



# POLICY FOR THE ORGANISATION OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS.

**Date of Review:** June 2026

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**Approved by Board of Governors:** 11<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**Signature:**

## **POLICY FOR THE ORGANISATION OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS.**

### **Rationale**

Mount Lourdes Grammar School is committed to enhancing students' learning and development by providing learning opportunities and experiences outside the formal classroom. Educational trips and visits are used productively to consolidate and extend learning, develop skills and aptitudes for life and work and develop self-confident, independent learners.

Educational trips further the aims of the school:

- to motivate our students in the pursuit of a high standard of academic achievement and critical thinking by providing a varied range of learning experiences in a stimulating environment.
- to ensure that our students have access to a curriculum which makes explicit the links between school-based learning and Life and Work.
- to enable each student to make the most of her talents by providing opportunities for participation in a range of aesthetic, cultural, skills based and leisure activities.
- to promote among staff and students a sense of personal identity and citizenship and encourage mutual respect for cultural diversity.

The School is committed to incorporating educational visits into the curriculum providing that they enhance students' understanding and experiences, and that their inclusion is practical, considering the constraints of staffing, cost, duration and timing.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety and well-being of students while they are in our care during a trip or educational visit.

In organizing trips, all reasonable steps will be taken by the management of the school and the organizing staff to ensure that potential risks are recognised and minimized. A risk assessment will be carried out in advance of all planned trips. This policy sets out the practice and controls which the school will put in place to minimise potential risks.

In Mount Lourdes we believe that all students should have equal access to all areas of the Curriculum. The needs of students who experience learning difficulties and/or medical conditions are met in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice 1998 and SENDO 2005. We aim to identify, assess and make provision for students who have Special Educational Needs and we are committed to removing barriers to learning and achievement. Reasonable adjustment will be made to enable all students have access to educational trips.

### **Principles**

- The organiser will have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and hence for the health and safety of the group. In this regard, the organiser will be representing the Principal during the visit.
- The minimum staff-to-student ratio is dependent on the nature of the visit and the age of the students. Organising staff should consult with the Principal/teacher responsible for school trips in advance. Permission to proceed with the visit will only be given when the Principal is satisfied that provision has been made for the adequate staffing of the visit.

- All accompanying staff will appreciate the limits and levels of their responsibilities and appreciate that the principle of 'in loco parentis' will apply for the duration of the trip. All staff will be responsible for the supervision of the students and they should act as if they were in a school environment.
- The organiser will carry out a comprehensive Risk Assessment in advance of the trip. In addition to health and safety, this assessment will take account of child protection, financial risks, transport, students' conduct and behaviour. They will make appropriate and adequate preparations for emergencies and ensure that all accompanying staff are familiar with procedures.
- Students will be provided with clear guidance on appropriate behaviour including while not under direct supervision by staff e.g. at theme parks, shopping centres etc..
- When the organisational details of the visit have been confirmed, all relevant forms must be completed and copies provided to appropriate personnel.
- An evaluation of the trip will be carried out by the trip organiser and any learning points communicated to the teacher responsible for school trips. This feedback will inform future provision.
- A report on student behaviour will be communicated to the relevant Head of Year to deal with as appropriate in liaison with the principal.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Educational Visit Organiser/Accompanying Staff.**

- Prior to any detailed organisation, provisional permission for the visit to take place must be obtained from the Principal.
- The organiser will also appoint a deputy.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all students during educational visits outside the school premises, it is mandatory that at least two adults supervise each trip. This supervision policy helps to provide adequate oversight and support, ensuring that any emergencies or issues can be promptly addressed.
- The organising teacher will identify members of staff who are willing to accompany the students on the visit and will also identify extra members of staff to stand by, in case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Accompanying staff will be advised before the trip of their roles and responsibilities, their duty of care and will be made aware of any relevant child protection issues.
- All supervisors will be aware of the medical needs of students and the emergency procedures that may need to be taken when dealing with them.
- The organising teacher will ensure that all accompanying staff are aware of any contingency plans for inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances.
- The organising teacher will ensure that all accompanying staff are aware of the first-aid facilities including emergency telephone numbers such as the local emergency services, local hospital. Staff must also be aware of the contact numbers for the Irish and British Embassies whilst abroad.
- Students should be made aware of the implications for their recent, current or future

learning in relation to the visit.

- Students will be made aware of what will be expected of them in terms of their learning and code of behaviour.
- In advance of the trip the organiser will ensure that adequate insurance has been arranged.
- In the event of private cars being used teachers should ensure that their insurance covers the transportation of students.
- When money is being collected students should be given a receipt and the money should be lodged in the School Office as soon as possible.

### **Communication/Contact with Parents**

- Parents or guardians should be informed in writing about the trip as early as possible. The letter should explain the nature and purpose of the planned visit and outline the programme/itinerary.
- Parents/guardians must provide a signed consent form and provide relevant medical or other relevant information as appropriate.
- Parents/guardians must provide contact details for use in an emergency.
- Parents should also provide appropriate clothing, food, etc, for their daughter.
- The letter should also contain a section on meeting the costs of the visit in terms of transport, food, admission fees etc.
- In giving permission to participate in the trip it is assumed that permission is being granted for students to participate in all planned activities.
- Parent and students should be informed in advance about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a student will be returned home safely if required, and who will meet the associated costs.

### **Risk Assessment**

- The organiser should carry out a comprehensive Risk Assessment in advance of the trip. In addition to health and safety this assessment should take account of child protection, financial risks, transport, students' conduct and behaviour.
- The Risk Assessment should make appropriate and adequate preparations for emergencies and ensure that all accompanying staff are familiar with procedures
- Where possible the organiser must be satisfied that the venue is a suitable one and any officials from the venue who will be involved in the visit are qualified and have been vetted for child protection purposes.
- Where possible the organiser should make a preliminary visit to the venue so to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. If this is not possible they should seek to obtain other sources of information including a copy of the Risk Assessment from the venue.

- The contact numbers of each staff member accompanying the group should be recorded on the Risk Assessment.
- For annual visits the Risk Assessment should be reviewed and signed each year.
- A copy of the Risk Assessment should be emailed to the Principal and the 'Teacher in charge of School Trips'.
- Two copies of the Risk Assessment along with all the travelling student's details should be kept at the school and one taken on the trip. One of the two copies will be given to the Main Office for the School Principal and the other one to Mr M McGuinness.

### **Child Protection/Safeguarding Issues**

- In all their contact with students, staff in Mount Lourdes follow the guidance and procedures described in the DENI publication 1999/10 'Pastoral Care in Schools - Child Protection'. These guidelines also apply while on school trips.
- Where possible the organiser must be satisfied that the venue is a suitable one and any officials from the venue who will be involved in the visit are qualified and have been vetted for child protection purposes.
- Venue staff must not be left in sole charge of the students.
- The decision to allow students access to their mobile phones during school trips will be decided in consultation with the Principal on an individual trip basis.
- Staff should use school camera equipment to take photographs. Staff should not hold photographs of students on their personal cameras or electronic devices.
- In the event of a staff member taking photographs using a personal device they should, on return to school, transfer the photographs onto a school device. They should then delete the photographs from their personal devices.
- On residential trips all students should carry the name, address and telephone number of the accommodation in the unlikely event that the individual becomes separated from the group.
- Students should not display their names badges on their clothing as this could result in individuals being isolated from the group by an apparently friendly personal call.
- Students should be informed of the potential risks and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others. Students will also be provided with clear guidance on appropriate behaviour including while not under direct supervision by staff e.g. at theme parks, shopping centres etc..

### **Dealing with a Critical Incident during a trip.**

In the event of a critical incident involving a member of staff or student body, the organising teacher or another member of staff will put in place the procedures outlined below.

- Should a critical incident occur the organising teacher will take responsibility for the management of the incident. If this is not practical or appropriate, then any member of staff may assume responsibility.

- If an incident occurs first aid will be administered, if appropriate.
- Medical assistance should be sought.
- Any student(s) that requires hospital treatment should be accompanied by a staff member.
- The safety and well-being of other students should be ensured.
- Maintain an atmosphere of calm and order.
- If a Critical Incident should happen during the trip then the trip organiser or another member of staff will alert the School Principal as soon as possible and as a matter of urgency.
- All communication with parents will be conducted by the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Governors.
- All enquiries from the broadcast or print media regarding the incident will be dealt with by the Principal or Chairperson of the Board of Governors.
- The trip organiser and accompanying staff will hold contact details of the nearest hospital/ Accident & Emergency.

### **Communication within school**

- In all cases, the teachers from whose lessons students will be absent should be advised of that fact. This can be posted on SIMS and the intranet.
- Staff should put the trip details, including the staff and students involved, in the shared calendar in Outlook. This will centralise details of school events including trips and in this way facilitate whole school planning and communication.
- The School Office staff should be notified of the dates and times of all visits, and of the students and teachers involved. This will aid the school's administrative duties such as the provision of cover for absent staff and the management of student attendance records.
- The catering staff should also be notified, preferably at least two weeks prior to the visit.

***All provisions of this policy do not necessarily apply to local visits of limited duration.***

**In formulating this policy the following publications were consulted;**

- The Educational Visits - Best Practice ELB Guide 2009
- Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits - DFEE (1999)
- DFES Supplements (2002)
- Health and Safety: Advice on Legal Duties and Powers. (2014)
- School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities. (2011)

- Chapter 14 - Educational Visits of Guide for School Governors (DENI) (2015)
- CCMS Circular (2005/30)

**Links with other school policies**

Positive Behaviour Management Policy

Child Protection Policy

Critical Incident Policy

Learning Support Policy

Substance Use and Misuse Policy