



Policy on School Trips and Excursions

Mission Statement

Presentation College is a Catholic Boys' School. The staff, students and parents of Presentation College, Bray, seek to promote a safe, caring environment and a well-balanced student-centred curriculum which encourages self-reliance, respect and responsibility.

Parents are recognised as the primary educators while teachers nurture and develop student learning. In partnership, we hope to enable all students to leave school with the skills necessary to participate fully in society and to live independent and fulfilled lives

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Preamble

School trips and out of class excursions help to broaden the educational experience of our students, to encourage social integration of groups in the school and build the confidence and self-esteem of students. School trips and out-of-school excursions are encouraged by Presentation College Bray and a broad range of such trips and excursions are undertaken each year.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- The health and safety of all students and teachers involved
- That school trips will be effective and appropriate learning experiences for the students
- That all participating teachers will understand the protocols and procedures to adopt when planning and engaging in trips and out of class excursions.
- That the school will be well represented while students are on trips, in line with our stated ethos and School Code of Behaviour (COB). This policy applies to all trips undertaken, day trips and overnight trips inclusive, within and beyond Ireland's borders.

Objective of trips

Some trips are required in order to work on or complete compulsory coursework requirements for State Examination. In these cases, students and Parents/Guardians are advised that coursework cannot be signed off, except by a recognised teacher in a recognised school, when that coursework was completed under his/her supervision. Students are advised that coursework which is completed beyond the supervision of the teacher on a school trip specifically organised for this purpose cannot be verified by the school for examination for State Examination assessment purposes.

Some trips are organised to provide enhanced understanding of specific aspects of the curriculum such as History, Geography or Art trips, Modern Language exchanges, or visits to the theatre, to Science or Career exhibitions.

Some trips, while having worthwhile educational content, are organised within year groups to provide opportunities for social interaction, to build cohesion within a group or to provide a reward for work done.

Roles and Responsibilities

➤ The Principal.

The Principal liaises with the Organising Teacher in the initial stages. The Principal reserves the right to prevent a student from participating in a trip, if the Principal feels that permitting the student to partake in the trip could cause a health and safety risk for the student or other students or teachers. This may mean loss of monies paid or additional costs to Parents/Guardians if a student must be repatriated. The Principal reserves the right to determine the adults who will travel. The Principal is also responsible for ensuring the adequate

supervision of students while on a trip and that students not travelling are adequately catered for in school, in terms of supervision and teaching time.

➤ Parents/Guardians.

The co-operation of Parents/Guardians is considered fundamental to the success of a trip. Parents/Guardians are responsible for informing the Organising Teacher of any factors which may impinge on the student's enjoyment of the trip or that of others e.g. health issues, dietary needs, anxieties etc. The responsibility is on the Parent/Guardian to inform himself/herself of the School COB for Students. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to ensure that the student presents himself at commencement of the tour without any of the items prohibited under the School COB for Students or law.

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's journey to/from the school.

Note that it is not always possible to drop students along a route for a parent's convenience, as the school is bound by the Health and Safety arrangements of bus companies.

Students on tours within the European Union shall be required to have a completed E111 (medical form) form and a valid passport. It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to see to these matters and to ensure that the student is insured to the satisfaction of the Parent/Guardian.

Parents/Guardians are advised that a student may be precluded from attendance on a school trip if attendance during normal class time is poor or if the student's behaviour has been such that his participation raises concerns for his health and safety or that of other students/staff. The Year Head and Deputy Principal will advise the organising teacher and Principal on this matter. Parents/Guardians are responsible for enabling students to achieve full attendance.

➤ Students.

Students are responsible for adhering to the School COB. In particular, they are responsible for carrying out the instructions of teachers and other personnel while on tour.

Students are responsible for respecting the environment, law, traditions, local customs and unfamiliar family norms (in the case of students staying with host families) which pertain to the location in which they are staying.

Students are responsible for being true to the Presentation ethos and ensuring that all members of the travelling party are included and involved. Students are responsible for acknowledging the role they play in the maintenance and promotion of the school's good name and reputation, while on a school trip.

Students also bear responsibility not to engage in behaviour which is unsafe for self and for others.

Each student is responsible for his own property, luggage, money, etc. All personal belongings should be clearly marked. The school cannot accept responsibility for a student's property.

Students are required to observe the curfew set by the organising teacher. Changes to sleeping arrangements, buddy systems or working partnerships are not permitted without agreement of the organising teacher prior to leaving the school.

➤ Staff.

The organisation of a trip is a voluntary activity and relies on the good will of the Organising Teacher and his/her accompanying colleagues.

The Organising Teacher takes responsibility for the organisation of the trip and is “in charge” while on the trip. The Organising Teacher will ensure that all accompanying teachers are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the trip.

The Organising Teacher acts for the school’s Designated Liaison Person (DLP), for child protection purposes while on tour and reports directly to the DLP during the trip and on return. The DLP for Presentation College is the School Principal.

Other accompanying teachers assist the Organising Teacher and share the tasks associated with the running of the trip.

The Organising Teacher has a responsibility to ensure that activities are not arranged which are prohibited by the school’s insurers. Queries will be clarified before the trip occurs.

The Organising Teacher will ensure that the dates of a proposed trip do not clash with other events of importance in the school calendar. Trips will be planned with adequate lead in time, to enable students/families to save.

Mindful of the DES guidelines regarding Child Protection 2017, teachers will act in a responsible manner (including concerning the consumption of alcohol), having regard to the fact that they are in the company of and responsible for the care of students. Teachers will maintain the same standards of care as apply in a school situation.

Communication with Parents /Guardians

The Organising Teacher will give Parents/Guardians written information at the onset of preparation and/or when final details are arranged. The correspondence will outline the objective of the trip, costs, details of the trip and the location, travel arrangements, general advice etc.

The organising teacher will meet with Parents/Guardians in advance of international trips.

In addition, the Organising Teacher will provide relevant materials which may come from a tour provider.

Students may be permitted to use their own mobile phone in order to contact parents. This will be communicated to students and Parents/Guardians in advance. Parents may contact their son while on a trip at allocated times of the day, depending on any given daily itinerary. In case

of emergency, the Organising Teacher will contact parents when the situation requires of him/her to inform them of developments.

In every case, Parents/Guardians will be required to give written permission for their son to attend the trip. The written permission implies acceptance of this Policy and agreement to adhere to the School COB for Students and other pertinent policy.

Parents/Guardians will be required to inform the Organising Teacher of any circumstances which may affect their son's ability to fully participate in all aspects of the trip and his enjoyment of same. This includes information about health and medications and other relevant information.

Costs

It is desirable that all students of Presentation College have the opportunity to participate in school trips, if they wish to do so. To this end, costs will be indicated to Parents/Guardians at the earliest possible opportunity, in order to allow for planning.

Clear instructions for the payment of monies due will be issued by the Organising Teacher. Students going on international tours will pay the school tour company directly.

Overseas trips are organised by teachers in collaboration with licenced/bonded tour operators, according to aviation guidelines (Aviation Regulation Act 2001). Payments for overseas trips are made directly to the tour operator, not to the school. For this reason, the school cannot arrange payment plans, except (on occasions) for savings for spending money or contingency collections. Any quibble over costs remains between the Parent/Guardian and the tour operator.

Students may be invited to bring spending money on trips. Parents/Guardians are asked to allow a reasonable, not excessive amount of spending money.

In the event that a student is required to return home from an overseas trip early e.g. if a student is in serious breach of the School COB, or in need of early return due to a family emergency, the family is advised that it is responsible for costs incurred for the student and for an accompanying adult, should it be agreed that an accompanying adult is required.

The Parents/Guardians of students who incur costs for excess baggage, damage to property are advised that they will be responsible for these costs.

Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs

Presentation College recognises that students with special educational needs can greatly benefit from school trips. The enjoyment, health and safety of the student are considered to be of paramount importance.

Where students with special educational needs are involved in a group who are going on a school trip, it may be necessary for Parents/Guardians, Management and the Organising Teacher to discuss arrangements in advance, in order to ensure the enjoyment, health and safety of the student and the whole group, mindful of the specific strengths and vulnerabilities of the student.

Students who have access or shared access to a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) during the school day will be facilitated with SNA care as far as is practicable. Where possible, the designated SNA or a member of the school SNA Team will accompany the student for the full duration of a day trip.

The school is not obliged to provide SNA care on overnight trips. Where a student with access or shared access to SNA care wishes to participate in an overnight trip, the school is willing to consider alternative solutions proposed by Parents/Guardian. These proposals should be made to the Organising Teacher and Principal, in conjunction with the student's support/care team in school.

School Policy

All school policy governs day and overnight trips. In particular, Parents/Guardians are reminded of the contents of the COB for Students and the Dispensing of Medicines General Policy.

The Principal/Deputy Principal and/or the Organising Teacher meets with a group before overnight trips to remind students of their obligations under the School COB.

Specifically students traveling on overnight trips are reminded that smoking, drinking alcohol, using drugs or other banned substances, engaging in sexual activity, and behaviours which endanger their own safety or the safety of others are prohibited. Any transgressions of this nature will be sanctioned appropriately by the school on return.

Certain items can be freely and legally bought abroad, the possession and importation of which is an offence in Ireland. These include fireworks, knives, lasers etc. Students are not permitted to engage in activities not permitted on home soil. Any transgressions of this nature will be sanctioned appropriately by the school on return.

The Organising Teacher is responsible for investigating and recording breaches of the School COB. Breaches of the School COB will be referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal in a timely way. The Organising Teacher will remain in contact with the Principal during the trip and will inform the Principal of serious breaches of the School COB. Serious breaches of the School COB may merit immediate sanction in the tour location (e.g. exclusion from activities) up to and including the student being sent home. In this case, the Parent/Guardian is responsible for all costs arising. Decisions around sanctions for serious breaches of the School COB will be made by the Organising Teacher, in conjunction with the Principal.

The Organising Teacher has the authority to sanction minor breaches of the School COB while on a trip or to refer the matter through the correct channels on return to school.

In relation to Data Protection and the use of images or recordings made of students, the school may need to retain photographic, audio or video records of elements of the trip for a number of purposes (verification, coursework, publicity.) The school will seek the permission of Parents/Guardians for the use of such images for publicity purposes.

Supervision of Trips

The Principal retains responsibility for ensuring that adequate and appropriate supervision of students on trips is achieved. Decisions about which members of staff join a trip will depend on such factors as the size of the group, the nature of the trip and its location.

The level of teacher supervision on trips will depend on the nature of the activity involved. Sufficient staffing to ensure the safety and welfare of the students and teachers will be agreed between the Principal and Organising Teacher when the trip is being planned.

On day trips, depending on the proximity of the venue and the age of the students involved, students may be permitted to go to and from the location of the excursion without teacher supervision. If this is the case, written permission will be requested of Parents/Guardians.

At least one supervising teacher will be on each bus travelling at all times. Sufficient supervision will be provided so that a teacher is available to accompany a student to emergency services, without inadequate supervision of the remaining students, should an emergency situation arise.

Regular head counting and roll taking of students will take place, particularly when leaving a venue. Teachers will carry a list of all students and adults involved in the trip. The Organising Teacher will establish rendezvous points and advise students what to do if they become separated from the group. Remote supervision may take place on occasion, e.g. if students are on shopping trips, certain adventure activities, during parts of school exchanges. Parents will be notified of this in advance. Students are advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 students. Adequate arrangements will be made re checking in with supervising teachers at certain times. Students are reminded of the importance of careful time keeping.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that students are behaving safely at all times, including at night (on overnight trips) and in all locations (including in bedrooms, changing rooms etc.) Should checks on bedrooms and changing rooms or similar be necessary, teachers will work in pairs. Students are bound by the house rules of the accommodation providers, including those of host families, B & Bs, hotels, entertainment venues etc..

Activities undertaken under the supervision of instructors when visiting organised centres will be the responsibility of the centre.

Guidelines for use of Private Bus and other Transport Services

Many school trips involve use of or hire of bus or other transport services. In all of these cases:

- Students must abide by instructions issued by drivers, airport / ferry / terminal staff etc,
- Students must have all documentation required with them; the Organising Teacher may handle this documentation for the student.
- Parents / Guardians are advised that it may not be possible to cater for students whose documentation (Passport/Visa etc.) gives rise to particular circumstances at points of entry. This may preclude the student's participation in a trip.
- Each passenger will have his own individual seat.
- All coaches used by the school must have an up to date PSV License and Cert and adequate insurance.
- Emergency procedures will be indicated to students.
- Central aisles and access to exits must be kept clear at all times.
- Students are advised to remain seated facing forward and to refrain from unnecessary movement during the journey.
- Where seat belts or other safety features (eg life jackets, harnesses, helmets) are advised, these must be used.
- Students are responsible for their property while traveling and leave items on the vehicle at their own risk.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that they leave the vehicle tidy as they leave it.
- Students are advised to rest and eat healthily on travel days, particularly if they are prone to travel sickness.

Critical Incident

Should a critical incident, as defined by the school's Critical Incident Policy, occur, the Organising Teacher will follow protocols agreed in that policy.

While, the Critical Incident Team will remain the primary agent for decision making in relation to the incident, it may be necessary for the Organising Teacher to make decisions for the security, welfare, safety and health of students. He/she does this in good faith.

The Critical Incident Team will coordinate with the Organising Teacher, and where necessary, delegate authority to the Organising Teacher for communicating with the relevant

Parents/Guardians, medical services, consular and embassy personnel, police or other security services, school insurers, travel agent or tour operator.

Evaluation and review of this policy

This policy will be developed, monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis and ratified by the Board of Management accordingly.

The experience of students and their Parents/Guardians and staff on return from a trip can inform policy. Views and observations are invited on return.