

Policy of Alexandra College on Educational Outings & Tours

Scope of Educational Outings and Tours policy: This policy applies to all members of the staff of Alexandra College who take students off campus. It is applicable to the students participating in the activity and to their parents/guardians.

The Code of Behaviour of Alexandra College applies to all students of Alexandra College and relates to all school activities both during and outside of normal school hours; it applies both on and off the campus and anywhere students are clearly identified or identifiable as students of the College.

In particular, Section 7 of the Code of Behaviour of Alexandra College states:

7. *Outings and Tours*

The Code of Behaviour also applies to all outings and to tours, whether or not they involve an overnight stay.

7.1 Before a student is accepted for a tour, her previous behaviour may be taken into consideration.

7.2 Parents/guardians will be notified, in advance, of all tours and both parents and student should sign the appropriate consent form. In this way parents, students and teachers enter into a partnership promoting good and appropriate behaviour at all times.

7.3 Parental consent is not required for outings, sanctioned by the Principal, which take place during the school day.

For further details please refer to Policy on “Outings and Tours”.

Rationale for having tours/outings and the need for a relevant policy

1. Alexandra College exists to provide an effective education service to all its students and is committed to the education, in the broadest sense of the word, of all students who attend the College. Alexandra College provides an academic education which also recognises that exposure to a variety of experiences and cultures is part of an holistic education.
2. The curriculum content of some subjects requires field studies/tours/outings/recreational activities, which take place off campus.
3. Tours assist in bonding between students, as well as providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.
4. There should be a balanced programme of outings and tours for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.
5. All educational tours must be consistent with the rationale as specified by the Department of Education and Science in Circular Letter M 20/04. All reasonable efforts will be made to satisfy all of the criteria contained in this circular.
6. To assist staff¹ in the planning of tours and outings, so that they are aware of all necessary precautions which must be observed to provide for the health and safety of staff and students.

¹ Definition of staff – Any person who is employed by Alexandra College.

It also ensures that tours and outings take place efficiently and smoothly and that the standard of supervision is firmly within guidelines and standards.

7. To clarify expectations of behaviour for all tours and to outline the conditions whereby a student may be refused permission to be included on a trip.
8. To involve all members of the school community in ratifying this policy on tours/outings in order to promote partnership, ownership and implementation of an active living policy.

Links to Mission Statement

This Policy has been developed in line with our Mission Statement which states that Alexandra College aims “It is our hope that every student who leaves this College will be equipped not only to make her own way in the world but also to make her particular contribution to society and at the same time continue her lifelong learning process”.

Links to Ethos

This policy reflects the ethos of Alexandra College which has inherited a commitment:

“to learn to think independently,
to tolerate and value diversity,

.....

by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the College.”

Objectives

- That the health, safety and welfare of our students is safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in the nature of the trip chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the demands on the physical resources of the girls, having regard to their age and capacity, and the dangers to which they may be exposed.
- That in relation to potential destinations the following are recommended²:
 - 1st year students have day tours within Ireland
 - 2nd years may travel to England
 - 3rd years may travel to mainland Europe
 - 4th, 5th and 6th year students – tours are generally subject based
- That students gain maximum educational benefit and enjoyment from all tours/outings
- Finally that, staff are aware that the degree of care required of them should be that of a “careful parent” which would vary with the circumstances and the age of the student.

² Agreed at staff meeting 31st Jan 2005
2007-08

Content of policy:

- 7.1 Day Tours within Ireland (including Northern Ireland)**
- 7.2 Overnight tours, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland**
- 7.3 General Guidelines for the PE programme.**

7.1. Day Tours within Ireland (including Northern Ireland)

- 7.1.1 Day tours may take place during the school day or may extend beyond normal school hours.
- 7.1.2 Day tours must have the approval of the Principal.
- 7.1.3 Members of staff who wish to take students on a day tour must put their request in writing to the Principal by completing the Tour Proposal Form in Appendix 1, which also is available on computer. At least two weeks notice must be given. Included in the proposal should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the tour.
- 7.1.4 Day tours that are planned to take place entirely within normal school hours do not need specific parental permission. At the start of the school year parents will give advance written permission for all such tours that have the approval of the Principal. Both parents and students must sign the Code of Behaviour section on this Permission Form to indicate their understanding and acceptance of the Code of Behaviour of Alexandra College which applies to all school activities, whether on or off campus.
- 7.1.5 Specific parental permission is required for a day tour that:
- is expected to extend beyond normal school hours
 - has one of its destinations in Northern Ireland
 - includes an activity which requires supervision by trained professionals (such as ice-skating or to an Outdoor Education Centre)
- 7.1.6 Students who have a history of inappropriate behaviour may be excluded from day tours.
- 7.1.7 Once the Principal has approved a tour, the organiser should:
- enter the details onto the College database
 - in order to minimise any medical risk, submit a list of the names of those travelling to the College nurse
 - in order to inform parents/guardians, forward brief details of the tour to the Deputy Principal for inclusion in AlexPress and in the calendar on the Alexandra College website
- 7.1.8 On all day tours there must be an appropriate ratio between the number of students and the number of staff travelling. This ratio will vary depending on the nature of the trip and the age of the students travelling. Students in First Year will require most supervision. On a private coach there should be at least one member of staff in addition to the driver. On public transport there should be at least one member of staff for every ten students in years 1 - 4.
- 7.1.9 Day tours may involve a financial cost to the student. For example, a fee may be charged to cover the cost of transportation to/from sporting events. In the case of financial difficulties, application for assistance may be made to the Principal.

- 7.1.10 The College will always have the mobile/contact numbers of the coach company or staff involved in case of delays or any other occurrences.
- 7.1.11 On occasion it may be suitable for Senior Cycle students (Fifth and Sixth Year students, and also Transition Year students in certain circumstances) to travel independently to and/or from an event. In such an instance, the organiser of the tour must advise parents in advance. Junior Cycle students may not do so.
- 7.1.12 For trips that extend beyond normal school hours, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that arrangements are in place for their daughter's journey to/from the College. The organiser of the tour must be informed in advance of these arrangements.
- 7.1.13 On occasion, staff may drive students to/from an event; this is covered within the College's insurance arrangements provided that the number of students is within the capacity of the vehicle.
- 7.1.14 A member of staff should only travel alone with a student when parental permission has been obtained.
- 7.1.15 On completion of a tour, the organiser must complete the "trip report" section on the College database.
- 7.1.16 An Accident/Incident Report Form (Appendix 5) must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven substance abuse.

7.2 Overnight tours, inside or outside the Republic of Ireland

- 7.2.1 Members of staff, who wish to take students on an overseas tour, must submit their request for approval to the Principal, by completing the Tour Proposal Form in Appendix 1. Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the tour. The request must be received before the end of May in any school year for inclusion in the following year's programme.
- 7.2.2 An overseas tour must be organised through a bonded travel agency. This does not apply to travel within the island of Ireland.
- 7.2.3 The number of students participating varies depending on the nature of the tour and the staff/student ratio will be appropriate to the age group and as recommended by the travel agency.
- 7.2.4 In the case of tours being oversubscribed, priority is given to those students who are studying the appropriate subject. Staff in charge reserve the right to refuse any student they deem unsuitable for the tour. Those considered unsuitable would include:
- ❑ students who in the past have proved unruly or undisciplined on tours
 - ❑ students who have a poor discipline record in the school
- 7.2.5 The initial letter to parents should contain a draft itinerary and deadline for registering and payment of non-refundable deposit, and also include the Information for Parents and Students and Rules and Regulations for Tours (as in Appendix 3 of this policy). Parents must be made aware that the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- 7.2.6 The organiser should factor into the budget an extra amount (maximum 10% of the full tour cost) to cover any extras that may not be covered in the basic cost.
- 7.2.7 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 trip.
- 7.2.8 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 should be informed that students with non-EU passports may need visas for EU countries.
- 7.2.9 Students must have their E111 or European Health Insurance Card for travel to countries in the EU.
- 7.2.10 It is important to impress upon parents that the onus is on them to ensure that their daughter has all necessary up-to-date documentation well in advance of the tour.
- 7.2.11 Parents should be informed in good time if there are any mandatory or recommended inoculations for the destination. It is important that parents realise that the onus is on them to make arrangements for their daughter to receive all necessary inoculations.

- 7.2.12 Students must attend all information meetings and co-operate with all requests pertaining to the tour.
- 7.2.13 Following receipt of the deposit, parents will receive the Permission Letter and Form (as in Appendix 4), all sections of which must be completed and the form returned to the organiser at least two weeks before travel. No alterations or additions may be made to any official College form. 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 sent to parents.
- 7.2.14 Mobile phone communication between teachers/supervisors and students on the tour may be necessary. A list should be made of participants' mobile phone numbers (as given on the Permission Form) and students should have the mobile phone numbers of participating staff – to be carried with them at all times while on the tour. It is recommended that a credit card size laminated list be made, which may be easily carried in a wallet. A mobile phone is available from the College, as staff members are not required to give their personal mobile phone numbers to students.
- 7.2.15 The tour organiser should have two emergency contact numbers; usually this will be the Principal and the Deputy Principal.
- 7.2.16 One of the staff members on the tour should have had training in First Aid and be responsible for a First Aid Kit, which is available from the school nurse. Parents should inform the organisers if their daughter has any special medical needs. A log must be kept of all incidents.
- 7.2.17 Two members of staff, one of whom must be female, should carry out inspection of rooms or personal property (bags, suitcases etc) with the student 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.
- 7.2.18 Staff should not have any physical contact with a student's clothing. If a search is deemed necessary, the student should be asked to empty her own pockets or to search the clothing that she is wearing.
- 7.2.19 If a student is found to be in serious breach of any of the rules in the College Code of Behaviour, the staff in charge must contact the Principal immediately.
- 7.2.20 On completion of a tour, the organiser must complete the "trip report" section on the College database.
- 7.2.21 An Accident/Incident Report Form (Appendix 5) must be completed for all accidents or incidents which have occurred. Examples of reportable incidents include: persistent lateness at the rendezvous point; not staying with the group; rudeness to teachers; and serious breach of school rules, particularly in relation to alleged or proven substance abuse.

7.3 General Guidelines for the PE programme³.

- 7.3.1 Each coach is responsible for taking a properly equipped first-aid kit to his/her match. If a minor accident occurs the PE staff will treat it on the spot. Anything deemed a major or potentially threatening injury is directly referred to the day-nurse or the matron. In the event of a serious accident the PE staff will ring an ambulance directly.
- 7.3.2 Any accident deemed to be of a serious nature is recorded on an accident report form, a copy of which is submitted to the Bursar. PE staff will appraise students of the necessary safety equipment for each respective sport.
- 7.3.3 If any student is excused, with written permission, from all or part of a PE class the teacher must be informed in the normal manner. If the excuse is due to illness, the student is expected either to accompany her class and watch the proceedings or remain indoors with another PE group.
- 7.3.4 Senior girls travelling to Riverview walk in groups in clement weather. No student is permitted to walk there or back unaccompanied. Buses are organised in bad weather, and students are instructed to walk through Whitebeam Park and not along the bank of the Dodder River.
- 7.3.5 If a student has to leave Riverview early it is strictly with permission of parents who have organised alternative transport. She may not walk back to Alex unaccompanied.
- 7.3.6 The PE staff organise transport to and from all matches, using the school mini bus or a recognised coach company. In the case of local venues, parents will be asked to provide transport and daygirls are asked to facilitate boarders where required.
- 7.3.7 When an away match is organised during school hours when PE activities are scheduled for other students, the number of staff travelling must be dependent upon the staffing requirements of the activities on campus. Generally one coach will travel with a team. The needs of the students on campus must receive priority when organising such matches.
- 7.3.8 Sports tours which involve an overnight stay are compliant with school policy as in section 2 of this document.

³ For further guidelines see the Irish Sports Council *Code of Ethics for Good practice in Children's Sport, (2001)* available at www.irishsportsCouncil.ie

Policy Development and Availability

This Policy relating to Tours and Outings has been developed with teachers through a sub-committee and agreement at staff meetings. Approval from parents is sought through the Alexandra College Association and from students through the Staff/Student Forum.

A sub-committee shall consist of four members of the teaching staff and one representative from the management of the College. The sub-committee will be responsible for drafting additions, amendments and alterations to the policy. Consultation with parents and students will be as mentioned above.

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the availability of the Policy to parents/guardians and students.

Implementation and Compliance

1. All members of the College staff who are in charge of students on a tour or outings off-campus will monitor the implementation of this Educational Outings and Tours Policy.
2. The full co-operation of students and parents/guardians is expected for all off-campus activities.
3. Parents/guardians must encourage their daughter(s) to uphold the standards of behaviour required on all Tours and Outings.

Success Criteria

- The planning, organisation and carrying-out of all tours and outings has proceeded without hitches.
- Any unforeseen event which occurred was dealt with promptly and in line with the guidelines in this policy.
- All staff members and students returned safely, having achieved a worthwhile learning experience.

Review and evaluation

- At the end of every tour/ outing, the organiser, in the submitted report, should include any recommendations for changes or inclusions in this policy.
- There should be an annual review of the Educational Outings and Tours Policy by a staff sub-committee.

Legislation/equality proofing

A solicitor who has expertise in this area must approve the draft of the Educational Outings and Tours Policy and any subsequent additions, amendments or alterations. These must be submitted to Council for final approval. Any amendments will become part of the Policy, and will be notified to parents.

Dates of the Council Meetings at which the Educational Outings and Tours Policy, and any additions, amendments or alterations were ratified:

Policy adopted on 21st September 2005.

.....

Signed :