School Tours Policy
Boherbue Comprehensive School

Rationale:

School tours and class trips provide educational opportunities, which often cannot be provided in other ways. The purpose of school tours and class trips is to enhance learning outcomes by providing students with enriching real-world experiences that complement and deepen their classroom knowledge.
School tours and class trips require careful planning and preparation in order for them to be successful. They need to be conducted following clear guidelines.
Some examples of school tours and class trips at Boherbue Comprehensive School include cultural tours to mainland Europe as well as day trips to do field work in the case of Geography and Science; trips to the theatre and public library in the case of English, trips relating to sport in the case of Physical Education (PE). The list is not exhaustive.

Department of Education circular guidelines

This policy has been drawn up and reviewed in the context of Department of Education Circular Letter M 20/04 which can be accessed by clicking on the following link Circular M20/04 - Educational Tours by School Groups (both inside and outside the State) (File Format Word 45KB) (assets.gov.ie)

Purposes:

1. To provide students with cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities outside the classroom in a variety of settings.

2. To provide clear guidelines for students, parents and staff on the procedures to be followed in organising tours.

3. To provide clear guidelines as to the manner in which those taking part in a school tour are to conduct themselves.

General Guidelines:

1. A tour which takes place in the name of the school is under the control of the school.

2. Before any move is made to organise a tour, permission to begin organising the tour must be sought from the Principal and or the Deputy Principal who will act on behalf of the Board of Management.

3. The Principal and or the Deputy Principal (who will act on behalf of the Board of Management) prior to giving permission for the tour organisation to proceed must be assured that:

- It is staffed by an approved person and that there are adequate teaching staff to facilitate the tour.

- The tour has an itinerary and a list of student expectations which will be issued to parents prior to the tour taking place.
- In case of foreign, the finances will be managed appropriately in dialogue with the Travel agency.
    - Students who do not go on the tour for whatever reason; and who have paid will not be able to recoup money from the school as all finances are managed by the travel agency. However, they may take out insurance and use it to claim a refund if need be.
- The itinerary is a suitable one for the age and abilities of the students.
- The timing of the tour is such that clashes with other school activities are kept to a minimum and ensures compliance with Department of Education guidelines.

4. Members of a touring group will be selected from within the school by the teacher(s) in charge, and approved by the Principal and or Deputy Principal in dialogue with the board of management.

5. Organisation:

a) Meetings: prior to any out of state tour, parents and pupils are to be invited to a briefing session in the school.
Minutes of all meetings and decisions taken are to be kept and given to the Principal.

b) Prior to any overnight tour within the state parents are requested to sign the attached consent form.

c) Normal rules as per the school's *Code of Behaviour Policy* and *Substance Use Policy* apply to any student going on day trips.

d) Management: There shall be a management committee comprising of the Principal, group leader and participating staff.

e) Finance: all accounts are to be administered and managed by the Travel agent in the event that students are going on a tour abroad. In relation to day trips/day tours, teachers manage the finances and accounts secretary ensure that finances are accounted for.

6. The School's *Code of Behaviour Policy and Substance Abuse Policy* applies at all times while on trips within the state and trips outside the state. Parents/guardians and students will read both of these policies and sign the Notice to Parents/guardians form (Appendix 1)

7. Students taking prescribed drugs or medicine on prescription are to declare this to the staff member organising the tour prior to the commencement of the tour. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are requested to inform the school prior to a student's admission in first year of any special needs, medical needs or medication required by their son/daughter. If changes to health occur thereafter, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the school in writing. In some cases, students will have Health Care Plans.

8. Staff will check the Student Health Care Plans and ensure that all measures are taken to adhere to the plan before and during the trip/tour.

9. The staff members in charge are responsible for applying the school's *Code of Behaviour* Policy and taking appropriate action if and when this policy is breached.

10. Students regardless of their age must abide by school rules in relation to the consumption of Alcohol, cigarettes, vaping products or drugs of any kind.

11. Any student going on a school trip undertakes to adhere to staff members' instructions and to accept the decisions of the staff member in charge.

12. Should the teacher in charge decide that a student's behaviour is such that the student must leave the tour, the cost is to be paid for by the student's parents/guardians.

13. The day to day running of the tour is at the discretion of the tour leader in collaboration with the approved staff.

14. The tour leader will have a school mobile phone in their possession at all times during the school tour. The mobile phone number of each student will be stored in the school mobile phone prior to the tour commencing. These numbers will be deleted from the school mobile phone following the trip. Each student will be issued with the school mobile phone number. The school mobile phone will be used in the event of an emergency. Students will be issued with guidelines prior to the tour with regard to the use of mobile phones while on the trip.

15. If an incident occurs on the tour, the tour leader will contact school management without delay using the school mobile phone

Health and Safety Risk Assessment

In advance of the school tour/trip, the tour leader in consultation with the principal and parents/guardians of the students will conduct a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. This assessment will involve examining the activities which form part of the tour/trip; and entering into a dialogue with the principal and parents/guardians with regards to each student's capacity to partake in these activities; keeping in mind at all times the health and safety of the student and the possible impact such activities may have on the student's health, safety and wellbeing. The complexities with regard to the rigours of the school tour itinerary will be discussed with the parents/ guardians relating to the challenges/difficulties and the potential impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the student. Following on from this, a decision will be made with regard to accommodations which need to be put in place to facilitate a student's participation in the tour/trip. In some instances, depending on the needs of the student, resources required, and activities involved the school may not be in a position to facilitate participation as it will pose a serious risk to the student's health, safety and wellbeing. This decision will be made in consultation with parents/guardians.

Health and safety of students and supervisors is a priority when organising and taking a school trip/tour. Teachers taking any tour/trip will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise.

Other key policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Substance Use Policy

This School Tours Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Boherbue Comprehensive School on

Reviewed and approved by the Board of Management at meeting of 26th November 2024

Chairperson of Board: Catherine Fitzpatrick

Signature: 

Principal: Ms Vera Leader

Signature: 

Appendix 1

Notice to Parents/guardians

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1. Any tour which takes place in the name of the school is under the control of the school. Members of a touring group will be selected by the teacher(s) in charge and approved of by the Principal.

2. School rules apply at all times in respect of general behaviour, as per the school's *Code of Behaviour Policy* and *Substance Use Policy*.

3. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will read the *Code of Behaviour Policy* and the *Substance Use Policy* with their child to ensure that it is understood.

4. The staff member(s) in charge are responsible for applying the school's *Code of Behaviour Policy* and taking appropriate action if and when any aspect of the policy is breached.

5. Any student agreeing to go on a school trip undertakes to adhere to staff members' instructions and accept the decisions of the staff member in charge.

6. Should the teacher in charge decide that a student's behaviour is such that the student must leave the tour, the cost of transporting the student back to school is to be paid for by the students' parent(s)/guardian(s).

I have read and understand the above rules pertaining to school trips.

Signed: _____
Student

Signed: _____
Parent/guardian