



Educational School Tours/ Trips
&
Extra-curricular & Sporting Activities
Policy

**Desmond College,
Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick**

Educational School Tours/ Trips and extra-curricular Sporting Activities Policy

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all members of the staff of Desmond College 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 Desmond College applies to all students of Desmond 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.

Rationale for having activities (trips/tours, sporting) and the need for a relevant policy

Desmond College strives to provide a comprehensive 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.

Desmond College provides an academic and vocational 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/tours/outings/recreational activities, which take place off campus.

Activities assist in developing social skills and bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment

and to build links with the local community and with people of other nationalities.

There should be a balanced programme of outings and tours for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.

All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Skills 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 tours and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary procedures that must be observed to provide for the health and safety of staff and students. It also ensures that tours 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 tours, trips and sporting activities.

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 and the careful assessment of any dangers to which the students may be exposed.

That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all trips/outings. For example, school trips/outings should broaden each pupil's cultural and intellectual

experience; foster independence/ maturity/ team building; enhance student's social skills; improve language acquisition skills; create positive memories of school; promote greater understanding between different cultures; encourage travel/ studying abroad; promote involvement of all students; improve communication skills.

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.

General Information

The Code of Behaviour & the Anti-Bullying Policy apply to all outings/ trips/tours/matches, whether or not they involve an overnight stay. In addition, other relevant school policies such as the Safeguarding, Substance Misuse and the Health & Safety Policy are applicable.

It is advised that a full schedule of events be known and approved at the beginning of the school year in which they are to take place. Teachers who wish to undertake school trips/tours should provide the Principal with a proposal for the operation of same. (*See Appendices for Proposal Forms*) In the case of an overseas tour, there must be at least four months between the proposal of a school tour and the operation of a school tour.

The Principal will grant approval for a school trip/tour on the consideration of the number of proposed events to take place during the course of the year, that the trip/tour conforms with the criteria of the circular letter M20/04, the timing of the event, the implications for normal teaching and the suitability of the travel and accommodation

arrangements.

Careful planning is required for all trips and outings, so that all 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.

The trip/tour organiser must ensure that the appropriate risk assessment form (*available from the Principal*) is completed and a copy provided to the Principal.

Before a student is accepted for any trip/outing, his/her previous behaviour will be taken into consideration. A record of breaches of the school's code of behaviour may disqualify a student from participating in a trip or outing.

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

All staff members have received adequate child protection training and are aware of Desmond College child protection protocol and what the school's duty of care is to the students.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) who travel with students on buses will receive child protection training and be made aware of Desmond College child protection protocol and what the school's duty of care is to the students.

Where possible, one adult of each gender should travel with a mixed group.

School Tours involving overnight stays, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

This policy was drafted in the context of Circular Letter M 20/04 issued by the Department of Education and Skills which states that:

The objective of an educational tour should be that it should provide a significant benefit to the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of students in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour and which benefit cannot be provided by in-school activities alone.

School Tours: Roles and Responsibilities Board of Management

- To ensure that the policy is developed and regularly monitored and reviewed
- To approve the policy ***Principal/ Deputy Principal***
- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- To monitor and support the implementation of the policy
- To promote and foster school tours. ***Tour Leader***
- It is recommended that one teacher be nominated as the Tour Leader who will be expected to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with agreed standards.
- **Where feasible it is recommended that the tour leader and/or a member of the team has received training on**

Critical Incident management.

- When the proposal is sanctioned by the Principal, the school tour organiser will inform the students and parents/guardians concerned. When numbers are concerned she/ he will invite staff members to join the team.

Tour Team organisation and planning

- **Tour Team:** A Tour Team, led by the Tour Leader should be put in place as soon as possible.
- **Organising Roles:** The Tour Leader should meet the full Tour Team at the outset to discuss possible individual duties.
- **Risk Assessment:** The Tour Team should meet to carry out a detailed risk assessment and fill in the appropriate risk assessment form for the proposed tour and provide a copy to the Principal.
- **Planning 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. Students with specific needs will be allocated a specific member of staff to liaise with throughout the tour.
- **Planning Tour Supervision Rota:** The Tour Leader can place teachers on a Supervision Rota for use in the various types of overnight accommodation used.

Prior to the Tour

- Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overnight or overseas trip/tour, must submit their request for approval to the Principal, by completing the Educational Outing Form in Appendix 1. Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.
- All trips outside Ireland must be organised by a fully bonded travel agent.
- Full travel insurance must be in-place for all staff and students travelling.
- Before a student with a medical condition is allowed to participate in a trip, the school authorities must be confident that the needs of the student can be managed without compromising the health and 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/guardians.
- 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. The DES lists a ratio of one adult to ten group members for all trips abroad.
- The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of a 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, a photocopy of the student's passport must be included with the deposit. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip.
- Parents/guardians will be required to complete and sign a Medical Information Form and this must be returned to the tour organiser by the specified date.
- 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/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended vaccinations for the destination. It is important that parents/guardians realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their son/daughter to receive all necessary vaccinations.
- Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip.
- 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 made available to parents/guardians.

Accommodation

The proposed sleeping arrangements for students, staff and other support personnel will be clarified well in advance of the trip/tour. This will involve ensuring that:

- Single gender dormitories/rooms are used for students○ students of similar age share. (It is not appropriate for an over 18 year old to share with a child under 18 years of age. It may not be appropriate for a child of 17 years of age to share with a 12 year old)
- Staff members will be accommodated in separate rooms from the students.

Health and safety issues relating to the accommodation such as emergency evacuation for upstairs rooms, accessibility of rooms and corridors for mobility of the students will be checked.

During the Tour

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

- Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the tour will be necessary. A list will be made of participants' mobile phone numbers (as given on

the Permission Form) and students will have the mobile phone number of the Tour Leader – to be carried with them at all times while on the tour. A mobile phone is available from the School, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.

- The Tour Leader should have two emergency contact numbers for each student travelling and the contact details for the Principal and the Deputy Principal.
- Staff should never enter a dormitory room/student bedroom without knocking first.
- In the event that staff have to enter a dormitory to check on students, it is imperative that the staff is of the same gender as the students in that dormitory. A loud knock should happen in advance of entering the room
- If necessary two members of staff should carry out inspections of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc) with the student(s) 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.
- If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty his/her own pockets, suitcase / bags or to search the clothing that he/she is wearing.
- Where sanctions are imposed, procedures shall be applied as per the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Should a student be found responsible for 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 the student missing out on a specific activity e.g. bowling or a 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 e.g. the student may be prevented from involvement in future tours.

- If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the expectations in the School Code of Behaviour, the staff member in charge must contact the Principal immediately.
- Following gross misconduct, a student may be sent home at parent's/guardian's expense.
- In the case of a serious/criminal incident (shoplifting, a violent attack etc.) the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Principal will be informed immediately and the matter will be handed over to the local police authorities.
- 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.
- If a student becomes ill he/she should, if necessary, be referred to a doctor or hospital as soon as possible and the parent(s)/guardian(s) notified ASAP.

Responsibilities of students whilst on a school tour.

Students must

- Follow the Code of Behaviour on school tours and adhere to the school expectations at all times.
- Follow the instructions of staff members/Tour Leader at all times.
- Not purchase or have on their person any item, which could cause major security delays.
- Not vacate the vicinity of the hostel/accommodation or bus at any stage without being accompanied by or with the consent of one of the teachers/supervisors.
- Not wander off or break away from the party without permission.
- Show respect for all staff members and other students at all times.
- Participate fully in the activities of the tour.
- Not take any unnecessary risks or undertake any activity that they fear.
- Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it.
- Behave during leisure time if not under the direct supervision of teachers.
- Socialise in communal areas, i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa.
- Go to their rooms at the times decided by the Tour Leader
- Groups of no less than three at all times and no student may wander off on his/her own.
- If the group has free time for shopping, they must remain together in groups of no less than three
- Students must stay in and must return to the appointed place on time.

- Switch lights off within an hour in order to ensure that students will be sufficiently rested and
- Remain in their own room and get maximum benefit from the visit.
- **Visiting other students' rooms is not allowed, as teachers need to know where students are at all times.**
- At all times strictly uphold protocol and respect in regard to gender relationships.
- Not be in possession of, or use or abuse tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any other illegal substance.
- Adhere to the tour dress code as set down by the Tour Leader.
- Respect others at all times e.g. drivers, guides, cabin crew, fellow travellers, those sharing transport and those sharing accommodation.
- Follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
- Be responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy.
- Be responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
- Have respect for and comply with local customs and laws, particularly when travelling abroad.
- Be responsible for their own belongings.

Students must note the following:

The good name and reputation of both the school and the country must be protected and promoted at all times.

Students must bear in mind that an excursion is educational in purpose and organised and directed by Desmond College. The final word and sanction on any issue relating to the trip resides with the accompanying teachers.

Money and valuables are the students' responsibility on tour

Expensive digital equipment, clothing/footwear should not be brought on this trip unless you are prepared to take **full** responsibility for its safekeeping.

Each teacher will be responsible for a specific number of students and students must meet with their assigned teacher at the correct locations at agreed times.

Mobile phones are permissible. Mobile phone use is governed by the schools Mobile Phone Policy, Anti Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour. The misuse of mobile phones, camera phones for the capture or dissemination of inappropriate content will be dealt with as per these Policies/Codes. School management will respond appropriately in such cases and will have the full range of consequences, outlined in the Code of Behaviour, open to them.

After the Tour

Arrangements should be made for a summary report from the Tour Leader to the Principal outlining: the achievements of the tour, a financial statement, any difficulties or problems which arose during the course of the tour.

Day Trips within Ireland (including Northern 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 by completing the Activities Template in Appendix 2.
- Members of staff who wish to take students on a day trip must put their request in writing to the Principal. Included in the proposal should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.
- Once the Principal has approved a trip, the organiser should inform parents/guardians and a consent form should be signed.
- The staff member should enter the details into the diary in the school office including departure and return times and any other relevant information.
- Consultation with other staff members may be necessary if the trip impacts on other lessons. A notice should be placed on the staff notice board, in good time, together with a list of students participating in the trip.

- The Trip organiser must ensure that the appropriate risk assessment form is completed and a copy is provided to the Principal.
- 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. 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/trips.
- The school will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the Coach Company or staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.
- If the students will be away during lunchtime, appropriate arrangements must be made for students to get a lunch on their return. Cold lunches/drinks should be ordered from the School Food Company before 08:50am on the morning of the activity and will be waiting for the students on their return. Alternatively, students should be instructed to bring a packed lunch.
- For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure that arrangements are in place for their son's/daughter's journey to/from the School. The organiser of the trip must be informed in advance of these arrangements.
- All students should return to the school premises. Exceptions

will be made on an individual basis where a note/contact has been obtained from parent(s)/guardian(s) in advance of alternative travel arrangements.

- 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.

Sporting Trips / Activities

- Members of staff who wish to take students to a match/sporting activity must put their request, in good time, to the Principal. It may not be possible to accommodate a number of requests for the same day.
- Once the Principal has approved an activity, the organiser should inform parents/guardians.
- The staff member should enter the details into the diary in the school office including departure and return times and any other relevant information.
- The organiser must ensure that the appropriate risk assessment form is completed and a copy is provided to the Principal.
- If the students will be away during lunchtime, appropriate arrangements must be made for students to get a lunch on their return. Cold lunches/drinks should be ordered from the School Food Company before 08:50am on the morning of the activity and will be waiting for the students on their

return. Alternatively, students should be instructed to bring a packed lunch.

- Each sports/games coach is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to his/her match.
- If a minor accident occurs the coach will treat it on the spot. In the event of a serious accident the coach will ring an ambulance or other mode of transport directly.
- Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded on an accident report form, a copy of which is submitted to the Principal. Staff will appraise students of the necessary safety equipment for each respective sport.
- Staff should liaise with the office to organise transport to and from all matches, using a recognised coach company.
- When an away match is organised during school hours, the number of staff traveling must be dependent upon the staffing requirements of the activities in school. Generally one teacher will travel with a team. The needs of the students in school must receive priority when organising such matches. Where possible, a second teacher or a parent (Garda Vetted) will travel to away fixtures.
- 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.
- **NB: It is impossible to create policy for all school related**

activities. Once a tour/trip/activity is organised the level of risk should be assessed by the Tour Director/ Organiser/ Coach and resources discussed with the Principal.

***Responsibilities of students whilst on a school trip/
activity/match***

Students must

- Follow the school's Code of Behaviour on out-of-school trips/activities/matches and adhere to the school's expectations at all times.
- Follow the instructions of staff members at all times.
- Not vacate the vicinity of the bus at any stage without being accompanied by or with the consent of one of the teachers.
- Not wander off or break away from the party without permission.
- Show respect for all staff members and other students at all times.
- Participate fully in the activity.
- Not take any unnecessary risks or undertake any activity that they fear.
- Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the

group and tell the group leader about it.

- Not be in possession of or use or abuse tobacco, alcohol, drugs or any other illegal substance.
- Adhere to the activity dress code as set down by the teacher involved.
- Respect others at all times e.g. drivers, guides, and members of the public.
- Be responsible for leaving the bus in a tidy condition.
- Be responsible for their own belongings.

Monitoring and Review

As part of the School Self-Evaluation Process, Desmond College will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.

This policy was adopted at LCETB Meeting ,on 13th June 2018 and by the Board of Management of Desmond College, on 1st April 2019

Signed: Vourneen Gavin Barry

Principal: Michael Cregan

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 1st April 2019