

## **DUNDALK GRAMMAR SCHOOL: POLICY on SCHOOL TRIPS**

### **1. Scope of policy**

- 1.1. This policy applies to all members of the staff of Dundalk Grammar School who take students off campus. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

### **2. Rationale for school trips**

- 2.1. Some trips are organised as part of the course to be followed in a subject area and as such may be compulsory. Other outings and trips are additional to the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity.
- 2.2. A great deal of educational benefit can be gained from participating in school trips. Such activities give students the opportunity to engage in experiences not available in the classroom, help develop a student's imaginative skills, encourage greater independence and enhance the student's social and cultural development. Trips assist in bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.
- 2.3. Educational trips (including day, overnight, overseas and field trips) should:
- extend and reinforce classroom activities;
  - enhance the learning process of as many students as possible by providing educational experiences which the classroom alone cannot provide;
  - support the curriculum content of some subjects through field trips, tours, outings or other recreational activities;
  - develop interpersonal skills of the students.

### **3. Planning and organisation of school trips**

- 3.1. There should be a balanced programme of outings and trips for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.
- 3.2. Field trips and day trips are organised by teaching staff in consultation with the Headmaster. Members of staff planning to organise a day trip or any non-sporting outing during class time, must, first inform the Headmaster of the intended date, no later than one month in advance of the proposed trip. (It is accepted that there may be some circumstances where information about worthwhile events is not received in time to meet this deadline). The trip, including all information and documentation to be provided to parents, must be approved in advance by the Headmaster.
- 3.3. In general, written permission is required from a parent/guardian of a student before they may go on a trip. (Parents should be reminded that a Policy on School trips is available for inspection on the school website). For certain subject specific purposes at senior level, parental consent may not be required for outings, in Dundalk, sanctioned by the Headmaster, which take place during the school day. It is understood that students who play as part of a team representing the school have on-going parental permission to travel to all away matches.
- 3.4. Some trip activities (e.g. ice skating, go-karting etc) will need prior consultation with the school's insurers before approval for participation can be granted. As part of the planning process, trip organisers should give consideration to any potential hazards that may arise and allow sufficient time for communication and discussion with the school's insurers.
- 3.5. Where appropriate (e.g. where a proposed activity is considered potentially hazardous) trip organisers must obtain written confirmation from any venue that it holds the appropriate insurance

cover. This confirmation (normally a statement from an insurance company of the level of public liability held) should be provided to the Headmaster.

- 3.6. School trips of a longer duration are sanctioned by the Board of Management in accordance with the Department of Education and Science guidelines (Circular letter M20/04). Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas trip, must submit their request for approval to the Headmaster for consideration by the Board of Management at least 12 months in advance of the proposed departure date. Included in the proposal, should be the year group(s) for which the trip is intended and the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the trip. An overseas trip must be organised through a bonded travel agency.
- 3.7. Parents and students are advised that if demand exceeds places, then once application forms are received by the advised deadlines, places will be allocated by drawing names from a hat (provided all conditions are satisfied).

#### **4. Financial aspects of school trip planning**

- 4.1. In general, day and overnight trips occur in addition to the normal academic and extra-curricular programmes of the school. There is normally an additional charge.
- 4.2. The school accounts office must be notified when a trip, which involves a cost to parents/guardians is being planned and this must be done in advance of any notification being sent out to parents/guardians. This is to ensure advance discussion of the method of payment, agree on the amount (including transport costs etc) and ensure that the accounts office has a list of students taking part.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. Payment for trips within Ireland must be made by cheque, draft, postal order or e-transfer (as with fees).
- 4.5. Payment for trips outside the island of Ireland must be made by cheque, draft, postal order or e-transfer made payable to the bonded travel agency.
- 4.6. Students who withdraw from a tour after a deposit, or full monies, has/have been paid, may 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.

#### **5. Documentation required for overseas trips**

- 5.1. 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 in order. If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's valid passport must be included with the deposit. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the trip.
- 5.2. Visas may be necessary for the destination and some countries require them to be processed together. There may be an additional cost to secure a visa. Parents should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries. Students must have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.
- 5.3. The school can not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result. Refusal of entry at a border/entry point which results in the student having to return home may result in extra cost to be borne by the

student/parent/guardian for unforeseen transport or accommodation. The school shall not be liable for such extra costs.

- 5.4. Students must carry their own passports through security at airport and ferry terminals.
- 5.5. For overnight trips the trip organiser must ensure that at least one week prior to departure a trip information pack is lodged with the school office (for the attention of the Headmaster/Deputy Principal) confirming:
  - full itinerary showing all relevant dates and times;
  - name and contact details for travel agent (if overseas);
  - transport information e.g. flight numbers (if overseas), bus company details etc.
  - names and classes of students travelling;
  - names and contact numbers of accompanying staff;
  - address and contact details for all accommodation;
  - any other information considered relevant.

## **6. Behaviour on school trips**

- 6.1. All school rules and policies apply while on school trips/outings (Code of Behaviour pt. 4 states *“School trips, holidays, excursions and extra-curricular activities are organised from time to time to a wide variety of destinations. The staff who supervise these trips and activities do so voluntarily and in the interests of the students. It is, therefore, very important that they are not put under stress in such circumstances. Students are expected to behave in an exemplary manner while on trips and when participating in activities. All school rules with regard to alcohol, smoking, drug abuse, vandalism, general behaviour and courtesy apply fully. Staff are authorised to make special arrangements to send misbehaving students home, at the expense of their parents. This may involve rearranged flights if the trip is abroad.*
- 6.2. *If a student misbehaves while on a trip or activity, a record of such misbehaviour will be kept by the school and the incident(s) reviewed by the Year Head(s). Normal sanctions will be applied, up to and including suspension and expulsion in serious cases. Trips and activities are a privilege, not a right. If necessary, the school may refuse permission to participate if a student disrupts normal class, has misbehaved on a previous trip or generally has a poor disciplinary record. In this instance, parents will be informed by letter, a copy of which will be retained in the students file”.* If a student while on a school trip is found to be in serious breach of the Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Headmaster immediately. Where there are reasonable grounds for concern with regard to suspected possession/use of a banned substance or other physical safety concerns, staff will carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc) with the student(s) present.
- 6.3. Punctuality is to be observed at all times and students are expected to meet all time deadlines set for the trip. Students may not absent themselves from the school group at any time without prior consent of the group leaders. Infringement will result in withdrawal from activities or being sent home at a cost to parents/guardians.
- 6.4. Students are permitted to bring digital entertainment items including a camera phone on school trips. The taking or sharing of images considered inappropriate is not permitted. Unauthorised recording of staff or pupils, transfer of images of staff or students, or using the phone to harass others will be considered a serious breach of discipline. Students are prohibited from posting images of staff/students on social networking sites. It should be noted that it is not advisable to bring valuable personal property e.g. jewellery etc on trips where the loss of same is likely to cause upset. Insurance cover for such items, where such exists, may be limited.

- 6.5. An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed by teaching staff immediately on return (or sooner if requested by the Headmaster) for any accidents or incidents which occur. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven substance abuse.

## **7. Health and Safety issues**

- 7.1. The number of staff which accompanies a group on a school trip will be influenced by a number of factors including:
- the number of students travelling;
  - the age and gender 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.
- 7.2. On overseas trips the number of staff accompanying students is often determined by the allocation provided for by the Travel Company (normally 1 teacher with every 10 students). Notwithstanding this the Board of Management reserves the right to stipulate the number of supervisors accompanying a trip entirely at its own discretion.
- 7.3. Health and safety of students and supervisors is a priority when organizing and taking a school tour. Staff taking any tour will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise.
- 7.4. Staff are aware that in general the degree of care required of them should be that of a “careful parent” which would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student. However, should a student infringe any of the conditions laid down, staff cannot be held responsible. Certain trips may facilitate shopping or recreation which may not be directly supervised. This situation will be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to parents/guardians.
- 7.5. Parents/guardians receive a written overview/itinerary of overnight trips and are required to give written consent to their son/daughter taking part on the trip. When doing so cognisance should be taken of any dangers associated with activities mentioned in the itinerary (e.g. skiing, go-karting etc). It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that the organizer of a tour is aware of any special needs, medical or dietary issues, or any activities in which they do not wish their son/daughter to participate. Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- 7.6. Students may not purchase or bring medication (prescription or other) unless the group leader is fully informed and then such medication may be held by that member of staff.
- 7.7. Students should not share medication. Students who use an inhaler must carry it with them at all times.
- 7.8. Basic first aid kits are available from the school office and where deemed appropriate staff should carry same on trips. Expert medical attention is sought should this be thought necessary. On return from, or during, any tour, staff may advise a parent/guardian to seek medical advice, should they deem this appropriate.
- 7.9. In the event of a serious accident occurring during a school trip of any duration the following will be the standard arrangements. The staff member(s) involved will immediately seek the appropriate medical/emergency assistance. Once that has been done contact will be made with the school office

(or Headmaster/Deputy Principal outside of school hours) and hence or otherwise with the parents/guardians of those involved. (On overseas trips, a list of the contact numbers of parents/guardians will be carried by staff for this purpose). If a student requires hospitalisation then they will be accompanied by a member of staff who will remain with them as appropriate or until a parent (or another adult nominated by a parent) can replace them. The school accident report form must be completed as soon as possible after the event.

- 7.10. Dundalk Grammar School requires that all students are covered under the school insurance policy, and the school returns details of all students to the insurers for this purpose. Specific activities are excluded from this policy and parents/guardians may request to see these. Additional insurance for activities not covered or for longer trips will be organised by the school where considered appropriate. Parents/Guardians must sign that they have read and understood the conditions under which their son/daughter is insured.

## **8. Post trip Review**

- 8.1. Following any trip, and where there is an obvious need to do so, staff should relay both verbally and in writing any comments/concerns re venue, organisation, tour operator, suitability of itinerary etc. to school management so as to inform subsequent trip preparation. Similarly it is open to parents to relay any feedback, positive or negative, to the school for the attention of the staff member in charge and/or school management.