



Scoil Aireagail

**Policy on School Tours Abroad and Overnight
Expeditions**

INTRODUCTION TO SCOIL AIREAGAIL

Scoil Aireagail is a co-educational multid denominational school. The school is committed to focusing on the needs of each individual student, and it aims to nurture each student, and to ensure their journey at Scoil Aireagail is a successful and life-enhancing experience. The school is under the trusteeship of Kilkenny Carlow Education and Training Board.

Scoil Aireagail provides a comprehensive system of education which combines instruction in languages, sciences and the humanities with technical and other transferable skills. The school is a friendly learning community where students progress well in their studies. The school community is proud of their achievements; academic and non-academic. The school community believe that kindness is essential to providing the best atmosphere for young people to learn the skills, qualities and information required for careers and for life. Kindness also helps give students the space to develop the resilience to cope with the challenges and battles that life will throw at them.

Significant emphasis is placed on wellbeing in the school. The school has received an Amber Flag for mental health. Students are encouraged to reach their potential in all facets of their development within the school.

Mission Statement

The mission of Scoil Aireagail is to create a caring inclusive environment where each individual is encouraged to develop a sense of honesty, tolerance and responsibility and in which everybody acquires the self-confidence to achieve his or her full potential.

“Scoil Aireagail is committed to the educational welfare of its entire community. This includes staff, students, parents and the wider population we serve. We will respect and support the needs of staff and so enable them to carry out their duties efficiently and effectively. We will provide a holistic education in which each student is valued and their individual needs are recognised and catered for. We will provide a structured, caring environment enabling each student to reach their full potential and enter society as a responsible adult.”

The above mission statement has been agreed by the staff, parents and Board of Management and is based on the values driving the very existence of the school.

Tours and abroad and overnight

International tours and overnight expeditions have considerable educational value. They have the potential to provide students with experiences that cannot be provided in the classroom and complement curricular and extracurricular experiences – aesthetic, cultural, emotional, spiritual, sporting, social and personal development. International tours also enhance the collaborative relationships between staff and students and foster positive communication across classes and year groups. As such, tours significantly enable the school to achieve its goals for the holistic development of its students.

Rationale

All international school tours must be consistent with the rationale as set down by KCETB School Tour Guidelines and Department of Education and Science circular M20/04 relating to 'Educational Tours by School Groups (inside and outside of the State)'. Scoil Aireagail aims to balance academic education with social and personal development of students, therefore providing a holistic education.

Planning

Substantive proposal to Principal and Obtaining Approval

Any teacher planning to organise an international trip must first discuss the proposal with the Principal, during the previous academic year, if possible. A general outline of the tour destination, proposed travel date(s), tour company details, travel insurance and tour price and general tour itinerary should accompany the request for permission.

Decisions about which members of staff to make up the tour team will depend on such factors, as the size of the group, the gender balance, requirements for a specific trip will be made by the Principal and the tour leader. The tour team may come from different departments within the school structure.

Tour Finances/Financial Guidelines

All income and expenditure related to the tour should conform fully to the accounting practices of the school.

- Separate financial records should be maintained for each school trip.
- A detailed record of all participating students and amounts should be retained.

Parents are informed as early as possible of the full cost associated with the trip. Written permission is obtained from parents/guardians of all trip participants.

Payment for foreign trips are not made directly to the school. All money is paid directly to the travel company.

Students are given at least one month from the date of distribution of the details of the trip, to pay the deposit.

Keep in mind the economic position of students and ensure that a varied instalment system is implemented to ease payments.

Student(s) who withdraw from a trip after a deposit or full monies has been paid may not be entitled to a refund, dependent upon the terms and conditions of the travel company through which the trip is booked.

Student(s) who is prevented from travelling for serious disciplinary or safety reasons will not be entitled to a refund. Please see the school's code of behaviour on www.scoilaireagail.ie.

Access

All students who want to participate should be facilitated in as far as possible. However, school management reserves the right that the school may not be able to take responsibility on a trip for some students, and can withdraw permission for a student to participate on the trip where there is evidence that the student has engaged in behaviour in school or on other school activities that could jeopardise the trip. Such decisions will be made by the Principal, the teacher in charge of the trip, the Year Head and relevant staff. Also, school management may decide that students with certain medical conditions may not be allowed on trips; such decisions shall be taken on the basis of medical evidence and in the interest of health and safety of the student and others. The Code of Behaviour and all school policies apply while on school trips and expeditions. Parents and students should be aware that permission to travel on a school related tour is conditional on strict adherence to the Code of Behaviour.

Information to and from Parents/Guardians

Once permission has been granted by the Principal, a letter of notification is sent to parents/guardians outlining the proposed destination, the cost of the trip, duration of the trip, the number of students required to allow the trip to be feasible, the deadline for payment of initial deposit and other payments and method of payment, information regarding insurance and indemnity. Parents are made aware in writing that the deposits for international trips are non-refundable and that student's disciplinary record behaviour in school and on other school activities throughout the year may be taken into account as to being allowed to participate on the trip. Also, parents/guardians are made aware that the tour organiser reserves the right to make changes to the itinerary.

Parents have a duty to inform the school of any relevant Health and Safety issues which might affect their son/daughter on tour.

The signed consent/permission of parents/guardians is an essential pre-requisite for the student to participate on the tour. Also signed of rules specific to a given trip must be signed by parents/guardians and students.

A letter is sent to parents/guardians if a second deposit is required and payment of outstanding balance with the deadline(s) stated. All money is paid directly to the travel company.

A significant time prior to the trip, a letter is sent to parents/guardians regarding the date and location of the briefing meeting.

Briefing meeting with students and parents

Before students are to travel abroad parents/guardians and pupils are invited to attend a briefing meeting where details (oral and written) of the proposed trip is provided – detailed itinerary, hotels, addresses, contact phone numbers, code of behaviour, consent forms. The principal or deputy principal and the tour team attend the meeting. Parents who cannot attend the meeting should inform the tour organiser and alternative arrangements can be put into place.

At the briefing, parents and students clearly understand what the tour will entail. Students must clearly understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. Students are made aware of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and the safety of others. Parents/Guardians and students are informed at the briefing about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a student will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

Documentation

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their son/daughter has all necessary up to date documentation well in advance for travel abroad. Scoil Airagail will not take any responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result.

For all trips abroad a passport is required and photocopies of all passports are taken on trip for emergency use. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip.

Visas may be necessary for some destinations. Some embassies require a passport to allow the visa to be processed. There may be an additional cost to obtain the visa.

Students must have a European Health Insurance Card for travel to EU countries.

Parents/Guardians should be informed that students with non EU passports may need visas for EU countries.

If a student is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that Social Services consent to any proposed trip. If a student is a Ward of Court, the principal should seek advice from the Court in relation to trips abroad well in advance.

If a student whose national or immigration status or entitlement to an Irish passport is in doubt, it is advisable that their parent/guardian make early enquiries to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice and Law Reform and the Passport Office.

Parents/Guardians should be informed in ample time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents/guardians realise that the responsibility is on them to make arrangements for their son/daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.

Mobile communications between teachers/supervisors and students on the trip may be necessary. Students should have the mobile phone number of the trip leader assigned by the school. This number is to be carried on the students at all times while on the trip. A mobile phone is available from the School for foreign or overnight trips, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile numbers to students. Students will be allowed use mobile phones on the trip in keeping with our Internet Acceptable Usage Policy which is on the school's website.

The tour organiser will have two emergency contact numbers – the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Medication

Parents/Guardians must fully disclose all medical, dietary and behavioural issues. Where a student requires medication, written details must be given to the tour leader. Parents/Guardians may request a private meeting to inform the tour leader about the illness and manner in which the medication should be administered. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian that their son/daughter has medication sufficient to last the entire tour.

Obtaining parent consents

Parents/Guardians must sign consent forms specific to the trip for students up to the age of 18. Contact details, medical conditions, current medical or dietary requirements, as appropriate, must be included. A medical consent form is part of the parental/guardian consent form for foreign or residential trips. In the event of a medical emergency/dental emergency while on tour, it may be necessary for a member of the tour team to act in loco parentis. Parents/guardians should be asked to agree to student's receiving emergency treatment including anesthetic or blood transfusions, as considered by the medical authorities. All parents/Guardians must inform the tour leader if the medical condition of a student travelling requires contact numbers, allergies or medication to be taken.

Insurance/Travel Insurance/Personal Accident Insurance

Public and Employer's Liability

The ETB's Public and Employer's liability policies operate to cover the legal liability in relation to Educational Tours/Activities organised by the school subject to the normal terms, conditions and exemptions of the policies.

Where activities are of a specialist or high risk nature the teacher organising the activity should ensure that the centre providing the activity is a reputable provider and that evidence of their Public Liability Insurance including an indemnity to the school and the Department of Education is obtained.

Travel Insurance

School tour operators provide travel insurance as part of the tour package.

When travel and accommodation are organised directly by the school e.g. language exchange, travel insurance must be organised with the Travel Agency or an Insurance Broker. Exclusions to the Travel Insurance Policy should be noted.

Personal Accident Insurance

Please ensure that your son/daughter has taken out 24-hour pupil personal accident insurance before travelling.

Contact information

Prior to departure, the tour leader must ensure that complete contact information is left on file in the school office, available for the use in the event of an emergency. The list includes names and home contact numbers of all those participating on the tour. A detailed itinerary, hotel addresses and contact numbers. Contact numbers for the Tour leader and other staff members.

Supervision on Tour

Prior to leaving, each member of the tour team is assigned a number of students and be known to the students as their group leader. If possible these groups should remain unchanged throughout the tour. It is the responsibility of each group leader to meet their group members at arranged rendezvous points and count group members.

Where a tour consists of mixed groups sharing accommodation boys and girls stay in separate rooms. Staff members carry out inspection of rooms and personal property (bags, suitcases, etc) with the student present. This is done for good reasons based on reasonable grounds such as concerns for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns.

If a personal search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty his/her own pockets or to search the clothing that he/she is wearing.

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 immediately.

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, serious breach of school rules particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse.

A rota is organised to assign night time corridor duty. Students should be made aware that corridors are being supervised.

Students are informed of the location of the group leaders room and are told to make contact immediately should an emergency arise.

Room curfews are implemented and must be obeyed.

There is regular head counting of students on arrival and when leaving any venue. All supervisors are supplied with a list of students in their own group. They also have a list of all student names, student contact numbers and parent/guardian contact numbers plus the names and contact numbers of all adults involved in the activity. The group leader will establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the group. The group leader should ensure that all supervisors are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the trip.

Remote supervision may have to take place on occasion e.g. if students are on shopping trips, in theme parks, adventure centres, aquatic centres. Parents are notified of this in advance and are requested to give consent to allow their child to participate in the activity. Students are advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 people. Students meet with their assigned supervisor on return from all activities. The supervisor conducts a head count of their group. Subsequently the supervisor checks in with the group leader.

Teaching staff are informed of the planned excursion. All members of staff will be expected to share the workload where necessary and during the trip.

Sanctions on Tour

Teachers supervising the trip are in loco parentis and therefore have the responsibilities and rights of a prudent parent. The school's code of behaviour applies on an international tour and overnight expeditions.

The tour leader will avail of and use sanctions as deemed appropriate on tour. A verbal warning may be sufficient in some situations. However, if the misbehaviour is deemed to be more serious, the student(s) involved may also miss out on certain activities at the tour

leader's discretion or/and in consultation with the tour team. A student prevented from participating in an activity must be supervised by a member of the tour team for the full duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed following the student's return to school such as being banned from future trips.

In the case of gross misbehaviour e.g. use/possession of alcohol, illegal substances, disruptive behaviour on coach, plane, boat, public transport or in accommodation, lack of respect for accompanying adults, theft or criminal damage, assault and aggression the parents/guardians will be informed with details of the incident(s). In cases of ongoing, extreme dangerous behaviour and/or gross misbehaviour, necessary arrangements will be made for the offending student with an accompanying adult to travel home. The parents/guardians will be liable for the extra cost involved.

In the case of a serious/criminal incident, such as shop lifting, violent attack, the parents/guardians will be informed immediately and the matter will be handed over to the local police authorities.

Incidents of serious misbehaviour must be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal on return to the school.

Covid-19

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that their son/daughter has all the required protocols in place for international travel with regard to Covid-19. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that all the requirements of the travel company and/or airline are adhered to. In the event of the necessary protocols not being followed or in the event of illness or self-isolation requirements due to Covid-19 or other related illnesses, Parents/Guardians will be contacted and there is a requirement on the Parent to ensure they make the necessary journey to be with their son/daughter. Please note this will be at the expense of the parent/guardian.

Evaluation

On returning to the school the tour leader should provide a general report to the Principal outlining;

- Success of the tour.
- Details of any incidents which necessitated the imposition of sanctions.
- Details of any incidents which necessitated medical intervention.

The above policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24 January 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Secretary, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Date of Review: January 2025

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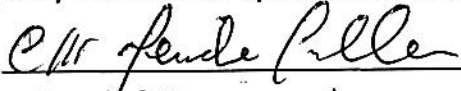
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(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: Al Mohi
(Secretary, Board of Management)

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