



Policy relating to Cultural & Educational Trips/Tours

Our Lady's Secondary School values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities.

Our school seeks to
Promote Spiritual and Human Development
Achieve Quality in Teaching and Learning
Show Respect for Every Person
Create Community
Be Just and Responsible

Policy relating to Cultural and Educational Trips/Tours

Reviewed	Ratified by the Board of Management	Review Date
2023-2024	4 th October 2023	

Policy relating to Cultural and Educational Trips/Tours

1. Introduction

The curriculum at Our Lady's provides opportunity for students to engage in a variety of learning experiences. These experiences now extend well beyond the classroom walls and dovetail into all areas of community life. Cultural and Educational Trips/Tours are a key component of the curriculum delivery at Our Lady's Templemore.

This Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, and other legislation protecting Students, Teachers, Parents/Guardian, Employers and Employees. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, and with parents/guardians and students.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Catholic co-educational voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust).

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management of Our Lady's Secondary School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for upholding the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

As a CEIST school, Our Lady's Secondary School values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities. Our school seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the CEIST Charter. These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools.

- Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

In Our Lady's Secondary School, the dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God is acknowledged and affirmed. The Catholic school is an inclusive community, ideally built on love and formed by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the Board of Management. Catholic schools are also outward looking. They are connected to their local parish and Diocese and other local organisations which enrich the life of the school. Our school draws on the rich resources of the local community and, in turn, contributes to the life of the local community.

Our Lady's is a Catholic co-educational secondary school committed to embracing Gospel values. As a school community we nurture the moral, spiritual, social and academic development of each student. We are dedicated to the pursuit of academic excellence and to quality in teaching and learning. Through the academic, pastoral care and extra-curricular programmes we strive to create a love of learning, enhance student wellbeing and build resilience. We foster a culture of respect for all and we support our students in becoming independent and successful learners.

The school adopts a student-centred approach which nurtures the talents and potential of all, in a positive, safe and inclusive environment. Students are inspired to become just and responsible citizens who will care for and protect the environment. Our hope is that this mission will be fulfilled in a spirit of partnership with students, staff, parents/guardians and the wider community.

The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under section 15(1) of the Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

3. Context

It is school policy to organise cultural and educational trips/tours for the benefit of students when this is deemed appropriate by the teaching staff, in consultation with the Principal. Our Lady's recognises the benefits of outings to complement teaching and learning, for educational or sporting purposes. Some cultural and educational trips/tours are organised as part of the course being followed in a subject area and full attendance is required on these trips. Other trips are additional to the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity. The lengths of trips may vary from a short local visit to a longer trip involving staying away for several days.

School cultural and educational trips/tours are a privilege reserved for students who meet minimum standards of behaviour while at school. Students who do not meet minimum standards of behaviour, as decided by the Principal/Deputy Principal, in consultation with student/parents /group leader/leaders may be refused permission to participate in a school trip. The Principal reserves the right to disallow a student from participation in a school trip if, in his/her 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 cultural and educational trips/tours. In particular, parents/guardians and students should be aware that permission to travel on a school related activity is conditional on strict adherence to the Code of positive Behaviour. The highest standards of behaviour and conduct are expected as a matter of course.

Particular emphasis is placed on the rules set out below:

1. Students should present at the collection point in advance of the departure time and they should be collected by Parents/Guardians promptly at the scheduled return time.
2. Drop off and collection point should normally be at the main school entrance. Any other arrangement must be agreed in writing with the Parent/Guardian and school in advance.
3. Teachers' instructions and advice must be adhered to. Students are expected to treat fellow students/teachers/supervisors/instructors/tour guides with respect at all times.

4. All school rules, and in particular rules relating to Alcohol and Drugs apply.
 - a. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must guarantee that when their son/daughter comes to the school to assemble for the start of a school trip, he/she does so free of illegal substances either on his/her person or in his/her luggage.
 - b. 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.
5. The consumption of energy drinks such as red bull or other drinks with enhanced caffeine is prohibited.
6. Students are not permitted to purchase, smoke or to be in possession of cigarettes or e-cigarettes (Vapes) for themselves or others.
7. Each individual is responsible for his/her own belongings. Students are forbidden to interfere in any way with the possessions or property of others.
8. Inappropriate language is not acceptable by any student on the trip/tour at any time. Students must consider and respect the culture and history of the country/place they are visiting.
9. Time-keeping is vitally important. Students and teachers must be punctual at all times to avoid inconvenience to others.
10. Free time – during trips it is common for students to be given some ‘free time’. During this time students are expected to treat their surroundings and members of the public with the utmost respect. Students should always travel in groups (minimum of 3). Under no circumstance should any student walk on their own.
11. Students must be dressed appropriately and respectfully, suitable for the activity or trip/tour at all times. Teachers with another supervising teacher reserve the right to request a student to change their clothing, wear their clothing correctly and dress appropriately.
12. Students must maintain an appropriate standard of personal hygiene while on cultural and educational trips/tours. Teachers with another supervising teacher reserve the right to raise this issue with student(s) while on a trip.

4. Sanctions

Failure to comply with the rules of the cultural and educational trip will lead to sanctions which will be imposed in line with the Code of positive Behaviour. More serious breaches of rules will result in phone calls to parents/guardians with possible follow up action in the school after the trip. In the event of serious misbehaviour students may be required to return home. The costs in such an event will be charged to the parents/guardians.

The teachers accompanying the group reserve the right to impose additional rules during a trip if necessary. Clear notice, will be given of any such changes, to the students.

5. Procedures

When embarking on cultural and educational trips/tours, the procedure below outlines the stages in the process from planning, while on the trip to post trip requirements.

1. Planning the Cultural and Educational Trips

- Seek permission from the Principal/Board of Management
- Outline in writing the details of the trip for students and parents/guardians
- Seek permission (in writing) and collect monies and other relevant information (eg medical information, passports)

- Organise logistics, e.g book transport, make bookings with relevant organisations, schedule trips on school management system.

2. During the Cultural and Educational Trips/Tours

- The group leader(s) should remain in regular contact with the Principal/Deputy
- School Rules will be implemented as per the code of positive behaviour
- Supervision will be implemented as per school policy outlined below.

3. Post Cultural and Educational Trips/Tours.

- Report to Principal / Board of Management.
- Report to PR officer.
- Financial report to accounts secretary.

6. Supervision

The number of staff which accompanies a group will be influenced by a number of factors including:

- The number of students travelling
- The age of the students
- The location of the trip
- Additional supervision which may be provided at the trip destination
- If the group will be dividing into smaller groups, each requiring supervision
- The type of transport used

Certain trips/tours may facilitate shopping or recreation which will not be directly supervised. This will be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should not permit their son/daughter to take part in such trips. The school expects that all students participating in school trips will display a level of maturity commensurate with their age.

7. Health and Safety

Health and safety of students and supervisors is a priority when organising and taking a school cultural and educational trip. Teachers taking any trip will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise.

Parents/Guardians of students who have special needs, a medical condition, or who are on medication of any kind, should notify the teacher/s in charge of this and any medication being taken prior to embarking on the trip.

In case of an accident, staff will normally apply basic first aid only. Expert medical attention will be sought should this be thought necessary. On return from, or during any trip, staff may advise a parent/guardian to seek medical advice, should they deem this appropriate.

Where a serious accident occurs, staff will seek medical assistance as a first priority and contact the school to inform the office of events. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible by the school.

Our Lady's advise that all students participating in school trips purchase 24 hours student insurance provided by Allianz. Specific activities are excluded from this policy and parents/guardians may request to see these.

Additional insurance for longer trips will be organised by the school where considered appropriate.

8. Practical Advice

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

- At all times present as good ambassadors for Our Lady's Secondary School
- 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 inappropriate language at all times on the trip.
- Be considerate of and helpful towards others at all times.
- During the trip, students may be given necessary and reasonable instructions about detailed matters like dress, punctuality, behaviour etc. prompt and good natured compliance is essential.

9. Cultural and Educational Trips / Tours Abroad/Exchanges and Overnight Trips

The approval of any school trip must be sought and obtained from the Principal/Board of Management. In general, overnight trips/tours occur in addition to the normal academic and extra-curricular programmes offered by the school. The Board recognises that school cultural and educational trips contribute positively to the personal and educational development of students. The primary concern of the Board of Management is the health and safety and educational development of all those participating in such trips.

The Principal together with teachers will decide which teachers will organise the tour and accompany the students. Prior to departure a teacher/teachers shall be appointed as tour leader(s). It is recognised that the organisation of or participation in any school trip is voluntary on the part of teachers.

Parents/guardians will receive a written overview/itinerary of overnight trips and will be required to give written consent to their son/daughter taking part on the trip. It will be the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that the organiser of a trip is aware of any special needs, medication required or dietary issues. Students will be informed, prior to going on the trip that school rules apply on trips. A student may be sent home, at their parents'/guardians' expense, if the conduct of the student warrants it. *

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad (e.g. passport, identity card) are up to date and as required by the travel company. The school will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result.

Students on trips which involve an overnight stay in Ireland or abroad will not be supervised on a 24 hour basis and all extended school tours will involve periods of time without direct supervision. Parents/guardians who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should not

permit their son/daughter to take part in such trips.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to sign a consent form which will allow medical advice to be followed in the event of injury/illness and where it is not possible to contact them in the time available. In the event of accident or injury, medical opinion will be sought immediately and best practice will be followed. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted as soon as possible.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be required to give details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency on a twenty-four hour basis for the duration of the tour. A mobile telephone(s) will be supplied to the tour leader/leaders for the duration of school tours. The number of the phone(s) will be given to parent(s)/guardian(s) and students prior to departure for use only in case of emergency. Parents or guardians must be contactable for the duration of the tour. In the event that a parent or guardian is unavailable, an alternative contact must be made available in writing in advance of the tour/trip.

Students on tours within the European Union shall be required to have a completed EHIC form and a valid passport.

Students who withdraw from a trip after a deposit/ full monies, has been paid, will not be entitled to a refund. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or safety reasons will not be entitled to a refund.

The group leader(s) will have a designated collection point and drop off point for a trip/tour. On grounds of health and safety, no other collection points or drop off points will be considered.

Our Lady's require that all students participating in overnight / Foreign trip purchase 24 hours student insurance provided by Allianz. Specific activities are excluded from this policy and parents/guardians may request to see these.

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. Teachers' instructions and advice must be adhered to. Students are expected to treat teachers/supervisors/instructors/tour guides with respect at all times
2. All school rules, and in particular rules relating to Alcohol and Drugs, apply with the exception of uniform policy.
 - a. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must guarantee that when their son/daughter comes to the school to assemble for the start of a school tour, he/she does so free of illegal substances either on his/her person or in his/her luggage.
 - b. 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 consumption of energy drinks such as red bull or other drinks with enhanced caffeine is prohibited.
4. Students are not permitted to smoke. Neither are they permitted to buy cigarettes, e-cigarettes/vapes for themselves or others.
5. Electronic devices such as laser lights / pens are strictly prohibited.

6. Students must not leave the school group at any time unless permitted to do so. A student must never go off by himself/herself/themselves.
 - a. All students are expected to turn up on time for all roll calls.
 - b. Students are expected to attend all set meals.
 - c. 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 bed times and lights out times.
9. Students will be assigned to a room by the group leader(s). Any changes must be authorised by the group leader(s). It is forbidden for male students to enter the rooms of female students and for female students to enter the rooms of male students unless given permission to do so by a teacher. Under no circumstances may people who are unconnected with Our Lady's be given access to any of the students' rooms.
10. Each individual is responsible for his/her own belongings. Students are forbidden to interfere in any way with the possessions or property of others.
11. Teachers reserve the right to search students' bags/rooms at any time. This will be conducted with the agreement of the group leader and carried out by more than one teacher.
12. Inappropriate language is not acceptable from any student on the trip at any time.
13. Time-keeping is vitally important. Students must be punctual at all times to avoid inconvenience to others.
14. FREE TIME – during trips it is common for students to be given some 'free time'. During this time students are expected to adhere to school rules and to treat their surroundings/members of the public with the utmost respect. Students should always travel in groups (minimum of 3). Under no circumstance should any student walk on their own.
15. In addition to the school rules applicable to school trips, students must adhere to the law of the country which they visit. In the event of a breach of this, due process of law will follow.
16. Students are required to follow the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and Acceptable User policy in relation to the use of social media while on a school trip/tour.
17. Schools reserve the right to manage mobile phones while on school trips/tours. This may include storing the phones for periods of time.

Sanctions

Failure to comply with the rules of the trip will lead to sanctions which will be decided by the group leader(s) 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. In the event of serious misbehaviour students may be required to return home. This decision will be taken in consultation with the school Principal. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed and the costs in such an event will be charged to the parents/guardians.

The teachers accompanying the group reserve the right to impose additional rules during a trip if necessary. Clear notice, will be given of any such changes, to the students.

Guidelines for teachers/tour group leaders

The Board of Management recognises that cultural and educational trips contribute positively to the personal and educational development of students. The primary concern of the Board of Management is the health and safety of all those participating in such trips.

Procedures for organising a school Trip

1. In the first instance the organiser of the proposed trip should have a verbal discussion with Principal outlining the proposed itinerary. Following the agreement with the principal to proceed, details should then be brought to the Board of Management requesting permission to organise the tour. This should include the following:
 - Tour description and draft itinerary
 - Proposed number of students involved and Year Group(s).
 - Proposed number of teachers involved.
 - Financial projections.
 - Any other relevant information.

2. Once the Board of Management has been informed of the details of a tour and has given its approval, then the tour leader(s) is/are empowered to proceed with the tour. A list of all students intending to travel must be submitted to the principal prior to booking. The inclusion of particular students in a school tour shall be at the discretion of the school principal.

3. Following receipt of provisional sanction to organise the tour by Board of Management, the tour organiser should liaise with the principal regarding all aspects of the school tour. He/she should meet with the principal to agree the following:
 - Details of the tour operator/bus company etc
 - A profile of the type of students who may not travel should be set down so that the Principal/Deputy Principal can advise on what may lead to a student not being allowed to travel. (At a later date, names of students receiving warnings or refusals to travel should be furnished to the Board).
 - Date for promotion of the tour and assessment of the level of interest
 - Review of documentation by the principal including: the itinerary, student application form, details of costing and payment plan for students, medical information form, rules applicable to the tour, compliance with the school's policy on School Tours etc
 - Date for meeting with student to explain rules, responsibilities, policy in relation to refunds/cancellations by the school or the student.
 - Date for meeting with the parents/guardians and students prior to the trip. At this meeting the itinerary should be confirmed. Rules, responsibilities and sanctions should be clearly outlined to students and parent(s)/guardian(s)

The above list is not exhaustive.

4. The tour leader should ensure compliance with legal requirements and the requirements of the tour operator at all stages prior to departure and during the tour.

5. The tour leader should ensure good communication with parents/guardians. Clear information regarding rules, costings and refunds, requirements e.g passports/EHIC forms etc should be furnished to parents/guardians at the earliest possible opportunity. At least two letters to parents/guardians are required as outlined below:

Initial Letter to Parents/Guardians

This will outline details of the proposed tour, its availability and its probable costs. It will also include a list of trip rules and the following sentence:

In accepting these rules I am agreeing to forfeit the tour place and any money paid if the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal find that my /son daughter has been guilty of a serious breach of school rules between now and tour departure.

Commitment Letter

This letter will confirm tour details, costings, school rules, additional requirements, medical questionnaire and it will include the following paragraph:

I have read the rules for the school cultural and educational trip and agree to allow my son/daughter to participate in the tour and be bound by the rules. In accepting these rules I am agreeing to forfeit the tour place and any money paid if the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal find that my son/daughter has been guilty of a serious breach of school rules between now and tour departure.

I accept the right of the Tour Leaders to discipline my son/daughter in the case of a breach of the rules while on the tour. I authorise accompanying teachers/tour leader to act on my behalf for the duration of the tour.

Please note: Parents/guardians are required to inform the Tour Leader in writing of any medical condition or illness from which the student may suffer.

5. The tour leader is responsible for all deposits and monies collected. All monies should be receipted and lodged with the accounts secretary.
6. The formal tour list (students/staff), together with a detailed itinerary, supervision arrangements and up to date accounts should be furnished to the Board of Management one month prior to the departure date. The Board reserves the right to cancel/postpone a school tour if necessary.
7. The Tour Leader and accompanying teachers are responsible for the supervision of students during the trip. Adequate supervision of all students should be arranged and appropriate insurance should be finalised well in advance of the trip. The ratio of members of staff to students shall be one to thirty, for trips or tours in Ireland and one to eight for tours to the rest of Europe or further afield. This ratio may be increased at the discretion of the Principal.
8. Students should be encouraged to represent the school well at all times. Incidents of misbehaviour should be dealt with in line with the school Code of Behaviour. In relation to minor incidents a verbal warning is usually sufficient. For more significant incidents the teacher should investigate the matter fully with the student(s). A written report should be

compiled and this should be signed by both the teacher and the student(s). Details of the incident should be made known to the Principal as soon as is practicable (by telephone or by e-mail).

In the event of a serious incident/accident at least two members of staff (preferably the tour leader) shall come together; they shall agree on an outline of the details of the incident/accident and taking into account all the facts as they are known at that time, shall decide on a course of action. The details and the decision(s) taken shall be put in writing as close to the event as is reasonable. The Board accepts that in cases where there is lack of consensus over the course of action, the tour leader (where available) has the final decision. Tour leaders and all members of staff accompanying the tour must ensure that, if it becomes necessary to question a student about a potentially serious matter, another adult must be present. In the case of serious misbehaviour it may be necessary for the student to return home prior to the end of the tour. This sanction should be imposed in consultation with the school Principal. In addition to the Code of Behaviour, students must adhere to the law of the country which they visit. In the event of a breach of this, due process of law will follow.

10. On return to Our Lady's the tour leader and accompanying teachers should complete an evaluation of the tour and furnish it to the Board no later than one month after the return date. The following items should be addressed in the report to the Board of Management:

- General satisfaction with tour arrangements regarding travel and accommodation.
- An overview of educational value of the tour and social aspects.
- A review of the general behaviour of students and a report on incidents of misbehaviour (if applicable). The incident forms to be available to the Board if requested.
- An evaluation of the school's policy on school tours together with suggestions for changes/improvements
- A final statement of accounts.

**APPENDIX 1 –
Participation in sporting related activities at Our Lady’s
Academic Year 2023 -2024**

Name of student: _____

Class: _____

Our Lady’s has a strong sporting tradition and this continues to thrive with the support of teachers who volunteer their time and expertise for the benefit of students. We are very proud of the students who represent the school on school teams.

The conditions set out in the policy relating to school tours apply to sporting related trips, however, for practical reasons one consent form is deemed adequate for the entire academic year.

Students will be informed of travel arrangements in advance of each match. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and the player to ensure that he/she presents on time at the collection point and that he/she is collected promptly at the scheduled return time. Players should carry mobile phones so that parents/guardians can be contacted regarding unforeseen changes to the scheduled times.

Illness/Injury

Should a student become ill or injured at a match, basic first aid will be administered and medical attention will be sought for the student if necessary. Parents/guardians will be informed as soon as possible. In the case of an emergency a teacher/coach will accompany the student to hospital if required. The parent/guardian should meet the teacher/coach as soon as possible following report of an illness/injury.

Parents should note that injury or illness to a student may result in a lesser supervision of remaining students on any trip should it be necessary for a teacher to accompany a student seeking medical attention.

1. I/We accept the conditions set out in Our Lady’s policy relating to school trips and participation in sporting activities.
2. I/We give permission for my son/daughter to participate in and travel to any sports matches, home or away during the academic year.
3. I/We acknowledge that while representing Our Lady’s Secondary School at sports events, my son/daughter is an ambassador for the school and must act accordingly.
4. I/We also give consent for any match/sports events involving my/our son/daughter to be videoed or photographed.
5. I/We acknowledge that on some occasion it may be necessary for students, under the supervision of teachers, to travel by private car to and from matches/sports events.
6. I/We agreed to collect our son(s)/daughter(s) at the school at the agreed time. Collection points other than the school may be considered in exceptional circumstances. In these cases the parent/guardian is responsible for the student as the bus will not wait for a parent/guardian to arrive.

Signed Parent/Guardian 1: _____

Signed Parent/Guardian 2: _____