

ROCKBROOK SCHOOL TRIPS POLICY

1. The plan for school trips will normally be drawn up before the beginning of the school year and finalised by school management in September. In some cases trips may need a longer run in, and so will require earlier approval. Trips abroad or longer trips (over three days) require the approval of the board of management.

2. School trips and exchanges will be organised to enhance the learning of students. Guidelines in departmental circular letters 12/79 and M62/83 regarding school absences, teacher absences, lost days, prior approval will be observed. Disruption to the normal school timetable will be minimised and use will be made of the school holiday period to facilitate longer trips. Teachers involved in school trips will work closely with school management to ensure there is proper cover during any teacher's absence. Issues regarding DES approval for a trip* should be considered (as indemnity issues or salary issues may arise), although it is school policy that school trips of any sizeable duration take place outside of the normal class teaching periods. (*usually required if the trip is for more than three school-days duration). The current practise for a number of years has been to timetable all school trips for the holiday periods, the only exception being the TY trip which usually overlaps with the school term.

3. Proper insurance cover will be secured for all trips, and co-ordinated at school management level. Parents will provide written permission for students' participation in school trips. For longer trips a detailed permission form will be completed which will include details of next of kin and all medical needs of the student. The school will ensure that all school trips have adequate supervision. Proper account will be given to safety issues that might arise (e.g. on field trips, Africa solidarity trips). Clear meeting points will be designated for the beginning and end of all school trips. Should incidents or accidents arise on a trip, a full report will be written up by the teacher in charge.

4. Exclusion of individual students from trips is a school management decision. Such decisions will be made taking into account a student's school performance, his level of co-operation with teachers, his previous performance on school trips, his capacity to make the trip difficult for other students. It is acknowledged that some trips may not be suitable for some students due to temperament, maturity and also occasionally due to disability issues.

5. School trips are intended to be learning opportunities for the students involved as well as good opportunities for personal development and building friendships. It is standard procedure that the timetable for the trip be approved in advance by school management, that reports of anything untoward that happened on the trip are relayed afterwards to school management by the teacher in charge.

As part of the personal development element of the trip the teacher in charge should provide a brief report on individual student's participation to the school mentoring committee.

6. Every attempt will be made to ensure that the trip budget is adequate to meet the needs of the group, and that each trip pays fully for its own expenses (and occasionally makes a contribution to the school overheads). Value for money is a major consideration in planning any trip, and the school will generally avoid high cost trips which effectively exclude those who cannot afford them. The trip leader will provide a full income and expenditure statement (and receipts as required). School trip details will be incorporated into the school accounts, unless other arrangements have been agreed by the school principal.

Travelling on School trips

The school policy on school trips state that a decision for a student to travel on a school trip lies with school management. *‘Such decisions will be made taking into account a student’s school performance, his level of co-operation with teachers, his previous performance on school trips, his capacity to make the trip difficult for other students. It is acknowledged that some trips may not be suitable for some students due to temperament, maturity and also occasionally due to disability issues.’*

The points below expand on this policy.

1. Travelling on a school trip requires that the leaders in charge take responsibility for all students in their care. Young people must have sufficient maturity to take and follow instructions and to look after their own belongings.

2. Teachers must have a high degree of certainty that those in their care will

- (a) respond positively to commands given by leaders;
- (b) not get involved in unruly or ill-advised behaviour;
- (c) on all occasions do nothing that would undermine the good name of the school;
- (d) on all occasions do nothing that would bring extra difficulty or problems for the group;
- (e) behave in such a way at night-time so as to respect the sleep rest and needs of all others in the group
- (e) on all occasions do nothing that might cause difficulty for future groups;
- (f) make ongoing efforts to get on well with all others in the group.

3. Students wishing to go on school trips must seek permission and receive permission from the school management. Poor behaviour in the school, especially around issues of respect for teachers and fellow students and responsiveness to school rules, or if it is consistent poor behaviour, will lead to a student not being eligible for a school trip. The school management will review in an ongoing way the effort / behaviour marked attained in school reports in making its judgement, as well as the information provided on student behaviour by individual teachers.

4. Older students going as leaders on school trips must undertake to follow the trip rules as laid down for the whole group.

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