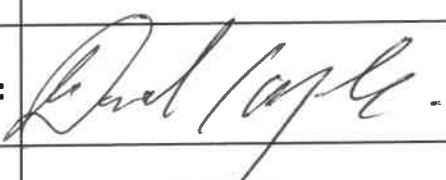




etb
Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúnaíochtaí na nGall
Donegal Education and
Training Board

Errigal College Letterkenny

School Trips Policy November 2024

Proposer:	Ms Philomena McDonough
Seconder:	Mr Paul McLaughlin
Chairperson of the Board of Management:	
Principal:	Danny McFadden
Date of Approval:	11th December 2024

Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement:

To enable each student to achieve his/her educational potential, in partnership with parents, based on the principles of caring, dignity, mutual respect and equality.

We are an ETB school, state, co-educational and multi-denominational, underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect



Introduction and Aims

Errigal College is committed to incorporating educational visits into its curriculum, providing that they will enhance students' relevant understanding and experience and are seen as a valuable addition to the regular school experience. They should promote the mission statement of the school and form an integral part of a student's journey through school. Such activities may include attendance at sporting events, visits to appropriate exhibitions, conferences, longer-term educational tours either in Ireland or abroad. The aim of school trips is to provide an educational, cultural, social and personal experience for everyone involved.

Educational trips and visits provide an excellent opportunity for the personal growth and development of students. They can have a positive effect on students' self esteem and can significantly improve many skills including their ability to work with others, using their initiative, powers of investigation and improved understanding of their surroundings. Educational visits provide rich experiences that cannot be created in school and many students will cherish them for a long time to come.

The organisation, particularly of school tours, requires a significant investment of staff time and energy. There are considerable implications in relation to the health and safety of pupils and the application of the school's Code of Behaviour in an out-of-school context.

Objectives of the Policy

- 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 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 students.
- That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all tours/outings. Errigal College Excursions Policy.

Scope of School Trips Policy

The term 'school trip' covers all expeditions off the school premises. This policy is to be implemented by all members of staff who organise such trips and is applicable to all students - and their parents/guardians - who are participating in these activities. The Code of Behaviour of Errigal College applies to all students of Errigal College, 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, therefore, in all its detail applies to all trips, whether or not they involve an overnight stay.

Rationale for School Trips and the need for a Relevant Policy

- Errigal College exists to provide an effective education service to all its students and is committed to the education, in the broadest sense of the word, of all students who attend the school. Errigal College recognises that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures are part of a holistic education.
- The curriculum content of some subjects require field studies/trips/recreational activities, which take place off school grounds. However, 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.
- Trips assist in bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-school environment.
- All educational trips must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the DES in Circular Letter M20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all the criteria contained in this circular.
- To assist staff in the planning of tours and outings.
- There is a need 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 by all Staff Organising School Trips

School trips have considerable educational value. However, they must be planned and organised in a way that causes least disruption to the day-to-day routine of the school.

A) Day Trips

- Day Trips may take place during the school day, or may extend beyond normal school hours.
Some examples of day trips are: Field work associated with specific subjects, visits to Art Galleries, museums and theatre visits, University Open Days, debates, concerts and events in connection with Transition Year.
- Any teacher planning to organise a day trip or any non-sporting outing during class time, must first inform the Principal of the intended date, at least two weeks in advance of the proposed date. The trip must be approved by the principal.
- Full details of trips (date, time, names of students) must be notified to the Principal, Deputy Principal (DP), administration office and relevant coordinator. Details will be posted on VShare and on the Errigal College google calendar and students will be marked as 'scheduled' for attendance purposes.
- 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 travelling.
- Day trips may involve a financial cost for the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of transportation to/from sporting events.
- All students going on any trip which is expected to extend beyond normal school hours must have completed permission forms before the trip takes place. Most permission forms are online (Google form) and sent to parents with some exceptions. Students who do not have completed permission forms may not participate in the trip. Links to the permission forms are available from the teacher in charge. A staff member will have a school Google Voice enabled phone for emergency contact.
- For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their student's journey to/from the school and these arrangements are communicated to the school. Students will only be dropped off at the school.

- The organising teacher must keep a careful note of any monies paid by students for the trip. Monies should be handed in to the school Secretary or organising teacher and a receipt collected for same. For some trips, money may be paid via the Way2Pay system.
- Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from day trips for supervision and health and safety reasons.
- Any accident must be reported to the Principal straight away and an Accident Report Form must be completed for all accidents which may have occurred on the trip.
- Other incidents will be reported on VShare and dealt with through the Code of Behaviour. Examples of reportable incidents include; persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers/staff; serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven substance or alcohol abuse. Parents will be informed of serious incidents.
- Medical or dietary conditions must be communicated to the school and parents/guardians must ensure that the student has any necessary medication, supplies or devices with them e.g. epi-pens, inhalers. Failure to do this may result in a student being denied permission to go on the trip.

B) Sporting Outings

- Sporting activities that are scheduled during class times must be agreed with the Principal at least one week in advance. Full details of trips (date, time, names of students) must be notified to the Principal, DP, administration office and relevant coordinator. Details will be posted on VShare and on Errigal College google calendar and students will be marked as 'scheduled' for attendance purposes.
These details must be placed on the Errigal College google calendar by the DP well in advance of the event as well as on the dashboard of VShare
- Each team manager is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to the match. If a minor accident occurs the player will be treated on the spot. Anything deemed a major or potentially threatening injury will necessitate a doctor or an ambulance being called.
- Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded on an accident report form and filed in the office. The principal is to be informed of the accident and also parents of the students should also be notified of same.
- The manager of each team will liaise with the transport coordinator to organise transport to and from all matches.

- When an away match is organised during school hours the number of staff travelling must be dependent upon the staffing requirements of the activities on campus. Generally one teacher will travel with a team.
- Where possible only one sporting outing should be scheduled on any particular day. The needs of the students on campus must receive priority when organising matches.
- It is school policy that all students are encouraged to participate in team competitions. However, the school recognises that it is parents/guardians prerogative as to how often their child shall be involved in such competitions.
- Sports trips which involve an overnight stay will be in line with school policy as in section (C) of this document.
- Medical or dietary conditions must be communicated to the school and parents/guardians must ensure that the student has any necessary medication, supplies or devices with them e.g. epi-pens, inhalers. Failure to do this may result in a student being denied permission to go on the trip.

C) Overnight Expeditions or trips abroad

Other trips may be over-night expeditions or of longer duration. These may be co-curricular activities organised by subject departments, or trips arranged for Year Groups.

Some examples are: Exchange programmes involving a group of students and teacher(s) or an Educational School Tour.

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. Parents/guardians will be notified, in advance, of all trips and tours and both parents and students should complete the appropriate consent form. In this way parents, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behavior at all times.

School Tour

A school tour is defined as any group travel involving at least one overnight stay. The school will only use the services of licensed tour operators/travel agents when organising trips outside the State, as per the Aviation Regulation Act 2001. The staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group. The school makes every effort to further enhance the student/teacher ratio on school trips.

1. Organisation and Approval:

The Tour Leader will be expected to ensure that the tour is conducted in accordance with agreed standards. The designated school tour leader (who should then appoint a deputy leader) will in advance of application to the Board discuss with the Principal the proposed destination/dates. Factors involved in preliminary discussions include:

- a) Educational Value.
- b) Price and Overall Value for Money.
- c) Suggested Itinerary.
- d) Safety of Location/Established structure in place to cope with school groups.

At this stage, an application to proceed with the tour will be made to the Board of Management. In circular letter M20/04 the Department of Education and Science has devolved to Boards of Management the authorisation to grant approval for educational tours by school groups both inside and outside the State subject to a number of criteria. 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.

The Board of Management will consider the following when reaching its decision;

- The appropriateness of the proposed trip in terms of DES Circular M20/04.
- The staffing arrangements for the trip.
- The financial controls in place for the trip.

The tour leader should put together a tour team as soon as possible. The tour team may include; teaching staff and special needs assistants. At this early stage, it is essential that a number of teachers commit to participation so that a core group may share the planning involved. Duties to be undertaken by the tour team may include the following; (a) Tour Finances (tour leader), (b) Passports, (c) EHIC Form (European Health Insurance Card), (d)

Contact Details/Medical Conditions and (e) Room Allocation. A definite commitment from all participating teachers will be required twelve weeks before the trip. Selection of teachers to accompany students will be at the discretion of the Tour leader and Principal. Any student who has an assigned SNA for their school based educational needs does not automatically secure the right to have the SNA accompany them on the school tour.

2. Selection of Students/Application Procedures:

A meeting will be held for the relevant students who may wish to go on the proposed school tour. An email will be given to the students with brief details of destination/itinerary/estimated price (dependent on ultimate uptake)/payment dates etc. In addition, a google form will also be distributed to all those who are interested in applying for the tour. This google form aims to establish the level of interest and does not in itself constitute an offer of a place on the tour. As part of their application a student and parent/guardian completes the form which agrees that priority will be given to students with an excellent record of behaviour (since enrolling in Errigal College) and a good attendance record. Any student who has transferred to Errigal College from another school will have their disciplinary and attendance record in that school checked also.

The Tour Leader and Deputy Leader will now examine the application forms and decide which students are to be offered a position on the school tour. They will consult and meet with the Principal and Year Head(s) (of a particular year group) to discuss the behavioural record of the relevant group. Other staff members of the school may be consulted on which students are or are not allowed to go on the school tour, but the tour leader and principal will have final say. At this stage some students may be excluded due to their behavioural record and/or attendance record. Any student who has been refused permission to travel on the tour will have it confirmed in a letter home. Payment of any school fees takes precedence and must be paid prior to confirmation of place on the tour as these fees contribute to insurance cover for students.

A meeting of those students who have been granted permission to travel will be called where they will be given a letter outlining specific dates to pay the first and second non-refundable deposits (depending on the destination and overall cost of the tour) to the tour operator. A student will not secure a place on the tour if the deposit is not paid to the tour operator by the deadline outlined; they may be placed on a reserve list in the event that someone withdraws from the tour. All students will be given a receipt, acknowledging the deposits paid.

The passport name of the student must also be given to the travel company. Students will also be informed that any subsequent name change will result in fees levied by the airline, and are outside the control of the tour organiser or the travel company.

3. Payment/Finance:

All payments including deposits and subsequent payments over the remaining months will be paid directly to the tour operator through the tour operator's online payment portal. The tour leader will provide parents/guardians with a payment link for the tour provider's online payment system after the student's application has been approved. No payments will be accepted by the school office or the tour leader.

After all deposits have been paid the final balance will be due 10 weeks prior to departure. The tour company may collect an overpayment at the request of the tour leader. Any overpayment will be lodged into the ETB account and will subsequently be used to pay the bus company.

A detailed record of all participating students and the amounts paid will be retained by the tour company. The tour leader will have access to these records via the tour company's online payment portal. Parents should be informed as early as possible of the full cost associated with the trip.

If for whatever reason there is money left over at the end of the tour, it should be refunded to the students when they return to school. Students must sign for any refunded money and parents/guardians must acknowledge receipt of the refund in question.

On completion of the tour and all associated financial transactions, the tour leader must provide the Principal/Deputy Principal and the BOM with a complete financial statement.

4. Pre-Tour Meeting for Parents/Guardians:

A meeting will be held in advance of the tour at which a parent/guardian of each participant must attend. Attendance at this meeting is extremely important, as the main emphasis of the meeting is health and safety. At this meeting a presentation on all aspects of the tour will be made to the parents/guardians and the parents/guardians will get an opportunity to meet with the Principal and the School Tour Leader. The following issues will be examined and discussed:

- Detailed Itinerary – dates, times, locations, hotels, contact phone numbers etc.
- Extra Costs (e.g. lunch not included, recommended spending money etc.)
- Contact Numbers
- Expected Standard of Behaviour (see below).
- Rooming arrangements.
- Supervision (see below).
- Insurance (see below)

Parents should also be made aware of their duty to inform the school of any relevant health or safety issues which might affect their children while on tour. 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. The tour leader should establish if a non-medical person can administer the medication.

5. Contact Information:

The tour leader must ensure that complete contact information is left with the principal/deputy principal during the tour for use in the event of an emergency. This should include:

- Names, addresses and home contact numbers of all those going on the tour.
- Full details of the itinerary, hotel addresses, phone numbers etc.
- A contact telephone number for each member of the tour team.

All data collected from students will only be used for matters relating to the tour.

6. Expected Standard of Behaviour:

We at the Errigal College have very high expectations of behaviour, and we expect such standards to be maintained during all extracurricular activities.

Participation in a school tour is a huge vote of confidence in a student on behalf of the school and requires every student to act in a mature and responsible manner at all times. The principal/deputy principal will meet with the students prior to departure and outline the Code of Behaviour.

School rules apply (except for uniform) and special emphasis is put on the following.

- Students should not smoke, drink alcohol or take illegal drugs. In the event that the tour leader suspects that a student possesses items deemed unsuitable, a search of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc.) may be made. Two members of staff (one male and one female) should carry out inspections. Staff should not have any contact with a student's clothing. If a search of clothing is deemed necessary students will be asked to empty the contents themselves while a teacher observes.
- Each student is responsible for their own property, e.g. luggage, money, etc. All personal belongings should be clearly marked. The school cannot accept responsibility for the student's property.
- Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Fighting or abusive language will not be tolerated.

- 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. Pupils must show respect to all property that will be used over the school tour e.g. hotel property, the tour bus, etc.
- Students should obey without question, instruction given by the tour leader or any of the accompanying teachers/staff for the duration of the trip.
- Students are expected to behave in a mannerly and punctual way at all times and are expected to attend all organised activities and may not leave the tour group at any time unless agreed by the teachers.

Should a student be guilty of minor misbehavior, 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:

- The student missing a half-day's activities.
- The student missing out on a specific activity, eg. bowling.
- The student missing an evening activity, eg. 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 a member of the tour team for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school.

If a student misbehaves in a serious manner where the health and safety of other students or teachers is jeopardised then parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible; the principal/deputy principal will also be contacted. It may be felt appropriate to send a student home and in such a situation a teacher will accompany the student, and the parent/ guardian will be liable for the potentially substantial costs involved. Sanctions may also be implemented on return to school regarding such offences.

Examples of 'serious misbehaviour' include:

- Use/possession of alcohol.
- Use/possession of illegal substances.
- Attempt to purchase alcohol or illegal substances.
- Misuse of legal substances (lighter fluid, tippex, etc.)
- Disruptive behavior on coach, plane, boat or in the hotel/hostel.
- Lack of respect for accommodation rules.
- Lack of respect for the tour team or any other supervising adults.
- Theft or criminal damage to property of others.

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

local police authorities. The principal/deputy principal must also be informed immediately of such incidents.

7. Exclusions Subsequent to application:

Students who misbehave in a manner deemed serious by the school authorities may be deprived of their place on the tour. This is in the interest of safety to themselves and other students/staff. In such a case, refunds depend entirely on the conditions of the travel company and depends on the actual date of cancellation of the place. In the case of a late exclusion and subsequent cancellation, a refund will not usually apply. It is important that the School Tour Leader highlights this point to students and parents/guardians before a student submits an application.

8. Supervision:

For the purpose of the smooth running of the tour the students will be divided into groups and a member of the tour team will be appointed to each group.

DAY

Students will be accompanied by teachers throughout the trip. However, it is usual that students are allowed free time for shopping, lunch etc. These free periods cannot be predicted in advance on a general basis as each tour's components will vary. Students will only be left free in an area deemed suitable, and a prominent meeting place will be advised before the group breaks. Students, who misbehave, deviate from the recommended area, purchase or consume alcohol, cigarettes or drugs, do so entirely at their own risk and will face the full rigour of school rules/laws of the destination country.

Mobile phone communication between the tour team and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participants' mobile phone numbers (as given on the 'contact information form') and students should have the mobile phone number of the tour leader – to be carried with them at all times while on the trip.

NIGHT

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:

- Draw up a rota for nightly corridor supervision.
- Draw up a rota for calling students each morning.
- Ensure teachers are on corridor duty until 1am/2am or as required.

On return to the hotel each night students will go to their rooms. A check will then be made to ensure that everyone is in their designated room. A further check will be made after a reasonable duration. Any student found to be causing a nuisance and disturbing the sleep

of others will be given a verbal warning. Persistent offenders may have sanctions imposed upon them.

9. Hotel Policy:

Hotels reserve the right to request a deposit from school groups (usually €10 - €20 per person). This is payable by students and is refundable on checkout. In the case of a particular room that is causing disturbance to adjacent (non school-group) rooms, this room's deposit could be forfeited.

Most hotels have safety deposit boxes available for a small fee and we strongly advise students to use these to store valuables and/or money.

10. Insurance:

Comprehensive travel insurance is included in the tour price. Copies of this are available to parents at the pre-tour meeting. Details of private health insurance will also be taken where available. All students will be given an EHIC form to complete and must take responsibility for processing this form and ensuring that they have a valid EHIC prior to their departure which is always requested when seeking medical care in EU countries. Parents will also be required to complete a form giving details of medical problems/medication being taken and will give authorisation to the tour leader or his/her nominee to act on their behalf in a medical emergency.

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. Before departure of the tour parents/guardians must specify in writing the person(s) they wish the tour leader to contact in the event of parents/guardians being unavailable. In the event of an emergency parents/guardians will always be contacted first.

11. Passport/Visa:

The School Tour Leader will explain to the students that it is their responsibility to have their own valid passport ready prior to the departure date. A member of the tour team will be assigned to check all students' passports and will make a copy of it. The tour leader and the deputy leader will collect each student's passport two weeks before the departure date. The passports will be distributed and collected at the airport and should be kept in the hotel safe while on the tour.

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. It is

important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their son/daughter has all the necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the tour.

12. Review and Evaluation:

On return to school, the School Tour Leader will give a general, written report on the tour to the school Principal and the BOM outlining:

- The achievements of the tour.
- A completed financial statement.
- Details of any incidents which required the imposition of sanctions while on tour.
- An account of any difficulties or problems which arose during the course of the tour.
- A written evaluation may also have to be completed for the tour operating company.
- An assessment of the School Tour Policy and suggestions for ways to improve or strengthen it prior to future school tours.

Pictures of the school tour should be put up on the school information monitors and/or an account of the school tour with pictures submitted to the local newspapers. Pictures could also be put up on the school website.

The policy operates within a legislative framework and takes account of the following:

- The Education Act ,1998
- The Education Welfare Act , 2000
- Equal Status Act, 2000
- The Equality Act, 2004
- Circular Letter M 20/04 (DES)
- Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools, 2004
- The Education for Persons with Special Needs, 2004

Signed: _____

Donal Coyle

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: _____

Danny McFadden

(Principal)

