



Foreign School Tour Policy

Version 2.0

May 2016

Document Version Control

Version	Date	Description
1.0	May 2008	Original Version
1.1	April 2009	Several operational amendments
1.2	Jan 2010	Minor amendment to Appendix 2 – include Date of Issue
1.3	Jan 2011	Addition regarding health needs of those going on tours
2.0	May 2016	New revised version

SECTION A – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Introduction

It is the policy of the Board of Management of Glenstal Abbey School to encourage, where appropriate, extra-curricular and/or co-curricular activities which further the broader educational development of students, including school tours. All school tours must comply with the provisions of DES Circular M20/04. The Board delegates its authority to approve School Tours to the Headmaster. Any staff member proposing to organise a tour should complete a Tour Proposal Form and submit it to the Headmaster for approval before proceeding to arrange the tour.

2. Purpose of School Tours

The objective of an educational tour should be to provide a significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of pupils in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour which cannot be provided by in-school activities alone. Tours organised purely for recreation/vacation may not take place during term time.

Tours organised on days when students would otherwise be in class should conform to the following DES guidelines:

- (a) Educational visit involving an exchange of groups of students with another school
- (b) Educational visit involving attendance at a course of instruction
- (c) Educational visit involving active participation in a music or drama festival
- (d) Educational visit to a conference or exhibition of clear educational value
- (e) Educational visits should be appropriate to the age group/grade concerned
- (f) Educational visits involving significant linguistic or cultural benefit

3. Booking Tours and Collecting Payments

It is an offence to sell or buy holiday packages involving travel abroad on behalf of someone else without a licence. It is also illegal to organise holiday packages or trips abroad for sale to someone else without a licence. This prohibition includes the purchase of flights directly from airline websites on behalf of someone else. Accordingly, all school tours travelling outside the Republic of Ireland must be booked through a bonded licensed travel agent or tour operator from the approved list on www.aviationreg.ie.

Payments from students must be made directly to the travel agent or tour operator. The costs may not be charged to students' expense accounts. (Where it is not possible for payments to be made directly to the travel agent or tour operator, the Aviation Regulator has confirmed that schools will be in compliance with relevant legislation if cheques made out to the bonded travel operator are collected by the Tour Leader and then forwarded to the tour operator. **NB:** Cheques must be made payable to the tour operator, not to the school or to the Tour Leader.)

4. School Policies

All relevant school policies must be observed by both students and leaders during tours. These include, but are not limited to:

- Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (DES);
Code of Conduct, Anti-Bullying Policy, Substance Abuse Policy, Data Protection Policy*

5. Permission to Participate in School Tours

The school reserves the right, both at the time of booking and in the period between booking and travel, to refuse permission to participate in a school tour to a student whose pattern of behaviour gives concern. If the Tour Leader or another member of staff has concerns about a particular student's suitability for the tour these should be referred to the Headmaster for decision. The Headmaster will communicate this decision to the student and his parents/guardians.

In the case of a student with a medical condition or other special needs, the school must be confident that the needs of the student can be managed without compromising his health and safety, that of the other students participating, or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents/guardians and the staff of the School Health Centre. In the event of a dispute, the Headmaster will have the right to adjudicate.

6. Safeguarding and Prudence

All adult leaders/supervisors must have current Garda Vetting and must be approved for participation in the particular tour in question by the Headmaster. The ratio of adults to students should not exceed 1:10. A smaller ratio may be required if one or more of the participating students has special needs that require extra assistance. The Tour Leader is responsible for briefing and allocating duties to the other accompanying adults.

A minimum of two adults must accompany all foreign tours, even if the number of students is less than ten. The only instances where a single adult may travel abroad with students are when it is a matter of merely accompanying the students during travel and thereafter leaving them in the care of an exchange school or family. However, students travelling to and from foreign exchange placements are the responsibility of their parent(s) and the school does not ordinarily provide supervision for such travel.

The Tour Leader is responsible for ascertaining and explaining health and safety details relating to tour accommodation such as emergency evacuation procedures, disabled access etc.

An adult leader or supervisor may not sleep in the same room/dormitory or tent as a student. An adult on his/her own should not be with an individual student on his own unless there is a window to the corridor or to a public place, others enter the room often or if it is a public room. If none of these applies, the adult should inform another adult leader and note the date, time and duration of the meeting.

Mobile phone contact, both voice and text, between students and the Tour Leader and other accompanying adults is deemed appropriate during school tours. The Tour Leader and other accompanying adults must have the mobile phone numbers of all the participating students and the students must be given the mobile phone number of at least one of the adults supervising the tour.

Prudence should be exercised by leaders when answering the door to students who come to their rooms for assistance or information, and also when visiting student quarters for morning call, night-time lights-out and other relevant purposes – ie adults should be fully dressed, should knock before entering student rooms etc.

Every reasonable step must be taken to ensure the safety of all tour members. Students must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk and appropriate and adequate supervision must be in place for each activity undertaken on the tour.

If a medical or other emergency arises necessitating physical contact with a student, except in situations where a delay could have material consequences for the health of the student, an adult leader should always ask another adult to be present.

7. Alcohol and Drugs

Adult leaders need to be aware that their supervisory responsibilities continue throughout the entire tour, including night-time. Their consumption of alcohol should not be such as to impair their capacity to fulfil their duties or to respond to an emergency.

The consumption of alcohol by students under the age of 18 is forbidden on all tours, regardless of the age limit in the destination country. Consumption of alcohol by students over the age of 18 is at the discretion of the Tour Leader.

Smoking by any student is not permitted on any tour. The use of other drugs for non-medical purposes while on tour is strictly forbidden to all students and adults, regardless of the legal situation in the destination country.

SECTION B – PROCEDURES

1. Organising a School Tour

- A staff member proposing to organise a tour should complete a **Tour Proposal Form** (*Appendix 1*) and submit it to the Headmaster.
- All trips outside Ireland must be organised by a fully bonded travel agent.
- Full travel insurance must be in-place for all staff and students travelling.
- When approval has been received from the Headmaster, the Tour Leader should send details of the proposed tour to the parents/guardians of the group concerned, along with a copy of this policy, a **Tour Registration Form** (*Appendix 2*) and a **Parental Consent Form** (*Appendix 3*). This initial mailing should include a draft itinerary, the deadline for registration and payment of deposit etc. Parents/guardians must be made aware that the Tour Leader reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- A photocopy/scan of each student's passport must be included with the Tour Registration Form. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip.
- Parents/guardians must be notified if a visa is required for travel to the destination country. The Tour Leader should make clear to parents/guardians whether visas will be organised by the school (and if so the cost involved) or whether the parents must arrange the visas themselves. **NB:** Some students holding non-EU passports may require visas for travel to certain EU countries.
- Parents/guardians should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended vaccinations for the destination. The Tour Leader should make clear to parents/guardians whether these vaccinations will be organised by the school (and if so the cost involved) or whether the parents must arrange the vaccinations themselves.
- Students must have an EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) for travel to countries in the EU.
- The Tour Leader must make clear to parents the mechanism and deadline for paying for the tour, whether directly to the bonded tour operator, or by cheque made payable to the bonded tour operator but sent to the school for forwarding to the operator. Under no circumstances should any payments be made directly to the school or to the Tour Leader or any other individual.

2. Before Travel

Health and Safety

- The Tour Leader must liaise with the School Nurse(s) to enquire whether any of the students embarking on the tour have any specific healthcare needs. It is the responsibility of Health Centre staff to provide any specific healthcare information (which is in the interest of the student's health and welfare) to the Tour Leader. Where any such needs are identified, the Tour Leader and Nurse(s) should agree a management plan in relation to these healthcare needs for the duration of the tour.
- Unless the students will be going directly from the airport/ferryport to the care of an exchange school or exchange family, the Tour Leader must travel with a suitable First Aid kit, issued from the Health Centre.
- The Tour Leader should travel with copies of the Tour Registration Forms for each student, or with a paper or electronic spreadsheet containing the information from these forms.

- The Tour Leader should compile a separate list of the mobile phone numbers of all the students on the tour to be given to all accompanying adults.

Parents/Guardians

- The Tour Leader must provide parents/guardians with the following information:
 - Dates and times of departure and return, including precise details of the gathering point for departure and the collection point on return
 - Accommodation contact information (hotel/hostel or exchange family name, address, email/phone number)
 - Names of Tour Leader and of other accompanying adults
 - The mobile phone number(s) on which the Tour Leader and/or other accompanying adults can be contacted during the tour
 - Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole, and whether parents/guardians need to arrange additional cover

School

- The Tour Leader must provide the following information to the Headmaster, who will be responsible for ensuring that it is available to relevant personnel in the school during the tour, and appropriately filed thereafter:
 - Itinerary and Accommodation details
 - Tour Registration Form for each student
 - Parental Consent Form for each student.
 - Copies of travel documents, insurance documents, and medical papers
 - Copy of the contract with the tour company/hotel etc.

3. During the tour

During all school tours, both students and accompanying adults are bound at all times by the rules, policies and procedures of Glenstal Abbey School. All should be mindful that they are representing the school and strive to uphold the good name of Glenstal by the way they behave while on tour. The principles of Reverence, Respect and Responsibility should characterise the life of the Glenstal school community no matter where they are.

It is the responsibility of each student and his parents/guardians to ensure that his mobile phone is in working order, he has a charger and appropriate adapter and, where applicable, has sufficient credit for the duration of the tour. Students must carry their mobile phone on their persons at all times, and should ensure that they have the name and address of their hotel and the mobile phone number of the Tour Leader(s). This is an absolute requirement on ski trips because of the risk of a student becoming separated from the group. Students on ski trips should wear helmets and are not permitted to do 'off piste' skiing unless accompanied by a qualified member of staff of the resort in question.

The Tour Leader is responsible for discipline during the tour. Minor misdemeanours should be dealt with swiftly and firmly with a verbal warning. The Tour Leader may, however, impose sanctions, such as the student missing out on a specific activity or excursion. A student thus prevented from attending an activity must be supervised for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school.

If a student is found to be in serious breach of the Code of Conduct, the Tour Leader must contact the Headmaster immediately. In the event of gross misconduct, a student may be sent home at parent's/guardian's expense.

SECTION C – ADOPTION AND REVIEW

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 25th May 2016.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website.

Signed  *Martin L. O'Sullivan*
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed  *William J. Fenelly* O.S.B.
Headmaster

Date 25th May 2016

Date of next review: October 2017