

OUR LADY'S SECONDARY SCHOOL



SCHOOL TOUR POLICY

Our Lady's Mission Statement

Our Lady's Secondary School is a voluntary Catholic secondary school operating under the trusteeship of CEIST according to the traditions of the Sisters of Mercy. We, the staff and students, enjoy working together to realise our full potential in a healthy, safe, stimulating and friendly environment where the atmosphere is one of mutual respect, cooperation and challenge. We take a holistic approach focusing on the wellbeing and development of each individual socially, culturally and academically. Within our school community, each student is treated equally. All are considered uniquely talented, with effort valued as much as excellence. On a day-to-day basis, the Christian message inspires everyone in the school to be charitable, inclusive and compassionate

School Context

Our Lady's Secondary School is a Voluntary Catholic School under the trusteeship of CEIST. The school is Co-Educational and currently has approximately 800 students and over 60 teachers as well as a range of ancillary and support staff. The school has a Board of Management comprised of Trustee Nominees, Teacher Nominees and Parent Nominees. The Board of Management delegates the day-to-day running of the school to the Principal. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and parental choice in relation to enrolment. In supporting these principles it also recognizes the rights of the Trustees CEIST, the Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy and the funding and resources available.

Mercy Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Students, Parents/Guardians and the wider community.

CEIST Core Values

The Core Values of CEIST are:

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

This policy was created in accordance with Our Lady's Vision Statement.

School tours can be of significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of students. In many instances they reinforce the work taking place in the classroom. The majority of school tours are of one day duration.

This policy covers tours taking place during the normal school day as well as longer tours including those overseas. This policy does not cover competitive sporting activity that the school is participating in (e.g. GAA matches etc).

All school tours will take place in accordance with the Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter M 20/04 (copy appended). The school's *Child Safety Policy* has particular relevance in terms of school tours. School Personnel are required to adhere to the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* and all registered teaching staff are required to adhere to the Children First Act 2015

The Principal will complete the template attached to the appendix of Circular Letter M 20/04 for each school tour and retain it in the school for examination by a Departmental Inspector. Only tours that the Board of Management feel comply with Circular Letter M 20/04 will be sanctioned. Students can only travel on tours when written permission is received from parents.

Criteria for participation in school tours:

- a) The student must have demonstrated an attitude of co-operation in all areas of school life.
- b) The student must have demonstrated an adherence to the school Code of Behaviour.
- c) A good level of attendance is required.
- d) Parental consent (either in writing/via phone call or digitally) must be obtained prior to departure.
- e) Payment of tour fee must be made prior to departure.

In the event of a student withdrawing or being withdrawn from a school tour every effort will be made to refund monies paid. However, in certain circumstances e.g. when price has been based on a certain minimum number or when deposits have been forwarded to organisers, it will not be possible to return monies paid. Students must

immediately notify teachers if they are withdrawing from the trip. Failure to do so, may leave the student liable for resultant charges.

f) Student Insurance must be in place.

Uniform

Unless informed to the contrary, it is policy on all day tours that full school uniform (as opposed to PE Uniform) is worn. Failure to do so may result in removal of student from the tour.

Code of Behaviour

Students are expected to respect the authority of their teachers and adhere to the “Code of Behaviour” outlined in the school journal. Failure to do so, may result in the imposition of sanctions. Additional rules may be put in place for the safety and wellbeing of students depending on the nature of the tour.

Mobile Phones

At certain times students may, with a teacher’s permission, be allowed to have their mobile phones\devices switched on. This would include while travelling away with a school group or on a school tour\excursion.

Under these circumstances all aspects of the school's “Acceptable Use Policy” apply. Recording, videoing or photographing staff or students without permission is an invasion of privacy and is strictly prohibited. In addition downloading, viewing and\distributing inappropriate or offensive material is strictly prohibited and if done will result in serious sanctions up to and including expulsion.

Foreign Tours

Students may be offered the opportunity of a foreign tour during their time at Our Lady’s. It has been recommended by the Board of Management that parents and students be given at least twelve months’ notice to allow them to plan payments accordingly. An exception to this will be made if the tour is occurring as a result of a successful entry in a competition whereby the prize includes a funded or part funded trip. Students will be eligible to travel subject to the same criteria as for day tours. In addition, participation will be subject to satisfactory school attendance and behaviour in the preceding period. All deposits are accepted on a provisional

basis. Final confirmation will be given when the student's behaviour and attendance record have been checked and deemed satisfactory. Every effort will be made to accommodate the maximum number of students who wish to travel. In the event that a school tour is over-subscribed selection of students will be based on a lottery and a waiting list will be put into operation. School management reserves the right to allocate student accommodation. Parents are responsible for informing tour organisers of any relevant medical conditions prior to departure. A student on medication should furnish a note signed by his/her parents giving approval for any medication to be taken. The note should also outline the nature of the medication; the dosage involved and when the medication needs to be taken. Parents are asked to consult the School's "Administration of Medication Policy". The school reserves the right to examine all luggage carried by students on school tours prior to departure and during the course of the trip.

In the event that a student is in serious breach of discipline and is sent home any costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Examples of 'serious breach of discipline' include but are not limited to:

- Use/possession of alcohol.
- Use/possession of illegal substances.
- Use/possession of cigarettes.
- Misuse of legal substances (lighter fluid, tippex, etc)
- Disruptive behaviour on coach, plane, boat or in the hotel/hostel.
- Lack of respect for accommodation rules e.g. entering the room of another individual without permission from supervisors.
- Lack of respect for tour team or any other supervising adults.
- Theft or criminal damage to property of others (this list is not exhaustive)
- Engagement, or suspicion of engagement, in any activity that is criminal in nature or endangers another student.

Guidelines for those leading a tour

Any member of staff who is considering taking students on a tour must first discuss the proposal with the Principal. No definite plans for any school tour may be made in advance of obtaining permission of the Principal/Board of Management.

The tour organiser must request in writing the consent of the Board of Management for trips. The Board must be assured that the Travel Agents/Tour Operators are licensed under the appropriate legislation (The Aviation Regulation Act 2001) and are Garda vetted in the case of Bus/Coach operators etc. The Principal must satisfy him/herself that appropriate insurance is in place.

For overnight trips the following procedures should be followed by the tour leader;

1. An initial letter to parents should contain an outline of the educational value of the tour, a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of non-refundable deposit. Parents must be aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
2. At least two teachers must be involved in the financial administration of the tour. All income and expenditure related to the tour should conform to the accounting practices of the school and Joint Managerial Body's Financial Support Services Unit guidelines. A full account of income and expenditure should at reasonable notice be made available to the Principal and Board of Management.
3. The tour leader should liaise with the Principal and tour operator with respect to tour insurance.
4. Visas may be necessary for the destination and some countries require all visas to be processed together. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.
5. Students must have their European Health Card for travel to countries within the EU. While teachers should inform parents and students of this, the responsibility rests with parents to obtain the card.
6. Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination.
7. Parents must be kept informed of the details of trip preferably via an information meeting. Before a student is allowed to travel on a tour, parents/guardians must sign the appropriate consent form (or give consent digitally) indicating compliance with trip rules. Issues parents must be made aware of include detailed itinerary, possible extra costs, contact numbers, expected standard of behaviour, rooming arrangements and supervision.
8. Those leading the trip should ensure there is at least one female and one male teacher among the supervising teachers.
9. The tour leader should take proof of parental permission with them on the trip.

10. A supervision plan for the trip should be agreed with the Principal before departure on overnight trips.

Critical Incident on a School Trip.

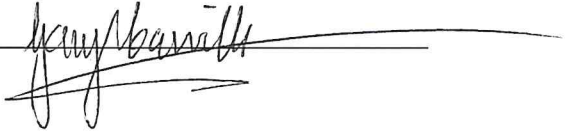
The Designated Group Leader will inform Principal as soon as possible in the event of a Critical Incident. The Principal will convene a meeting of all available members of the Critical Incident Team. The Principal and/or other members of the Critical Incident Team will make contact with families of all staff and students on the tour. The Principal will keep in regular contact with Group Leader and if necessary the Principal or another member of Critical Incident Team will travel to location of tour. The Principal and/or another member of Critical Incident Team will stay in regular contact with Tour Organiser and Department of Foreign Affairs if relevant. The Critical Incident Plan as outlined above will be followed as appropriate.

Parents

The following apply for parents on all trips;

1. Parents must advise the tour leader of any medical conditions, allergies or dietary requirements. It is also their duty to inform the school of any relevant health and safety issues which might affect their children. Parents should be advised to consult School's Administration of Medication Policy. Those travelling with medication internationally should ensure that they take a copy of their Doctor's prescription to the airport.
2. If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's passport must be included with the deposit.
3. The onus is on parents to ensure that their daughter/son has all the necessary up-to date documentation well in advance of the tour.
4. It is important that parents realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their daughter/son to receive all necessary inoculations.
5. Should a tour group or an individual get stranded overseas and the circumstances fall outside the insurance cover in place or an airline's obligations, parents will be required to fund the cost of the journey home.
6. A Consent Form must be co-signed (or digitally agreed) by parents before participation in overnight or day trips.

Ratified by the Board of Management on October 5th 2023

Signed: Gary Carville (Chairperson B.O.M.) 

Date: 5/10/2023

Date of Review: February 2026