



Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore Policy on School Tours

This policy applies to all members of the teaching staff taking students from the school premises and is applicable to students participating in such activities.

The Code of Behaviour of Mercy Secondary School applies to all students when engaging in activities organised by the school both during and outside of normal school hours and applies anywhere that students are identified as students of the school/representing the school.

The organisation of school tours and activities out of the classroom is an integral part of a holistic education. Such activities are seen as an extension and reinforcement of classroom activities and serve to significantly enrich both the academic curriculum as taught in the school and the social and personal development of those students participating in them.

The Department of Education and Science (Circular Letter M 20/04) has devolved to the Board of Management the authorisation to grant approval for educational tours by school groups both inside and outside the State subject to certain criteria. Permission for such tours is a matter for the

Board of Management, subject to the recommendation of the Principal. In granting approval, consideration will be given to:

- Conformity with the criteria in Circular Letter M20/04. Please see Appendix (1).
- The number of other proposed events to take place during the course of the year.
- The timing of the event and its effect on other school activities.
- Its implications for the normal teaching routine of the school.
- The suitability of travel and accommodation arrangements.
- Financial implications for the school, students and family.

Day Tours/Activities/ Sports within Ireland

The following points relate to school tours, events, educational outings and sports fixtures amongst others.

Staff wishing to take groups out must complete the calendar request form located on the staff google classroom. [It is also available here](#). The form must specify all teachers required for cover, whether an SNA is needed and for whom along with the exact times you need to be freed from class, and the exact time of return.

Names of students involved in the event must be sent to the Deputy Principal as early prior to the event as possible to determine whether windfall cover can be used. A roll for the activity must be taken on the morning of the trip marking students as School Activity or Absent in School on TYRO by the teacher accompanying the group.

At times events may be declined if there is too much cover needed in the school, or if the organising teacher has missed a lot of tuition time previously.

When approval has been given, Parent(s)/Guardian(s) should be informed, in writing, of the details of the tour/activity and must sign a consent slip found in the student journal which will be retained by the organiser. In Transition Year and LCA, parents have signed a general permission slip in September for routine outings for such subjects as Sports/Environment Education/Tourism. All TY events are communicated to parents via the school website also.

The calendar request form document will be posted by the Deputy Principal on the staff noticeboard. If approval is granted for the trip it will be entered into the google calendar by the Deputy Principal. The Organiser should check with the Year Head/Tutor for any medical issues concerning the participants.

The student/teacher ratio may be expected to vary depending on the age and maturity of the students involved, the length of the tour/activity and the activity to be engaged in. SNA assistance may be necessary depending on the students going, this must be indicated on the calendar request form.

The school must always have the mobile phone number of the staff involved in case of emergencies.

It may be necessary for Senior Cycle students to travel Independently to and from events. Parents will be advised by the organising teacher in advance. **Junior Cycle students may never travel independently.**

On occasion, staff may drive students to/from an event, but should never travel alone with a student. The teachers insurance must be of acceptable cover to do this (e.g. teacher union insurance covers such a journey while other insurance does not cover it as it is seen for personal use not work use). Otherwise they may not drive a student.

On completion of the tour, a participant should be encouraged to write a short account for social media and the website.

An Accident Report form must be completed for any accidents which occur. Such report forms are available in the Staff Room and should be returned to the Office on completion; it should also be noted in the notes section on TYRO?

Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from such tours.

Tours Outside of Ireland

Staff wishing to take students on a tour abroad must complete a tour Proposal form and forward it to the secretary of the Board of Management. The request must be received before the end of April in any school year and where possible are booked over weekends or holiday periods. A tour overseas must be organised through a bonded Travel agency.

If a tour is oversubscribed, priority is given to students who are studying the appropriate subject and who have a proven record of positive behaviour. Students who have a history of indiscipline may be excluded from tours. For students with additional needs please refer to circular 0030/2014. All trips operate at the goodwill and availability of sufficient staff to safely conduct the trip.

The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and a deadline for registering and payment of a non refundable deposit. All monies collected will be receipted. The school tour company should handle all

accounts and a contingency should be built into the price by the tour company. Parents will be advised of deadlines for the payment of the remainder of the tour fee. It is important that these deadlines are met.

Parents and students travelling are requested to sign a contract/consent form (See Appendix 3) and a Medical History Form (See Appendix 4).

All rules and sanctions are clearly outlined in Appendix 3.

Details of accommodation, travel arrangements, personal items that the student needs to bring and guidelines for spending money will be sent to parents in advance of the tour. The tour organiser reserves the right to alter the itinerary if necessary.

All passports must be valid/within date (by at least 6 months) for the duration of the trip, this is the parents responsibility but must be checked by the tour organiser. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries, including for any flights that may take off from Belfast as opposed to Dublin. Students must have their European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU. Parents have the responsibility to ensure that all documentation is correct.

Each teacher accompanying students on tour should have responsibility for a group of students. The teacher should have a list of the mobile phone numbers of the group and students should have the school phone number in their contacts. If a student(s) is/are found in serious breach of the Code of Behaviour, the Principal should be contacted immediately.

On completion of the tour, a participant should be encouraged to write an account for the website and school social media channels

An Accident Report form must be completed for any accidents that occur. Such forms are available in the office and should be returned to the office on completion.

A financial statement should be furnished to the Principal within two weeks of the completion of the tour.

Contact Information

The organiser will have the phone numbers of the Principal and Deputy Principal.

The following information will be forwarded to the Principal prior to departure:

- A list of all students and staff participating
- The itinerary to be followed with contact details of Hotels.
- The emergency telephone number of the Tour Agent.
- The mobile numbers of staff on tour.

Professional Responsibilities of the Staff

Staff must exercise an appropriate duty of care to all students. Our Child Protection Guidelines are central to this approach.

Review and Evaluation of the Policy

The policy will be reviewed after three years and amendments will be proposed to the Board, if necessary.

Adopted by the Board:.....

Signed:.....Chairperson

APPENDIX 1

<p style="text-align: center;">The Criteria for School Tours: Circular Letter M20.04</p>

School tours should be an extension and reinforcement of classroom activities and should be designed to include the maximum number of pupils in a class. The tour should, accordingly, enhance the learning process of as many pupils as possible by providing educational experiences which the classroom alone cannot provide.

Tours should be planned, in consultation with parents, well in advance of tour dates and preferably before the start of the school year. The full cost of the tour should be communicated to parents at the planning stage. This will have the added advantage of facilitating financial preparation with a view to allowing maximum pupil participation. Every effort should be made to ensure that the cost involved does not prevent any pupil or group of pupils from participating in the tour.

By international standards, the school year in Ireland has long holiday periods. Educational tours of more than one day's duration should be arranged to coincide with normal school holiday periods if possible but with due regard to finance also.

Schools should ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place and that written parental approval is obtained for each pupil to take part in the tour. Such written approval must not seek to devolve any liability to the parent for any aspect of the tour.

The Board of Management must ensure that pupils who are not participating in the tour (including pupils from other classes who will be affected by their subject teachers' absence) are adequately catered for while their teachers' are away on the tour. Appropriate arrangements should be made for the conduct of those teachers' classes in their absence in accordance with Circular PPT01/03. Schools should on all occasions take into account the effect that the absence of accompanying teachers will have on the normal work in the school and numbers absent should be kept to the minimum level required.

APPENDIX 2

SCHOOL TOUR – NOTIFICATION TO GENERAL STAFF

Dates:	
Class(es):	
No. of Students:	
Name(s) of teachers involved	
Destination	

Names of Students: See List Attached

Please leave one copy on the Notice Board in the Staff Room and a copy on the SNA noticeboard.

Appendix 3

SCHOOL TRIP STUDENT CONTRACT

Please complete the details below and return your signed contract to the Trip Organiser:-

Student Name:		Class:
Date of Birth:		
Location of Trip:		
Organising Teacher:		

Agreement:

- v I agree to participate in and to make a commitment to the entire Mercy Secondary School, Inchicore School trip.
- v I have read the document, supplied by the leaders of the trip, listing the rules regarding the trip and agree to all of the rules included in that list.
- v I accept that any failure on my part to behave responsibly at all times to the teachers/ supervisors/instructors/tour guides, may lead to appropriate sanctions.
- v I am also aware that a possible sanction for what is deemed unacceptable behaviour could result in my being sent home from the trip after my parents/guardians have been informed. The extra costs in such an event will be charged to my parent/guardian.
- v I understand that failure to behave appropriately may have a bearing on my selection for future trips/school activities.

Student Signature:	
Parent Signature:	
Date:	

[Please return this completed form to the Trip Organiser]

RULES FOR MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL OVERNIGHT TRIPS/TOUR -

The purpose of the rules set out below is to ensure that the enjoyment of the trip is not hindered for any student or teacher.

RULES

1. All school rules, and in particular the code of behaviour, anti bullying policy, substance abuse policy and acceptable usage policies apply.
2. Being in the possession of or consumption of alcohol or any other behaviour altering substances in any form will be considered a serious violation of the rules and immediate action will follow.
3. The excessive consumption of behaviour affecting drinks such as red bull, espresso coffees or other drinks with enhanced caffeine is prohibited.
4. Smoking and vaping is prohibited under the school rules.
5. Students are expected to attend all set meals unless permission is given by teachers.
6. Students are to remain with the group during the day and evening unless authorised by the teachers.
7. Hotel rooms/apartments are to be kept clean and tidy at all times. Failure to do so may result in sanctions.
8. Students are expected to comply with set bedtimes and lights out times.
9. Students are expected to treat teachers/supervisors/instructors/tour guides/coach drivers with respect at all times.
10. Teachers reserve the right to search students' bags/rooms at any time if they suspect contraband is present.
11. All students are expected to turn up on time for all roll calls.
12. Foul language is not acceptable from any student on the trip at any time.
13. FREE TIME – during trips it is common for students to be given some 'free time'. During such time students should always travel in groups (minimum of 3). Under no circumstance should any student walk on their own. During this time students are expected to treat their surroundings with the utmost respect and are also expected to adhere to all the school rules applicable above.

Sanctions

Failure to comply with the rules of the trip will lead to sanctions which will be decided by the teachers/supervisors on the trip. Sanctions might include fines, loss of pass for certain activities, etc. More serious breaches of rules will result in phone calls to parents/guardians with possible follow up action in the school after the trip. Where necessary, disciplinary meetings will be convened by the accompanying staff. In the event of very serious and uncontrollable incidents students may be required to return home. The costs in such an event will be charged to the parents/guardians. This will be done after full communication with the parents/guardians.

The teachers accompanying the group reserve the right to amend any rule during the trip as necessary. Clear notice will be given of any such changes to the students.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Any student taking part on a trip should try their best to adhere to the following advice while on the trip:

- Try to find out as much as you can about your destination before you go.
- Do your best to help fellow students and teachers at all times.
- Do your best to ensure that all students are included in group activities at all times
- During foreign trips, try to speak the language of your host country if known.
- Refrain from using bad language at all times on the trip
- Do your best to be considerate of others at all times.

During the trip, students may be given necessary and reasonable instructions about matters like dress, punctuality, behaviour etc. Prompt and good natured compliance is essential for the benefit of all, and the smooth running of the trip.

Appendix 4

Medical History Information

The information provided will be treated as confidential by all staff.
If you have any queries please feel free to contact us.

Name of Student:	
Date of Birth:	
Parent Name & Mobile Tel:	
Second Contact Name & Tel:	

Does your son / daughter suffer from any of the following? Please tick where appropriate:

Illness	YES	NO
Allergies		
Eczema		
Bronchial Asthma		
Congenital Heart Disease		
Diabetes Mellitus		
Epilepsy/Seizures		
Gastric Problems		
Frequent Headaches		
Hearing Problems		
Vision Problems/Glasses		
Other Illnesses YES/NO	Please specify:	

Consent in case of emergency treatment

_____ will have a current European Health Insurance Card with them when travelling.

I consent to my son/daughter being taken to a doctor/hospital in the event of a medical emergency.

Name of Parent (please print in BLOCK CAPITALS): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____