



School Tours Policy of Sancta Maria College

Our School Tours Policy is drawn from our CEIST Charter and should be read in conjunction with our Positive Code of Behaviour.

Our Values

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development.	The policy allows us in Sancta Maria College to maximise the talents of each student in our care.
Showing Respect for Every Person	The policy promotes an environment whereby each person is respected, and the dignity of each person is valued.
Creating Community	The policy clearly sets out the parameters, allowing parents/guardians, students and the College to work together towards a common purpose and creating a sense of community.
Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning	The policy is built around creating the conditions to inspire and motivates the learning process.
Being Just and Responsible	This policy clearly explains the expectations of students taking responsibility for their own learning and are more in control of their journey.

Mission Statement

Sancta Maria College is an all-girls Catholic Voluntary Secondary School, under the trusteeship of CEIST and in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. We are a compassionate community, which strives to:

- Foster the personal growth and holistic development of all staff and students.
- Embrace Gospel Values, promoting a culture of inclusivity and respect.
- Nurture the full potential of each student through high standards of learning and teaching.
- Promote a positive partnership between all members of the school and wider community.

Scope

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

The Positive Code of Behaviour of Sancta Maria College also applies to students participating in such events or on school trips and tours organised by the school both during and outside of normal school hours, as does the Anti Bullying Policy, Safety and Health, Substance Use, Child Protection and any other relevant school policy.

Rationale

The organisation of school tours and activities outside 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 school and the social and personal development of those students participating in them.

The Department of Education and Skills (Circular Letter M20/04) has devolved to Boards of Management the authority 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 recommendations of the Principal. The Principal may permit day tours/activities within Ireland without seeking the formal approval of the Board. 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

Where permission is granted by the Board of Management for tours **outside** of the State, the template (Appendix 2) should be completed and retained by the Principal for examination by a Department Inspector in the course of a normal school inspection.

Day Tours/Activities within Ireland

- Day tours may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours
- Only school staff will be permitted to accompany students on day tours/activities
- Staff wishing to take groups on a tour must complete the tour proposal form available in the Staff Room (Appendix 3) and forward it to the Principal at least two weeks, where possible, before the proposed date
- It may be necessary to carry out a risk assessment and to discuss this with the Principal prior to approval
- The Board of Management must give approval for all overnight trips within Ireland
- When approval has been given, Parents/Guardians should be informed in writing of the details of the tour and must sign a consent slip and medical history form which will be retained by the organiser
- A notice giving preliminary details of the tour should be placed by the organiser on the forthcoming events section of the Notice Board in the Staff Room. A form for this purpose is available in the Staff Room and on the SharePoint (Appendix 4)
- The organiser should check for any medical issues concerning the participants. The parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that the school has up to date medical details for their child
- 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
- The school will always have the mobile phone number of the coach company/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 completion of the tour, a participant should be encouraged to write a short account for the newsletter
- An Accident Report must be completed for any accidents which occur, and the Principal/Deputy Principal and the Parents/Guardians must be informed immediately of any such accidents
- Any incident occurring on a school tour or activity should be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal on return
- Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from such tours even if behavioural issues arise following date of payment of initial deposit.

Tours outside of Ireland

- Staff wishing to take students on a tour abroad must complete the tour proposal form available in the staff room or on SharePoint and forward it to the Principal. The request must be received before the end of May in the year prior to the proposed date of travel
- A tour overseas must be organised through a bonded travel agency or tour operator from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie
- To prevent disruption to teaching and learning, school tours should require no more than two days of absence from school and should be scheduled to extend into weekends or school holidays whenever possible
- Only school staff will be permitted to accompany students on day tours/activities
- The number of students participating may vary depending on the nature of the tour and the staff/student ratio as recommended by the travel agency
- If a tour is oversubscribed, priority is given to students who are studying the appropriate subject
- Students who have a history of indiscipline may be excluded from tours even if behavioural issues arise following date of payment of initial deposit
- The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and a deadline for registering and payment of a non-refundable deposit
- The organiser will factor into the budget an extra amount to cover the extras not accounted for in the basic cost
- Payments from students should be made directly to the travel agent or tour operator and not collected through the school
- 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 are required to sign a consent form and a Medical History Form
- Parents will be provided with full details of accommodation, travel arrangements, personal items that the student needs to bring and guidelines for spending money
- The tour organiser reserves the right to alter the itinerary if necessary
- All passports must be valid for three months after the end date of the trip
- Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas when travelling to EU countries. It is the responsibility of Parents./Guardians to ensure that all visa requirements are complied with fully
- Students must have their European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in EU
- Parents have the responsibility to ensure that all documentation is correct
- Each teacher 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 mobile phone number of the school phone
- If a student is found in serious breach of the Code of Behaviour, the Principal/Deputy Principal must be contacted immediately

- An Accident Report must be completed for any accidents which occur, and the Principal/Deputy Principal and the Parents/Guardians must be informed immediately of any such accidents.
- 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 phone numbers of staff

Professional Responsibilities of the Staff

Staff must exercise an appropriate duty of care to all students. Our Child Protection Guidelines and Protocols for the Protection of Students in Sancta Maria College 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.

P. J. Ganish

Signed:

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Soreha McManus

Signed:

(Principal)

Date 26 May 2025

Date: 26 May 2025

APPENDIX 1

The Criteria for School Tours: Circular Letter M20/04

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.

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. (Boards of Management of

Comprehensive and Community Schools should refer to Appendix 2 of this circular regarding State Indemnity cover for out-of-school educational activities.)

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 PPT 01/03. 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

DETAILS OF SCHOOL TOUR

Name of School	Address	Roll No.
	Tour dates	
From _/_/_	To _/_/_	No. of school days _____

Brief outline of Tour

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Number of students participating	Total number of students in relevant year group

If some students are not participating, outline the reasons why:

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Expected benefit to accrue from the tour:

Why is the tour deemed to be necessary
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Adults accompanying the students

Name of Class Teacher	Number of other teachers	Number of other adults

Confirmations

That appropriate arrangements are made in accordance with Circular PPT 01/03 for those classes whose teachers are absent with the tour.	Yes: <input type="radio"/>	No: <input type="radio"/>
That adequate insurance is in place to cover all risks while on tour.	Yes: <input type="radio"/>	No: <input type="radio"/>
That parental permission has been secured for each student who is to participate on the tour.	Yes: <input type="radio"/>	No: <input type="radio"/>

Signature of Principal:	Date:
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APPENDIX 3

SCHOOL TOUR PROPOSAL FORM

Date: _____ Time: _____

Class Groups: _____

Number of students: _____

Teachers involved: _____

Destination: _____

Travel Arrangements: _____

Subject area: _____

How does the tour/activity link with the aims/objectives of the syllabus?

Substitution required: Yes

☐

No

☐

Please forward to Ms. McManus, acting Principal, two weeks, where possible, in advance of the proposed date.

Approved ☐

Not approved ☐

Comment:

Signed:

Principal

APPENDIX 4

SCHOOL TOUR – NOTIFICATION TO GENERAL STAFF

Date: _____

Time of Activity: _____

Time Leaving School: _____

Time of Return to School: _____

Destination: _____

Class Groups involved: _____

Names of students: _____

Teacher Coordinating tour: _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____

Other Teachers on tour: _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____

Other Teachers on tour: _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____

Please leave one copy on the Notice Board in the Staff Room and a copy with Ms Joan Keegan or Ms Suzanne O'Connell, in Administration, for the Attendance Rolls.