

School Trips (Including Foreign Trips) Policy

DONABATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



This Policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management every three years.

This Policy was agreed on:

24/2/26

Signature:

[Handwritten Signature]

(Chairperson to the Board of Management)

Donabate Community College

Donabate Community College is a post primary college, which opened in August 2008 under the Patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The college is co-educational and aspires towards excellence in a caring and supportive environment. The Board of Management is committed to the successful implementation of recent legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the Equal Status Act (2000). The Board fully subscribes to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

College Mission

The Board of Management will promote Excellence. Our aim will be to create, with the assistance of parents/guardians, responsible citizens with pride in their community. The development of the whole person will be based on personal responsibility, inter dependence, respect for people and respect for property. Our college will seek to instil integrity, value discipline and punctuality and facilitate the best in academic and non-academic areas. We will value our culture, our tradition, be inclusive of religious beliefs and will seek to be a caring and compassionate community where justice and truth will be the central elements.

Policy Review and Ratification

Donabate Community College is committed to ongoing policy review to ensure clarity, relevance, and compliance with current legislation and best practices. Where amendments to a policy are of a minor or administrative nature and do not alter its overall meaning, purpose, or intent, the school may proceed to seek ratification from the Board of Management without further consultation with stakeholders. However, where substantive changes are proposed that impact the policy's intent, scope, or application, appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken before submission to the Board of Management for ratification.

1. Introductory Statement

The Board of Management recognises the educational value of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and supports the organisation of school tours where they enhance students' educational, social, cultural, and personal development. All school tours must be planned and conducted in a manner that prioritises student safety, wellbeing, and inclusion.

2. Scope

For the purpose of this policy, a School Tour is defined as any school-organised trip involving students that takes place during or outside the normal school day, including:

- Day trips, and
- Trips involving one or more overnight stays, within or outside the State.

This policy applies to all students, staff, and adults accompanying students on school tours.

3. Rationale

This policy is necessary to:

- Ensure student safety, wellbeing, and supervision.
- Meet Child Protection and safeguarding obligations.
- Provide clear guidance for staff, students, and parents/guardians.
- Support effective planning, organisation, and financial accountability.
- Ensure compliance with Department of Education, ETB, and statutory requirements.

4. Aims and Objectives

School tours aim to:

- Enhance curriculum learning through real-life experiences.
- Support the development of students' social, personal, and life skills.

- Promote independence, teamwork, cultural awareness, and responsibility.
- Strengthen relationships within the school community.

5. Policy Content

Part I: Approval

a) All school tours must receive prior approval from the Principal. The application must include:

- Proposed dates and duration
- Destination(s)
- Tour operator or travel agent details
- Insurance arrangements
- Estimated total cost per student
- Outline itinerary

b) Tour Leaders must consult with the Deputy Principal responsible for Supervision & Substitution before submitting an application to ensure:

- Minimal disruption to teaching and learning
- Alignment with the school calendar
- Where possible, multi-day tours coincide with school holiday periods

c) All tours must comply with relevant Department of Education circulars and guidelines, including Circular M20/04 – Educational Tours by School Groups.

d) Tours must be organised through a licensed tour operator or travel agent, where applicable.

e) Appropriate insurance cover must be in place for all participants.

f) Approval must also be obtained from the CEO of DDLETB, where it is required.

Part II: Tour Team

a) A Tour Team led by the Tour Leader(s) must be established as early as possible. A reserve list of staff should be identified.

b) The Tour Team may include:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Teaching staff
- Special Needs Assistants
- Other adults (e.g. parents, BOM members), where necessary

All adults accompanying students must comply with Garda vetting and safeguarding requirements.

c) The Tour Leader(s) will assign responsibilities, which may include:

- Liaison with tour operator
- Passports and travel documentation
- EHIC/travel insurance
- Medical and emergency planning
- Itinerary planning
- Communication with parents/guardians
- Responsible for ensuring the correct ratio will be assigned to the student body travelling.

Part III: Tour Finances

a) All tour finances must comply with school and ETB financial procedures.

b) Parents/guardians must be informed in advance of:

- Full tour costs
- Payment schedules and deadlines

c) The Tour Leader must:

- Ensure all payments are made on time

- Retain receipts for tour-related expenditure

d) School tours must not incur deficits or require borrowing.

Part IV: Communication with Parents/Guardians

a) For foreign trips, expression of interest will be sent to parents. Those who have expressed an interest will be given priority.

b) Once approved, parents/guardians must receive written notification outlining the tour details.

c) Information provided must include:

- Educational objectives
- Itinerary and duration
- Costs and payment arrangements
- Insurance details
- Code of Behaviour
- Participation limits (if applicable)

d) Parents/guardians must inform the school of any medical, health, or safety issues relevant to their child.

e) Participation in a school tour is conditional on a student's adherence to the School's Code of Positive Behaviour. Students whose behaviour does not meet the expected standard may not be offered a place on the tour. Where places are limited, priority will be given to students who have a minimum of 100 VSware behaviour points.

f) Written parental consent is mandatory for all participating students.

Parent Information Meeting:

A meeting should be held prior to departure, providing:

- Detailed itinerary and accommodation details
- Emergency contact information
- Guidance on spending money

- Reminder of behavioural expectations

Medical and Emergency Information:

- a) Parents/guardians must provide written medical information and updates as required.
- b) Clear instructions for medication administration must be supplied.
- c) Parents may request a private meeting with the Tour Leader if needed.
- d) Parents/guardians must sign consent allowing staff to act in loco parentis in medical emergencies where they cannot be contacted.

Part V: While on Tour

Contact Information

The school must retain:

- A full list of participants and contact details
- Itinerary and accommodation details
- 24-hour contact number for Tour Leader(s)

Supervision

- Each staff member will act as a Group Leader for a small group of students.
- Regular roll calls and headcounts must be conducted.
- Clear meeting points and times must be established.

Overnight Supervision

- A supervision rota must be in place.
- Students must be aware that supervision is ongoing.
- Only vetted and approved adults may supervise students.
- All supervision must comply with Child Protection Procedures.

Student Code of Behaviour

The school's Code of Positive Behaviour applies at all times during the tour. Students must:

- Follow school and accommodation rules
- Behave responsibly on transport and in public
- Respect staff, peers, and property
- Rooms must be checked before and after occupancy for damage.

Sanctions

Minor misbehaviour may result in:

- Verbal warnings
- Withdrawal from non-essential activities
- Any student removed from an activity must be supervised by an adult.

Serious misbehaviour may result in:

- Immediate contact with parents/guardians
- Student being sent home at parents' expense
- Involvement of local authorities, where appropriate

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes
- Theft or criminal damage
- Serious disrespect or endangerment

All serious incidents must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Part VI: Post-Tour Responsibilities

Within two weeks of return, the Tour Leader must submit a written report to the Principal including:

- Evaluation of the tour
- Record of incidents or sanctions
- Recommendations for future tours

6. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff involved share responsibility for implementing this policy in line with their assigned roles.

7. Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Health and Safety Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy

8. Monitoring, Review, and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required by legislative or organisational changes.