll No.
Tour Dates		
From	To	Number of School Days
_ / _ / _	_ / _ / _	
Brief Outline of Tour		
Number of Students Participating	Total number of students in relevant grade	
If some students are not participating, outline the reasons why		
Expected benefit to accrue from the tour		

Why is the tour deemed to be necessary

Adults accompanying the students

Class Teacher	Number of other teachers	Number of other adults

Confirmations

That appropriate arrangements are made in accordance with Circular PPT 01/03 for those classes whose teachers are absent with the tour	Yes:	No:
That adequate insurance is in place to cover all risks while on tour	Yes:	No:
That parental permission has been secured for each student who is to participate on the tour.	Yes:	No:

Signature of Principal:

Date: