

School Tour & Trip Policy



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**ST JOSEPH'S SECONDARY SCHOOL,
SPANISH POINT**



Educational School Tours/Exchange/Trips Policy

Policy Ratified: *15/09/2025*

Review Date: *2028*

Signed: *Paul Reedy*
Principal

Signed: *R. T. Holgate*
Chairperson Board of Management

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all members of the staff of St Joseph's Spanish Point who take students off site. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians. The Code of Behaviour of St Joseph's Spanish Point applies to all students of St Joseph's Spanish Point and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off the school grounds and anywhere students are clearly identified or identifiable as students of the School. For the purpose of this document, **trips** are defined as day trips and excursions, while **tours** are defined as any overnight stays with students.

Rationale for having activities (trips/tours, sporting) and the need for a relevant policy

School Tours/Trips are an integral part of the school programme. Organising a school tour/trip is a voluntary but invaluable contribution to the school. Activities assist in developing social skills and bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment and to build links with the local community and with people of other nationalities. All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Skills in Circular Letter M 20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria contained in this circular.

Financial Planning:

The tour leader will ensure that parents have early information about the costs of the trip/tour.

The cost of a tour abroad will be spread out and payment will be in installments to the tour company directly. Students will receive a payment date schedule. Trip payments will be issued via Tyro.

Spending money for the students will be left to the discretion of the parents but guidelines will be given by the Tour Leader.

School Tours/Trips: Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- To ensure that the policy is developed and regularly monitored and reviewed
- To approve the policy

Principal/ Deputy Principal

- To establish structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- To monitor and support the implementation of the policy
- To promote and foster school tours/trips.

Tour Leader

- It is recommended that one teacher be nominated as the Tour Leader who will be expected to ensure that it is conducted in accordance with agreed standards.
- When the proposal is sanctioned by the Principal the school tour/trip leader will inform the students and parents/guardians concerned.

Approval:

The Tour/trip Leader must obtain permission from the Principal/Deputy Principal to take students on a school tour/trip before distribution of information to students. An outline of the trip/tour, including travel dates, tour company details, price, and general tour/trip itinerary, must accompany the request for permission. The Principal seeks BOM approval for any tours overseas.

Procedure:

1. School Activity must be completed on TYRO
2. Parental consent must be given via Tyro.
3. For Tours Abroad: A completed application form and behaviour contract signed by the student and parent/guardian must be submitted by the stipulated closing date.
4. First deposits on any tour/trip are non-refundable. On withdrawal, a student **may** receive a full refund if another student takes his/her place for school trips. Terms & Conditions will apply for school tours organised by travel agencies. Refunds are

normally not possible and are at the discretion of the Tour Company. Late Payment Penalty may also apply.

5. The Principal and Deputy Principal reserve the right to refuse an applicant on the grounds of (a) school discipline, (b) where attendance <80% (c) where the supervision needs or personal needs of the applicant would place an excessive burden on the group leader or other supervisors, (c) the submission of an incomplete or dishonest application.
6. School Tours Abroad must be booked with a licensed fully bonded travel agent.
7. The Tour/Trip leader should ensure the ratio of adults to students should be appropriate. The number of staff which accompanies a group will be influenced by a number of factors including but not exhaustive of
 - The number of students travelling
 - The age and maturity of the students
 - The location of the trip/tour
 - The availability of alternative adult supervision eg SNA
 - 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
 - The activities to be engaged in

Prior to the Trip/Tour

- Full travel insurance must be provided by the Travel Agent for all staff and students travelling on tours abroad. Students must have their European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.
- Before a student with a **medical condition** is allowed to participate in a tour/trip, the school management must be confident that the needs of the student can be managed without compromising the health and safety of the student in question, the other students participating, or the itinerary of the trip. Each case will be considered on an individual basis in consultation with parents/guardians.
- The number of students participating may vary depending on the nature of the tour/trip and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group.
- The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of a non-refundable deposit. Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.

- If a passport is required, a photocopy of the student's passport must be included with the deposit. All passports must be valid for at least six months following the tour.
- For Tours, Parents/guardians will be required to complete and sign a Medical Information Form and this must be returned to the Tour Leader by the specified date.
- For Tours, 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/guardians should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel are up to date and in order. The school will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from traveling as a result.
- Parents/guardians should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended vaccinations for the destination. It is important that parents/guardians realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their son/daughter to receive all necessary vaccinations.
- Students **must** attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the tour.
- Details of accommodation, travel arrangements, any special local conditions, personal items that the student needs to bring, guidelines for spending money and money for extras such as meals and excursions will also be made available to parents/guardians.

During the Trip/Tour

- Mindful of the DES guidelines regarding Child Protection, teachers/supervisors will act in a responsible manner, having regard to the fact that they are in the company of and responsible for the care of students. Teachers/supervisors will maintain the same standards of care as apply in a school situation.

- Certain Tours/Trips may facilitate shopping or recreation which may not be directly supervised. This situation will usually be indicated on the permission slip, itinerary or information letter sent to parents/guardians. The school expects that all students travelling on a tour /trip will display a level of maturity commensurate of their age. Students on tours overnight will not be supervised on a 24 hour basis and all extended school tours will involve periods of time without direct supervision. Parents who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should not permit their son/daughter to take part in such trips/tours
- Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the tour may be necessary. If needed teachers/supervisors will set up a Google Chat Group with students through their school email to contact students while on tour.
- Mobile Phones will be collected at night for Overnight Tours
- The Tour Leader should have two emergency contact numbers for each student travelling and the contact details for the Principal and the Deputy Principal.
- Staff should never enter a dormitory room/student bedroom without knocking first.
- In the event that staff have to enter a dormitory to check on students it is imperative that the staff is of the same gender as the students in that dormitory. A loud knock should happen in advance of entering the room
- If necessary two members of staff should carry out inspections of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc) with the student(s) present. This will only be done for good reasons based on reasonable grounds, such as concern for physical safety, suspected possession or use of a banned substance or other concerns.
- If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty his/her own pockets, suitcase / bags or to search the clothing that he/she is wearing.
- Where sanctions are imposed, procedures shall be applied as per the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Should a student be guilty of minor misbehaviour, the incident should be dealt with in a swift and firm manner and a verbal warning may be all that is needed. The Tour/Trip Leader may however feel that specific sanctions are required such as the student missing out on a

specific activity e.g. bowling or a disco. If a sanction is being imposed it must be made clear to the student why it is being imposed. A student prevented from attending an activity must be supervised by a member of the Tour/Trip Team for the duration of the activity. Further sanctions may be imposed when the student returns to school e.g. the student may be prevented from involvement in future tours/trips.

- If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the expectations in the School Code of Behaviour, the staff member in charge must contact the Principal immediately.
- An Accident/Incident Report Form must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: accident/injury of student/staff member, persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; disrespect towards staff travelling; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven alcohol or substance abuse. **If the tour/trip leader suspects any student of drinking alcohol they reserve the right to issue a breathalyser test¹. If a student refuses, it will be viewed as an admission of guilt.**
- In the case of a serious/criminal incident (shop lifting, a violent attack etc.) the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Principal will be informed immediately and the matter may be handed over to the local police authorities.
- **Following gross misconduct, a student may be sent home at parent's/guardian's expense.**
- If a student becomes ill he/she should, if necessary, be referred to a doctor or hospital as soon as possible and the parent(s)/guardian(s) notified ASAP.

Responsibilities of students whilst on a school tour/trip

Students must

- Follow the Code of Behaviour on school tours/trips and adhere to the school expectations at all times.
- Follow the instructions of staff members at all times.

¹ Medical exemptions may apply

- Not purchase or have on their person any item which could cause major security delays at airports.
- Not vacate the vicinity of the accommodation or bus at any stage without being accompanied by or with the consent of one of the teachers/supervisors.
- Not wander off or break away from the party without permission. **Students must stay in groups of no less than three at all times and no student may wander off on his/her own. If the group has free time for shopping, they must remain together in groups of no less than three and must return to the appointed place on time.**
- Show respect for all staff members and other students at all times.
- Participate fully in the activities of the tour/trip.
- Not take any unnecessary risks or undertake any activity that they fear.
- Look out for anything that might hurt or threaten anyone in the group and tell the group leader about it.
- Behave during leisure time if not under the direct supervision of teachers/staff members.
- Socialise in communal areas, i.e. no boys in girls' rooms and vice versa.
- Go to their rooms at the times decided by the Tour Leader, remain in their own room and switch lights off within an hour in order to ensure that students will be sufficiently rested and get maximum benefit from the visit.
- Remain in their own room. Visiting other students' rooms is not allowed as teachers need to know where students are at all times.
- At all times strictly uphold protocol and respect in regard to gender relationships.
- Not be in possession of, or use or abuse tobacco, alcohol*, drugs or any other illegal substance. ***If the group leader suspects any student of drinking alcohol they reserve the right to issue a breathalyser test². If a student refuses, it will be viewed as an admission of guilt.**
- Respect others at all times e.g. drivers, guides, cabin crew, fellow travellers, those sharing transport and those sharing accommodation.

² Medical exemptions may apply

- Follow the rules of the hotel, hostel or other type of accommodation where they are staying.
- Be responsible for leaving their bedrooms tidy.
- Be responsible for leaving seats on all forms of transport in a tidy condition.
- Have respect for and comply with local customs and laws, particularly when travelling abroad.
- Be responsible for their own belongings.
- Students are not allowed to purchase the following items on the school tour/trip:
 1. Knives of any description.
 2. Lasers of any description.
 3. Fireworks.
 4. Alcohol
 5. Drugs of any description. (The purchase of any prescribed or unprescribed medicines must be in the presence of a supervising adult).
 6. Any material of a sexually explicit nature.
 7. Cigarettes or any form of tobacco/ E cigarettes/ Vapes.

The Group leader reserves the right to confiscate any of the above i.e.

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Students must also note the following:

- Money and valuables are the students' responsibility on tour/trip. Expensive digital equipment, clothing/footwear should not be brought on any trip/trip unless you are prepared to take **full** responsibility for its safekeeping.
- Each teacher/supervisor will be responsible for a specific number of students and students must meet with their assigned teacher/supervisor at the correct locations at agreed times.
- The good name and reputation of the school must be protected and promoted at all times.

- Students must bear in mind that an excursion is educational in purpose and organised and directed by St Joseph's Spanish Point. The final word and sanction on any issue relating to the trip resides with the accompanying teachers/supervisors.
- Mobile phone use is governed by the schools Mobile Phone Policy, AUP Policy, Anti Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour. The misuse of mobile phones, camera phones for the capture or dissemination of inappropriate content will be dealt with as per AUP Policy and the school's Code of Behaviour. School management will respond appropriately in such cases and will have the full range of consequences, outlined in the Code of Behaviour, open to them.
- Students will be held financially responsible for any damage they may cause.

Monitoring and Review

St Joseph's Spanish Point will monitor, review and evaluate this Policy on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.