



Ballinode Community College

School Tours and Trips Policy

Ballinode Community College aims to protect the well-being of its students and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. The college has drawn up a School Tours and Trips Policy as one element of the school's policies and plan.

Ethos Statement

The MSLETB is a community of learners with a historic and unique tradition as a provider of education and training. In responding to the needs of the community, it delivers the highest standards of teaching and learning.

MSLETB Schools and Centres of Education are democratic, co-educational and multi-denominational in character where policies, practices and attitudes are underpinned by the core values of Respect, Equity and Fairness.

Link to Mission Statement

Ballinode Community College in conjunction with its education partners is committed to providing an environment where each student is cherished equally and is nurtured to achieve his or her full potential.

The School Tours and Trips Policy helps form part of a framework to set the standards that the school community aspires to and acts as a template which allows students and staff to work together to continue to develop the school and maintain its characteristic vision.

Introduction

School tours and trips allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced inclusive educational process.

It is school policy to organise outings for the benefit of students when this is deemed appropriate by the teaching staff, in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal. The school recognises the benefits of outings to complement normal schoolwork, for educational, wellbeing or sporting purposes. Some trips may be required by a particular curriculum subject, such as field trips. Other outings and trips are additional to

the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity though they deepen the student's knowledge and understanding of the cultural, social, and physical aspects of the areas or countries visited. Student tours to develop linguistic skills are a good example of this. The lengths of trips may vary from a short local daytrip visit to a foreign tour involving staying away for several days.

School trips, outings and tours are a privilege reserved for students who meet minimum standards of behaviour while at school. Students in breach of the Code of Behaviour may be prevented from participating on school tours. The Principal reserves the right to disallow a student from participation in a school trip if, in their opinion, the health or safety of the student or other students or teachers is at risk. All school rules and all school policies apply while on school trips. All students selected for sports teams and who travel as part of a class group represent Ballinode Community College. The highest standards of behaviour and conduct are expected as a matter of course. Students and parents/guardians shall be acquainted in advance of the tour with rules, regulations, and special requirements of each tour.

Scope of Tours, Outings and Trips Policy

This policy applies to all members of staff of Ballinode Community 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 Ballinode Community College applies to all students of Ballinode Community 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 at this school.

The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to trips, whether they involve an overnight stay or not. Before a student is accepted for a trip, his/her previous behaviour will be taken into consideration.

Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs and Specific Additional Needs

The school recognises that students with special educational needs can greatly benefit from school trips. The enjoyment, health and safety of the student are 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, to ensure the enjoyment, health and safety of the students and the whole group, mindful of the specific strengths and vulnerabilities of the students.

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 / Guardians e.g. the participation of the Parents of the student with special needs in the trip or the agreement of additional costs to enable the provision of SNA care. These proposals should be made to the Organising Teacher, Deputy, and Principal, in conjunction with the student's care team in school. Parents of students with specific additional needs must discuss their child's participation in advance with Management.

Aims

The Board of Management of Ballinode Community College supports and encourages school tours.

It concurs with Department of Education & Science guidelines which state that:

“the objectives of educational tours for schools should be that they be of benefit in the intellectual, cultural and social development of the pupils taking part in them and any activity, in connection with the tour, which is in conflict with this objective is to be avoided” (Circular Letter M 20/04)

To reflect a world which is developing and changing, current educational philosophy recommends that students have first-hand experience wherever possible. School tours allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced educational process. School tours require good preparation and organisation to optimise the learning experience for students. The Board has an expectation that all school trips and tours would have a beneficial effect on pupils, enhancing both their academic prowess and their social and/or sporting skills.

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, 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 students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all trips/outings.
- 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 student. (Citizens Information, 2023)

Payments

An appropriate system will be used including within the school and any outside agencies i.e., licenced tour operator.

Garda Vetting

If people outside of school staff are accompanying students on a school trip, then Garda Clearance must be sought, and the individual must have completed Child Protection Training.

Monitoring and Review

As part of the planning process, Ballinode Community College will monitor, review, and evaluate this policy and all related work and procedure on an ongoing basis to ensure the maintenance of best practices.

Ratified by BOM: 30th May, 2024

Date of Next Review: May, 2025

Appendices that follow:

- Appendix 1- Day Trips within Ireland (Including Northern Ireland)
- Appendix 2 - Overseas Trips
- Appendix 3 - Mobile Phones
- Appendix 4 - Responsibilities of a Student when on an International Tour or Overnight Tour
- Appendix 5 - Responsibilities of a student when on school day trip or activity or sporting activity:
- Appendix 6 – Sample Day Trip Letter

Ratified by BOM: 30th May, 2024

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Appendix 1- Day Trips within Ireland (Including Northern Ireland)

1. Members of staff (it would be an aim that there would be male and female members of staff on trips where practical) who wish to take students on a day trip must make their request to the Principal/Deputy Principal, with as much notice as possible to be given.
2. Day trips may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours and may include weekends.
3. Specific parental permission is required for all trips and should be kept on file by organising teacher (until after the trip has occurred).
4. Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from trips by either the Organising Teacher the trip or the Principal/Deputy Principal.
5. Once the Principal/Deputy Principal has approved the trip, the Organising Teacher should:
6. Forward details of the trip to the Deputy Principal for inclusion in the school calendar and staff update. Include in this the number of teachers and auxiliary staff required for the trip also.
7. Inform parents/guardians of the details of the trip. This should include cost, travel arrangements, all arrangements, and any other relevant information. Parents must sign and return the permission slip/consent form. The onus is on the parents to return all completed documentation and failure to do so will mean that the student will not be permitted to travel.
8. Email a list of students participating in the trip to the staff. Provide a copy of this list to the Deputy Principal or school office (for the roll).
9. Students will be expected to be in their full school uniform or full PE uniform with school jacket for day trips unless stated otherwise.
10. On all school organised trips students will be accompanied by supervising staff members. There will be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff travelling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students travelling. The Principal/Deputy Principal in consultation with the Organising Teacher will decide the allocation of personnel to supervise students on trips.
11. Day trips may involve a financial cost to the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of the transportation to/from events or to cover the cost of the activity on the trip. In case of financial difficulties for students, application for assistance by the Organising Teacher may be made to the Deputy Principal/Principal.
12. The school will always have the mobile/contact number of the coach/bus company and accompanying staff involved in case of delays or other occurrences.
13. For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their child's journey to and from school.
14. One staff member on the tour should be responsible for carrying a First Aid Kit. Any student with specific medical needs will be responsible for their own medication. The Organising Teacher should be notified by the parents/guardians or by the student of the medication/medical needs before and on the dates of travel.
15. An Incident Report must be completed for all accidents, incidents or near misses which occur on school trips in the accident or near miss report book in the school office.
16. In cases of a breach of school rules, teachers are required to follow the code of behaviour as appropriate in the circumstances and should note the issue on vsware on return to the school.

Appendix 2 - Overseas Trips

1. Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Principal and the Director of Schools within MSLETB. Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip.
2. 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 and as recommended by the travel agency.
3. In the case of trips being oversubscribed, priority is given to those students:
 - (a) who have a clean behaviour record,
 - (b) then who are who are studying the appropriate subject (e.g., Spanish if it is a trip to Spain),
 - (c) then by year group.

Following that, a lottery system will operate. The school reserves the right (like those mentioned in the Day Trips within Ireland) to refuse any student who has a poor behaviour record in the school or a student whose parent does not attend any of the compulsory pre tour meetings.

4. Before a student with a medical condition is accepted to participate in a trip, the student must be covered by individual travel insurance. The school must be confident that they can manage the needs of the student 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 school management, parents, and staff members.
5. A general information letter and permission slips will be issued to parents. This must be signed by parents and returned to Organising Teacher. The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and details of non-refundable deposit payable directly to the travel agent. A payment scheme is available via the Tour Company to help make the tour as accessible to as many students as possible. Parents must be made aware that the Organising Teacher or the Tour Company reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
6. If a passport is required, parents/guardians should ensure that passports are valid for at least six months following the trip. A copy of the passport should be given to the Organising Teacher at the earliest opportunity.
7. 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.
8. Students must have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU. Non-EU students must have adequate travel insurance covering health insurance and medical needs before they will be allowed to participate on the trip.
9. It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their child has all necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the trip.

10. Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations/vaccinations for the destination. It is important that parents understand that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their child to receive all necessary inoculations/vaccinations.
11. Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the trip. Failure to do so (without an adequate explanation) may necessitate, their removal from the trip as vital information will be shared at these meetings.
12. Following payment of the deposit, the parents will be issued with a form for completion re: student details, all sections of which must be completed, and the form returned to the Organising Teacher by specified date. 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 sent to parents.
13. Parents are required to attend the mandatory pre-tour meeting(s) in school with their son/daughter where all details will be provided. At this meeting parents should also provide permission that the tour leaders will act on medical advice presented to them 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. Similarly, before the tour leaves parents/guardians must specify in writing the person/person(s) they wish the Organising Teacher to contact in the event of a parents/guardian's being unavailable. In the event of an emergency parents/guardians will always be contacted first.
14. The Organising Teacher should place the travelling teachers on a supervision rota for the various daily activities and overnight accommodation supervision. Students should be made aware that the corridors are being supervised.

Appendix 3 - Mobile Phones

1. Parents/Guardians will be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a 24-hour basis for the duration of the school tour.
2. For international tours, a mobile telephone will be supplied to the Organising Teacher by the school. The number of the phone will be given to parents/guardians and students prior to departure for use only in case of emergency.
3. Mobile phone communications between teachers and students on the trip may be necessary. A list should be made of participants mobile phone numbers and will be kept only for the duration of the trip.
4. The Organising Teacher should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.
5. If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the School Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal/Deputy Principal immediately.
6. If a student has permission to have their mobile phone on a school trip it is expected that student use of such mobile phones will be responsible and in line with the schools Acceptable Use Policy and the Code of Behaviour.
7. Posting or sharing photos/videos/reels/tic toks etc. of any group members or teachers without their express consent is forbidden. Any taking of photographs/videos/reels/tic toks etc. that is deemed to be irresponsible or bring the school into disrepute will be subject to the school's disciplinary procedures in line with the Code of Behaviour.

Appendix 4 - Responsibilities of a Student when on an International Tour or Overnight Tour

Students must:

1. Follow the Code of Behaviour on school tours and always adhere to the school expectations.
2. Be courteous to teachers and must carry out their instructions and always abide by their decisions. These decisions will be made in the interests of safety, organisation, and efficiency of the tour. They must always listen carefully to instructions and work as part of the team looking out for each other and informing teachers of any issues which may arise.
3. Obey all in-flight instructions regarding seatbelts, use of electronics etc. Do not move unnecessarily around the aircraft.
4. Not purchase or have on their person any item which could cause major security delays.
5. Not vacate the vicinity of the hotel/accommodation or bus at any stage without being accompanied by or with the consent of one of the teachers/supervisors.
6. Not wander off or break away from the party without permission. Students must always stay in groups of no less than three 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 and must return to the appointed place on time.
7. Always show respect for all staff members and other students.
8. Participate fully in the activities of the tour.
9. Not take any unnecessary risks or undertake any activity that they fear.
10. Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it.
11. Behave during leisure time if not under the direct supervision of teachers.
12. Socialise in communal areas, i.e. No boys in girl's rooms and vice versa.
13. Go to their rooms at the times decided by the Tour Leader, remain in their own room and switch lights off within an hour to ensure that students will be sufficiently rested and get maximum benefit from the visit.
14. Remain in their own room. Visiting other student's rooms is not allowed as teachers need to know where students are always. Teachers reserve the right to collect phones overnight, should they deem that to be necessary.
15. At all times strictly uphold protocol and respect regarding gender relationships.
16. Not be in possession of, or use or abuse tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any other illegal substance.
17. Adhere to the tour dress code as set down by the Tour Leader.
18. Respect others always e.g., drivers, guides, cabin crew, fellow travellers, those sharing transport, host families and those sharing accommodation.
19. Follow the rules of the hotel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.

20. Be responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy. Should any issues / problems arise regarding the room / equipment, they should report this to teachers immediately. Students will be financially liable for any damage caused by them.
21. Be responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
22. Have respect for and comply with local customs and laws, particularly when travelling abroad.
23. Be responsible for their own belongings. Bags should be clearly labelled and should not be left unattended particularly at the airport. Any non-essential valuable items should not be brought on the trip.
24. Students must note the following:
25. 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.
26. Students are encouraged not to take expensive phones on the trip. Phone use should be limited to contacting home and possibly photographing of sights.
27. Teachers reserve the right not to have their images posted online and we discourage use of social media while taking part in the trip.
28. 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.
29. The good name and reputation of both the school and the country must be protected and promoted at all times.
30. Students must bear in mind that an excursion is educational in purpose and organised and directed by Ballinode Community College. The final word and sanction on any issue relating to the trip resides with the Organising Teacher and accompanying teachers.
31. Mobile phones are permissible. Mobile phone use is governed by the schools Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy. The misuse of mobile phones, camera phones for the capture or dissemination of inappropriate content will be dealt with as per these policies. 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.

Appendix 5 - Responsibilities of a student when on school day trip or activity or sporting activity:

Students must:

1. Follow the school's Code of Behaviour on out-of-school trips/activities/matches and always adhere to the school's expectations.
2. Always follow the instructions of staff members.
3. Not vacate the vicinity of the bus at any stage without being accompanied by or with the consent of one of the teachers.
4. Not wander off or break away from the party without permission.
5. Always show respect for all staff members and other students.
6. Participate fully in the activity.
7. Not take any unnecessary risks or undertake any activity that they fear.
8. Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it.
9. Not be in possession of or use or abuse tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or any other illegal substance.
10. Adhere to the activity dress code as set down by the Organising Teacher involved.
11. Respect others always e.g., Drivers, guides, members of the public.
12. Be responsible for leaving the bus in a tidy condition.
13. Be responsible for their own belongings.

Appendix 6 – Sample Day Trip Letter

**** Please use letter headed paper ****

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are organising a day trip for 2nd Year Science students and 5th Year Biology students to Dublin Zoo Education Centre on **Thursday 27th April 2023**. The purpose of this trip is for students to carry out an Ecology field study, this is a mandatory part of their Junior Cycle Science and Leaving Certificate Biology syllabus. The students will spend 3 hours completing the field study and will then have an opportunity to visit the zoo after the field study. The cost for the trip is **€25** per student and this can be given to **ORGANSING TEACHER**, at the latest **Friday 21st April 2023**.

Students need to be at the school at **6:30 a.m.** and bring a packed lunch, which they will eat at the zoo. Students should wear full school uniform for the trip and bring their school jacket with them. We will stop at Liffey Valley Shopping Centre on the way home. Students need to bring spending money for food etc. during the day. The bus will return to school at approximately **7:00 p.m.**

Any student who behaves in an inappropriate manner prior to the trip will be excluded from the trip. INSERT ANY OTHER TRIP REQUIREMENTS HERE i.e. number of referrals/vsware hits that may prevent a student from being eligible to participate on the trip.

If you would like your son/daughter to go on this trip, please sign the permission slip below and return it with the €25 as soon as possible.

Kind Regards,

Teacher

The Code of Behaviour and the usual school rules apply while on this trip.

I give permission for _____ to go on this trip.

Signed: _____

Contact No: _____

Student's Mobile Number: _____