



# St Fergal's College

## Trip Policy

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## **1. Purpose**

St. Fergal's College recognises the significant educational, social and cultural benefits that students derive from well-planned school trips, tours, and out-of-school activities. This policy is designed to ensure that educational visits are managed in a safe, efficient and educationally worthwhile manner, in compliance with Department of Education Circulars, Health & Safety legislation, and ETB guidance.

## **2. Scope**

This policy applies to all school-organized trips and tours, including day trips, residential visits, overseas tours, sports outings, Gaisce or adventure activities, curricular field trips, and exchange programmes. It covers planning, supervision, risk assessment, parental consent, financial management, student behaviour, and emergency procedures.

## **3. Planning & Approval**

1. The teacher or trip organiser must submit an initial proposal to the Principal, outlining the purpose, dates, destination, student group, supervision plan, costs, transport and educational benefits of the trip.
2. The Principal (and, where required, the Board of Management) must give approval in principle before detailed arrangements proceed.
3. A detailed trip plan must include:
  - a full itinerary
  - risk assessments
  - supervision structure, including adult-to-student ratios
  - transport and accommodation details
  - insurance and medical plans
  - financial arrangements
4. Parental/guardian consent must be obtained for all participants via a completed consent form either through VSWare permission slip or a letter sent home. This will be dependent on the trip in question. Medical/health and emergency contact information should be collected.
5. Final lists of students and staff, along with itinerary, consent forms, medical details, and emergency contact information, must be held by both the trip leader and the school office before departure.

## **4. Supervision and Staffing**

1. Adequate supervision is essential. Supervision ratios will be determined based on the age and needs of students and the nature of the activity. As a general

guide:

- Day trips: approximately 1 teacher : 20 students
  - Residential / overnight trips: approximately 1 : 10–12 for higher-risk or foreign tours
2. Supervisors should include at least one male and one female teacher when groups are mixed gender.
  3. Any adult volunteers (e.g. parent supervisors) must be Garda-vetted and approved in advance.
  4. All staff and volunteers must be briefed in advance on their roles, responsibilities, emergency procedures, student behaviour expectations, and health & safety protocols.

## **5. Student Selection and Behaviour**

1. Participation in a trip is a privilege. The school reserves the right to refuse a student's participation or withdraw permission if their behaviour, health, or safety would pose a risk to themselves or others.
2. Students must adhere to the School Code of Behaviour and all school policies while on a trip. Misconduct may result in early return home at the expense of parents or guardians.
3. Students and parents must be informed in advance that school rules (including uniform, conduct, digital and substance-related rules) apply during trips and tours, including when abroad.

## **6. Costs, Payments and Financial Management**

1. The costs of trips must be clearly communicated to students and parents well in advance, including transport, accommodation, meals, insurance, and any contingency expenses.
2. Where appropriate, payment plans or fundraising options may be provided to ensure equitable access.
3. Once payments are made (especially deposits or full fees), students who withdraw may not be entitled to a refund unless stipulated in the trip's terms or covered by insurance.
4. Accurate financial records for all trips, including income, expenditure, and receipts, must be maintained by the trip organiser and submitted to the Principal following the trip.

## **7. Insurance and Medical Arrangements**

1. Appropriate insurance must be in place for all trips. This includes public liability cover and, for foreign or residential trips, travel insurance.
2. The school will maintain a record of medical / health information, allergy or

medication needs, and emergency contacts for each student.

3. Parents/guardians must provide explicit consent for emergency medical treatment, including anaesthetic or hospital care, if required.
4. The trip organiser should have contingency plans for early return or emergency evacuation, and parents should be aware of the financial responsibility for such eventualities.

## **8. Risk Assessment & Safety**

1. A detailed risk assessment must be completed for each trip or activity, identifying potential hazards and outlining control measures to minimise risk.
2. Supervisors must monitor risk throughout the trip and have clear procedures in place for handling emergencies, including accidents, illness, student separation, and travel delays.
3. Health and safety procedures should include:
  - head counts and group check-ins
  - clear instructions for students on what to do if they are lost or separated
  - knowledge of local emergency services and embassy/consulate details if abroad
4. First aid kits should be carried, and at least one staff member should be competent in first aid. Medical documentation (e.g. EHIC cards, medical histories) should be carried by the trip leader.
5. Students with additional educational needs or complex care needs will have their participation reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **9. Emergency Procedures & Communication**

1. The group leader will act as the primary contact in emergencies. A school-based contact person must be designated, with full details of the itinerary, contact numbers, and participant list.
2. In the event of an incident, the priorities are to:
  - ensure the safety and well-being of students
  - administer or seek medical attention where needed
  - inform parents/guardians and the school contact as soon as possible
  - document all events, times, contacts, and actions taken
3. For overseas trips, supervisors must know the location and contact details of the nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate and local emergency services.
4. Students should not make direct contact with parents or social media until an official message has been communicated by the group leader or school.

## 10. Post-Trip Evaluation and Reporting

1. After the trip, the trip leader must submit a trip evaluation report to the Principal, including comments on educational outcomes, student behaviour, health or safety incidents, logistical issues, and financial reconciliation.
2. Financial records and trip documentation (permission forms, receipts, incident reports) should be retained securely in the school for a period of at least five years in line with data protection and audit requirements.

## 11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed periodically, or in light of new Department of Education circulars, changes in health and safety guidelines, or after significant incidents or feedback from trip evaluations.

### Ratified:

Reviewed by staff:	Date:
Reviewed by students:	Date:
Approved by BOM Chairperson:	Date:

## Appendix A – Trip Checklist

Trip to:	Date:
Lead/Contact Name:	Phone Number:
Leave Time:	Return Time:
Number of Students:	Number of Adults:

### Information for Staff

Timetable copies and notes distributed to staff	
Staff understand responsibilities	
Students are supervised – staffing proportions including male and female supervisors where appropriate	
Risk assessment completed and signed off	
Emergency contact list in school office	

### Items to be Packed

First aid kit and emergency contact list	
Risk assessment and consent forms	
Mobile phone and emergency contacts	
Travel tickets/passes and itinerary	
Student medical requirements and medications	
High-visibility jackets and hand wipes	

### Ensure Students Have

A contact number(s) for teacher(s)	
Bus pass/ticket	
Water bottle	
Personal medications (if necessary)	
Appropriate clothing/footwear	
Writing material (if necessary)	

## **Appendix B – Student Care Plan (Additional Needs)**

Student Name:	
Class/Year Group:	
Trip Destination:	
Trip Date(s):	
Supervision Ratio:	

### **Pre-Trip Preparation - Medical & Personal Care**

Medication Required:	
Medication Details:	
Dosage & Timing:	
This will be administered by:	
Emergency Procedures:	

### **Communication & Behaviour**

Parental Input:	
Role of the SNA on the trip i.e. direct support, emergency response, monitoring etc.	

### **During the Trip**

Are Breaks required	
Who is monitoring or checking in with the student	
Awareness of triggers/Indicators	
Who contacts parents (if information needs to be communicated)	

### **Sign-Off**

Trip Leader:	Date:
SNA/Support Staff:	Date:
Parent/Guardian:	Date: