



Coláiste Pobail Acla

Out of School Activities Policy

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1. Policy Statement

This out of school activities policy was created in accordance with our Mission Statement.

We strive to motivate our school community to realise its full potential academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally in a safe, supportive learning environment.

Within our holistic approach to education, we see the provision of a wide range of out of school activities as being vital to allowing our students access as broad a range of experiences as possible. These activities form an essential part of the school's objective of enhancing the full development of the student. They supplement and complement in-school learning and provide opportunities for students to broaden their horizons in ways that would not be possible within the confines of the structured curriculum alone.

2. Introduction

It is school policy to organise outings for the benefit of students when this is deemed appropriate by the teaching staff, in consultation with the Principal. Coláiste Pobail Acla recognises the benefits of outings to complement normal school work, for educational or sporting purposes.

Some trips/activities are organised as part of the course to be followed in a subject area. Other outings and trips are additional to the curriculum and are not deemed a core activity.

The lengths of trips may vary from a short local visit to a long trip involving staying away for several days.

Coláiste Pobail Acla trips, outings and tours are a privilege reserved for students who meet minimum standards of behaviour while at school. Students who do not meet minimum standards of behaviour, as decided by the Principal, may be refused permission to participate in a school outing, as stated in the Code of Behaviour. The Principal reserves the right to prevent a student from participation in a school trip if, in his/her opinion, the health or safety of the student or other students or teachers is at risk. All school rules and all school policies apply while on school trips. In particular, parents/guardians and students should be aware that permission to travel on a school related activity is conditional on strict adherence to the Code of Behaviour. All students selected for sports teams and who travel as part of a class group represent Coláiste Pobail Acla. The highest standards of behaviour and conduct are expected as a matter of course.

3. Procedures and Planning

3.1. General Procedures

Coláiste Pobail Acla provides a range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities which complement the academic work of the school. In line with the school ethos, these activities assist the growth and development of the whole person. To facilitate these activities, certain outings and activities are organized which will necessitate students travelling outside the school in groups, and on occasion staying overnight at other locations. These outings require the presence of staff members

as supervisors. To a large extent, teachers make themselves available to accompany and supervise outings/activities on a voluntary basis.

Individual teachers may organise out of school activities with the permission and at the discretion of school management.

Every care should be taken when planning out of school activities or trips. Where practicable, the group should be involved in the preparation of the trip. The school, on behalf of Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim ETB, take every measure to ensure the safety of students at all times. Therefore, the following procedures should be adhered to when teachers are accompanying students on school activities outside of the school grounds.

3.2. Planning and Permission

1. At the earliest opportunity, the lead teacher organising a trip will inform the Principal about the date, time and location of the intended activity and the students who will be away from class for the planned time. This may then be written into the Activities diary to avoid clashes with other activities.
2. For insurance purposes, residential trips must be notified to the Board of Management.
3. Costs to the school in relation to the activity should be discussed with the Principal.
4. Costs to the student should be made clear to the students well in advance of the activity, and clear deadlines given for the payment of monies.
5. Some students may not be able to afford the costs involved. There may be school funds that may be of help. These must be secured well in advance of the trip. School Management will aim to secure these funds as early as possible, and preferably at the beginning of the school year; the trip can then be planned for the appropriate time of year.
6. Teacher to decide, in consultation with the Principal, how many teachers are required for supervision. It is not advisable for one teacher to undertake supervision, other than for a very small number of students. Normal best practise is that two adults would accompany a class group on sporting and general activities. The ratio of teacher to pupil should reflect/be appropriate to the level of risk of the activity and the group involved.
7. Parents/guardians are invited to indicate to the Principal if they are willing to help out with supervision of Out of School Activities – steps will be taken to facilitate garda vetting and ETB approval in advance of any parent/guardian's participation.
8. As far as is practicable, when groups of mixed gender are away from the school on activities a male and female teacher will accompany the group.
9. If a bus is required, book well in advance. Make sure the destination, date, time of departure and arrival back, are clearly understood. Confirm the bus a few days in advance.

While every effort will be made to adhere to arranged times on trips we cannot always guarantee such times, for example where circumstances arise which are outside the control of staff involved.

3.3. Notification and Consent

If the activity involves entry onto private property, e.g., on a farm or a factory, ensure the owner's consent is obtained. Be prepared to explain the purpose of the activity. Proof of insurance cover may be required. As a rule, a letter of thanks will be sent to the individual/company involved.

Parents/guardians must be informed by letter or text of all activities outside of normal school hours.

Parents/guardians should be informed of the following:

- Date, time of departure and estimated time of arrival back in the school
- Cost
- Recommended clothing and footwear (if necessary)
- Lunch arrangements
- If there is an element of risk involved, make sure this is explained to parents.
- A contact number for the lead teacher
- Seek information on whether any student has medical conditions which might require special arrangements.
- Seek consent if the student is joining or leaving a school group at a location other than the school grounds.

Before residential visits or when pupils travel abroad or engage in adventure activities parents/guardians may be invited into school to attend a briefing meeting.

If a passport is required for the trip a photocopy of this must be supplied before the trip and the passport should remain in date for six months after the trip.

Medical consent will form part of the parental/guardian consent form for foreign and residential trips. Parents/Guardians will be asked to agree in writing to the pupil receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If the parent/guardian does not agree to this, the decision to permit the student to travel on the trip may be reviewed. Every effort by the lead teacher and accompanying staff will be taken to communicate directly and in a prompt manner in the event of a medical emergency.

Written parental/guardian consent may in some cases, be required, e.g. where students are under 18 or involved in school activities outside of normal school hours or in the instance of an overnight trip. Parents/guardians must give notice to the school if they intend to collect students early or on the route back to school.

4. Supervision

Members of staff and/or parents/guardians/grandparents who have been Garda vetted will generally supervise students on out of school excursions. The number of staff/vetted volunteers which will accompany a group will be influenced by a number of factors including;

- The number of students travelling.
- The age of the students.
- The location of the trip.
- 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.

Certain 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/Guardian.

Coláiste Pobail Acla expects that all students travelling on an extended tour will display a level of maturity commensurate with their age. Students on trips which involve an overnight stay in Ireland or abroad will not be supervised on a 24-hour basis and all extended school tours will involve periods of time without direct supervision. Parents/guardians who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inappropriate should not permit their son/daughter to take part in such trips.

5. School Tours Abroad/Overnight Trips

In general, overnight trips/tours occur in addition to the normal academic and extra-curricular programmes of Coláiste Pobail Acla. There is normally an additional charge.

Students who withdraw from a trip after a deposit, or full monies has been paid, may not be entitled to a refund. Similarly, a student who is prevented from travelling for disciplinary or safety reasons will not be entitled to a refund.

It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians in conjunction with students to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad e.g. passport, identity card are up to date and in order. Coláiste Pobail Acla will not take responsibility for a student whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result.

Parent/guardians will receive a written overview/itinerary of overnight trips and will be required to give written consent to their son/daughter taking part on the trip. It will be the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to ensure that the organiser of a trip is aware of any special needs, medical or dietary issues. The member of staff organising the trip/activity will need to complete the Checklist for School Tours/Out of School Hours Activities (See Appendix 2) before the trip/activity can take place.

Students will be informed, prior to going on the trip that school rules apply on trips. A student may be sent home, at their Parent's/Guardian's expense, if the conduct of the student warrants it.

School tours can be of significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of students. In many instances they reinforce the work taking place in the classroom.

6. Conduct and Uniform

Pupils will be required to wear official school uniform on all trips unless otherwise decided by school management.

There is a direct relationship between the tick/detention system and the ability of a student to be allowed travel on trips away from school. Furthermore, the Code of Behaviour of Coláiste Pobail Acla should be adopted during all school tours or trips.

Students travelling abroad will be made aware of any legal and/or cultural differences that impact on expected behaviour in the destination country, and are expected to behave in accordance with these the legal/cultural requirements/expectations

In the event of a student suffering an injury or requiring medical attention.

- One teacher (Teacher 1) will accompany that student to the medical centre.
- The remaining staff will accompany the rest of the group.
- Teacher 1 will contact the parent/guardian and then the school of the event. If Teacher 1 cannot reach a parent/guardian, the school will continue to try to make contact on their behalf, thereby allowing Teacher 1 to focus on the injured student.
- The group may return by bus or otherwise to school.
- Additional staff may leave the school to assist Teacher 1 or to meet the group.

Code of Behaviour

Students are expected to respect the authority of their teachers and adhere to the Code of Behaviour at all times. Failure to do so may result in the imposition of sanctions. Students may be required to use a breathalyser to analyse blood alcohol content in their system. Failure to provide this sample will result in sanctions being applied by the teacher in charge or school management. Additional rules may be put in place for the safety and wellbeing of students depending on the nature of the tour.

Criteria for participation in school tours:

The student must have demonstrated an attitude of co-operation in all areas of school life.

- The student must have demonstrated an adherence to the school Code of Behaviour.
- An appropriate level of attendance is required. (Defined by School Management)
- Parental/guardian consent form must be signed prior to departure.
- The student must be willing to provide a sample of breath when required by the teacher/person in charge.
- Payment of tour fee prior to departure.
- Student Insurance must be in place.

7. Health and Safety

Health and safety of students and supervisors is our main priority when organising and taking a school trip or tour. Teachers taking any trip will exercise due care, common sense and judgement when issues of health and safety arise. Parents/guardians of students who have special needs, a medical condition, or who are on medication of any kind, should notify the teacher/s in charge of this and any medication being taken.

In case of an accident, staff will normally apply basic first aid only. Expert medical attention will be sought should this be thought necessary. On return from, or during, any trip staff may advise a parent/guardian to seek medical advice, should they deem this appropriate.

Where a serious accident occurs, staff will seek medical assistance as a priority and contact the school to inform the office of events. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible by the school.

Please note: School staff are not medical professionals.

Coláiste Pobail Acla requires that all students are covered under the school insurance policy, and the school returns details of all students to the insurer for this purpose. Specific activities are excluded from this policy and Parents/Guardians may request to see these.

8. Declaration

This Coláiste Pobail Acla Policy was formed following consultation with all staff, members of the Board of Management, Parents and the Student Council. It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years or whenever it is deemed necessary by School Management. It was adopted by the Board of Management of Coláiste Pobail Acla on:

Signed: _____

Mr. Pat Kilbane

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Mr. Paul Fahy

Board Secretary & School Principal (Acting)

Date: _____

Appendix 1 - Acronyms

Below is a list of abbreviations used across several Coláiste Pobail Acla policies and documents.

ACE	Autism Centre of Excellence
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition
BOM	Board of Management
BSP	Behaviour Support Plan
CAMHS	<i>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</i>
CAT	Cognitive Ability Test
CPNS	Child Protection Notification System
CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education
DDLDP	Deputy Designated Liaison Person
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Education in Schools
DES	Department of Education and Science
DLP	Designated Liaison Person
EP	Education Plan
EPSEN	Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs
ETB	Education and Training Board
GRT	Group Reading Test
HSCLO	Home School Community Liaison Officer
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
JCSP	Junior Certificate Schools Programme
LCVP	Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NBSS	National Behaviour Support Service
NCBI	National Centre for the Blind Ireland
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NEWB	National Education and Welfare Board
NLN	National Learning Network
OT	Occupational Therapy
PC	Pastoral Care

PE	Physical Education
RACE	Reasonable Accommodations at Certificate Examinations
RE	Religious Education
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SCP	School Completion Programme
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENO	Special Educational Needs Officer
SESS	Special Education Support Service
SETS	Special Education Teacher Support
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SSE	School Self Evaluation
TUSLA	Child and Family Agency
TY	Transition Year

Appendix 2

Checklist for School Tours/Out of School Hours Activities

- ✓ Proposed trip has been discussed and approved by the Principal/Deputy Principal prior to students and Parents/Guardians being informed.
- ✓ Parents have been informed in writing of the proposed trip. This letter should include details of:
 - The purpose of the trip
 - The itinerary and duration of the trip
 - The cost along with the schedule and method of payment
 - A list of items to be brought by each student on the trip
 - The rules of behaviour to be observed
 - Details of insurance and indemnity
 - A consent form for parents/guardians to sign permitting their child to participate on the trip, details of medical conditions and any medication their child takes, and confirmation that they will check that all items in their child's possession meet with the criteria necessary for the trip and adhere to Coláiste Pobail Acla's Code of Behaviour.
- ✓ Parents have provided all requested/required documentation for their child.
- ✓ The signed permission of parents/guardians is a prerequisite for the participation of any student in any school tour/activity.
- ✓ Organising teacher has booked all transportation and accommodation and has confirmed these in the days preceding the trip.
- ✓ Organising teacher has devised a supervision rota for all attending personnel.
- ✓ A list of all students attending has been given to Deputy Principal for dissemination to all staff.
- ✓ Organising teacher has contact numbers for all students' Guardians/Parents.

Activity Name/Title: _____

Signed (Teacher): _____

Signed Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Date: _____