

Coiste Gairmoideachais Cho. Chill Mhantáin

CO WICKLOW VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

***POLICY FOR SCHOOL TOURS
AND FIELD TRIPS***

Part I

General Principles

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Co. Wicklow Vocational Education Committee, hereinafter referred to as “The Committee” believes that students can derive a great deal of educational benefit from participating in well planned school tours and field trips. Such activities give students the opportunity to engage in experiences not available in the classroom, and help develop a student’s imaginative skills, encourage greater independence and enhance the student’s social and cultural development. This Policy is designed to help principals, teachers, Board of Management members and others to ensure that students stay safe and healthy as they enjoy the educational experiences of school tours and field trips.
- 1.2 Most school tours and field trips take place without incident and the Committee is satisfied that its teachers are already demonstrating a high level of safety awareness. However, there is a growing concern about further ensuring the safety of students. This Policy is not designed to discourage teachers, but to ensure that good planning and attention to safety measures are in place to prevent accidents and incidents and lessen the seriousness of those that do occur.
- 1.3 The Committee expects that all tours and field trips will be thoroughly planned. Reasonable care must be exercised in the nature of the trip that is chosen, the venue, the means of transport, the level of supervision, the demands on the physical resources of the students, having regard to their age and capacity and the potential dangers to which they may be exposed.

2. GENERAL:

- 2.1 This Policy is drafted in the context of the Health and Safety at Work Acts 1989 and 2005 and Circular Letter M20/04 issued by the Department of Education and Science.
- 2.2 This Policy should be read in its totality, as there may be some overlap in the requirements for planning specific trips and/or activities. For example, when planning a trip abroad the section on Residential Trips will also be important.
- 2.3 Educational tours of more than one day’s duration should be arranged to coincide with normal school holidays as set out in CL M20/04.
- 2.4 If an educational tour/field trip is an integral part of a school programme the Board of Management of the school may grant permission for the tour/field trip to be held during term time and as per the requirements of CL M20/04.
- 2.5 The Board of Management must ensure that students who are not participating in an educational tour/field trip are adequately catered for while their teachers are away on school tours/trips. Appropriate arrangements must be made for the conduct of all classes in accordance with Circular PPT01/03. In the planning of the tour/trip cognisance must be taken of the impact the tour/trip will have on the normal work of the school and the numbers of absent teachers should be kept to a minimum.
- 2.6 For local and one-day events and field trips Form ST1 should be completed and retained in the school.

2. PLANNING SCHOOL TOURS AND FIELD TRIPS

Outline the proposal to the Principal/BOM, seeking approval in principle. (Complete Form ST2).

Proposals should include:

- Objectives of the activity
- Likely date, duration and venue
- Student group, age profile and supervision requirements
- Resources required and estimate of costs
- How the activity will be funded

Planning

- Contact reputable tour operator/service provider
- Contact venue. Is it suitable for the group?
- What are the transport options?
- Who will lead the group and who will supervise it and the level of supervision that will pertain
- Who will pay for the activity?
- Risk assessment

Substantive proposal to Principal/BOM – Complete Forms ST3 and ST6

Details of dates, risk assessment, emergency procedures, transport, insurance, costs, funding, composition of group, supervision

Shorter Trips

- Get parental consent for trips involving students up to age 18
- Inform parents of activity routine
- Brief students
- Engage in activity, monitoring risks at all times

Residential – Abroad

- Obtain approval from Principal/BOM to prepare the visit subject to satisfactory preparation

Final Preparation

- Information to and from parents
- Briefing meeting with parents and students
- Secure full payment of costs

- Obtain final approval from Principal/BOM (ST4) and signed parental consents (ST5)

- Go on trip, monitoring the risks at all times

Evaluation/Financial Report (ST9)

3. SUPERVISION

- 3.1 The Committee expects that all school tours, field trips and extra curricular activities will be adequately supervised.
- 3.2 The Committee recommends that the following ratios should apply as general principles regarding the supervision of students on particular trips. Slight deviation from the ratios may be acceptable where a thorough risk assessment has been carried out by or on behalf of school management and where said management is satisfied that the health and safety of the students is assured:
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Games: | 1 teacher : 25 students |
| Field Trips (Ireland): | 1 teacher : 20 students |
| Adventure Activities: | 1 teacher : 10 students (The level of supervision at centre may allow for a 1:20 ration here) |
| Residential Trips | 1 teacher : 10 students |
| School Tours (Ireland): | 1 teacher : 20 students |
| School Tours (Abroad): | 1 teacher : 10 students |
| Swimming (Beach, River etc) | 1 teacher : 10 students |
| Swimming Pools | 1 teacher : 20 students |
- 3.3 Students should not be brought swimming or on adventure type trips without a qualified lifeguard or other suitably trained personnel.
- 3.4 It is not recommended that *personnel other than teachers* would be engaged to chaperone or supervise students. Sometimes this necessity may arise. In this regard personnel other than teachers should only accompany students if a suitably qualified teacher is also accompanying the group and if he/she has received Garda clearance with regard to working with young people.
- 3.5 The group leader must ensure that all supervisors understand their roles and responsibilities at all times and that they are fully briefed as to the rules, regulations and requirements pertaining to the particular trip before departure.
- 3.6 The group leader must ensure that all supervisors are made aware of their duties and responsibilities vis-à-vis student health, safety and behaviour prior to departure.
- 3.7 All supervisors have a responsibility to act as positive role models for students in terms of their actions and behaviour and in particular in relation to smoking and consuming alcohol etc.
- 3.8 Regular head counting of students should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all students and adults involved in the activity. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell students what to do if they become separated from the group.

4. PREPARING STUDENTS

- 4.1 Students who are well briefed about an activity will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Students should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the activity will entail. They must understand what standards of behaviour are expected of them and why rules must be followed. Students should be made aware of any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.

- 4.2 Students, whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential activities the group leader should consider whether such students should be sent home early. Parents and students should be told in advance about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a student will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.
- 4.3 For some students an overnight trip may be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other students. They should understand:
- 4.3.1 The aims and objectives of the trip/activity
 - 4.3.2 Background information about the place to be visited
 - 4.3.3 Basic foreign words and phrases where appropriate
 - 4.3.4 Relevant foreign culture and customs
 - 4.3.5 How to avoid specific danger and why they should follow rules
 - 4.3.6 Why safety precautions are in place
 - 4.3.7 What standard of behaviour is expected
 - 4.3.8 Appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct
 - 4.3.9 Who is responsible for the group
 - 4.3.10 If on a foreign trip, items not to be brought back to Ireland
 - 4.3.11 What to do if approached by anyone from outside the group
 - 4.3.12 Rendezvous procedures, including time keeping
 - 4.3.13 What to do if separated from the group
 - 4.3.14 Emergency procedures, including telephone numbers, etc.
 - 4.3.15 Pocket money and security of personal items
 - 4.3.16 Maps and town plans, as appropriate
 - 4.3.17 Limitations of movement, such as out of bounds areas
- 4.4 Remote supervision may have to take place on occasion. For example, when students are on shopping trips, certain adventure activities etc. Parents should be notified of this in advance. Students should be advised to stay in groups of at least 3 or 4 students, as appropriate and adequate arrangements should be made re: checking in with supervisors at given times.

5. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 5.1 While routine extra-curricular activities are covered under This Policy, its main thrust is directed at events that entail a great deal of structured organisation such as residential, field and adventure trips as well as foreign tours.
- 5.2 Permission for students to participate in team sports and other activities that take place on a regular basis throughout the school year should be sought on enrolment.

6. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

- 6.1 Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or tour unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum, which parents already know about through the school prospectus or a letter. Seeking consent at time of enrolment for such routine activities may be appropriate.
- 6.2 Before residential visits or when students are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities parents should be invited to attend a briefing meeting where details (oral and written) of the proposed trip should be provided. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend.

- 6.3 Parents need to be made aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors (See Section 3.4) on the trip will be exercising the same care as a prudent parent. The following information on matters that might affect student health and welfare should be given to parents.
- 6.3.1 Dates of the trip.
 - 6.3.2 Objectives of the trip.
 - 6.3.3 Times of departure and return – parents must agree to meet the student on return.
 - 6.3.4 The location where the students will be collected and returned.
 - 6.3.5 Modes of transport including the names of travel companies, etc.
 - 6.3.6 The size and gender breakdown of the group and the level of supervision, including times when remote supervision may take place.
 - 6.3.7 Details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site.
 - 6.3.8 Names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults.
 - 6.3.9 Details of planned activities and how any risks will be managed.
 - 6.3.10 Standards of behaviour expected in respect of alcohol, sexual behaviour, smoking and general group discipline including prohibited items. This information may take the form of a code of conduct which parents may be required to sign.
 - 6.3.11 What students should not take on the trip or bring back.
 - 6.3.12 Details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents may need to arrange additional cover.
 - 6.3.13 Clothing, equipment and items of personal hygiene to be taken.
 - 6.3.14 Money to be taken.
 - 6.3.15 Information regarding parental consent.
- 6.4 The group leader should seek parental consent for:
- 6.4.1 Adventure activities
 - 6.4.2 Foreign trips
 - 6.4.3 Other residential trips
- 6.5 If parents withhold consent the student should not be taken on the trip.
- 6.6 A parental consent form (**ST5**) should be completed for each student in the group. Besides conveying the parent's consent it may also be used for obtaining details required as follows:
- 6.6.1 Any allergies/phobias the student may have.
 - 6.6.2 Any medication the student is taking, what the dosage is and who is to administer it, or whether the student can administer it.
 - 6.6.3 Any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the family during the preceding **four** weeks and any other recent illness suffered by the student.
 - 6.6.4 Any special medical or dietary requirements.
 - 6.6.5 Name, address and telephone number of family doctor
 - 6.6.5 Whether the student suffers from travel sickness.
 - 6.6.6 The student's ability to swim.
 - 6.6.7 Any other information the parent thinks is relevant.
 - 6.6.8 The parental home phone numbers and address.
 - 6.6.9 An alternative contact, phone number and address.
- 6.7 The contents of the consent form will vary according to the type and duration of the trip.
- 6.8 Medical consent should form part of the parental consent form for foreign and residential trips. Parents should be asked to agree to the student's receiving emergency treatment,

including anesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If the parents do not agree to this, the Principal may decide to withdraw the student from the trip – given the additional responsibility this would entail for the school. Doctors in another country may be reluctant to operate on a student unless assured of parental authorisation for such treatment.

- 6.9 The school management may decide that students with certain medical conditions may not be brought on trips. Such decisions shall be taken on the basis of medical evidence and in the interest of the health and safety of the student and others.
- 6.10** The group leader should inform parents that they will be expected to fund the early return of a student whose conduct gives rise for concern on a trip. ***Ensure that ST5 is completed.***
- 6.11 The Principal should ensure that parents can contact their child via the group leader or the school contact in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the trip or a late arrival home. Parents should therefore:
- 6.11.1 Know the destination details.
 - 6.11.2 Be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (particularly during holiday periods when the school may be closed) and at the venues the group will visit.
 - 6.11.3 Provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency.
 - 6.11.4 In the event of an emergency, parents should contact the group leader/school contact who will then liaise with the student.
 - 6.11.5 In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so or as directed by the group leader.
- 6.12 An evaluation of all trips should take place on return and a report, including a financial statement, should be submitted to the principal and Board of Management within 28 days of return. The financial statement should include all details of income and expenditure in relation to the trip as well as a balancing statement.

7 CHARGING FOR TRIPS:

- 7.1 If a trip is linked to a particular curricular or subject area the charge to be imposed may be compulsory.
- 7.2 All non-curricular and optional trips shall be voluntary.
- 7.3 Group leaders should be mindful of the social and economic status of families when charging for trips. Planning should be done well in advance and a procedure should be put in place whereby students can pay for the trip over a period of time at an agreed rate.
- 7.4 When planning for a trip, group leaders should factor in all costs, including contingencies and should ensure that all charges are paid well in advance of departure.
- 7.5 Monies paid in advance will be forfeit if a student withdraws from the tour, except where such funds are recoupable through the insurance policy.

8. Insurance

8.1 Public and Employer's Liability

- 8.1.1 The Committee's Public and Employer's Liability policies operate to cover the legal liability of the Committee in relation to Educational Tours/Activities organised by Schools/Centres subject to the normal terms, conditions and exceptions of the policies.
- 8.1.2 Where educational tours/activities involve activity of a specialist or high risk nature e.g. adventure sports, skiing, horse-riding, ice skating etc., schools/centres should ensure that the Centre providing the activity is a reputable provider and that evidence of their Public Liability Insurance including an indemnity to the VEC is obtained. The current recommended limit of indemnity is €9.5 million.

8.2 Travel Insurance

- 8.2.1 Travel Insurance should be organised for educational tours/activities, which involve travel outside the island of Ireland. School tour travel operators normally provide travel insurance as part of the tour package. However, when travel and accommodation are organized directly by the school/centre (e.g. language exchanges), travel insurance must be organised with the Travel Agency or an Insurance Broker. Please note the exclusions in the Travel Insurance Policy.
- 8.2.2 The Committee's Insurers can also arrange Travel Insurance subject to full details.

8.3 Personal Accident Insurances

- 8.3.1 The Public Liability Policy covers the legal liability of the Committee caused by the negligence of the Committee or its employees. In some circumstances accidents may occur which are not the result of negligence. It is therefore recommended that all students engaged in sporting/high risk activities would take out Personal Accident insurance. Brennan Insurance Company, 12/14 Lower Mount St. Dublin 2 operates Personal Accident Insurance for schools.

Part 2

GUIDELINES FOR SPECIFIC TOURS/ACTIVITIES

A. ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

1. The group leader should check and agree the provider's arrangements for supervision and recreation during the evenings and between adventure activities. The group leader should also provide any relevant information to the provider such as the group's age-range, competence, accompanying adults, etc.
2. The group leader/teachers retain ultimate responsibility for students during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. This also applies to some residential and day trips. The provider is responsible for the safe running of the activity. Everyone, including the students, should have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school staff and the provider's staff.
3. The group leader/teachers should have sufficient information on what each activity involves before it takes place. They should approach the instructor at an appropriate safe interval if they are concerned that the students may be at unnecessary risk. Assurances may be sought that the provider has:
 - 3.1 Checked the suitability of staff/temporary workers to work with young people.
 - 3.2 Clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of its staff.
 - 3.3 The appropriate security arrangements.
 - 3.4 Appropriate Public Liability Insurance - €9.5 million is recommended.
4. The Board of Management should satisfy itself that:
 - 4.1 The group leader and other supervisors are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of students in a given activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant certification, where it exists.
 - 4.2 The group leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventure/activities/trips.
 - 4.3 An appropriate risk assessment has been carried out.
 - 4.4 The supervision will be appropriate.
 - 4.5 There is adequate first aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group.
 - 4.6 The emergency procedures include activity-specific measures and supervisors/providers are competent to carry them out.
 - 4.7 The equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition.
 - 4.8 Every student is suited to the activity and is properly briefed, prepared and equipped.
5. Some adventure activities, such as those under the Gaisce Awards, may require students to work without direct supervision. Particular attention should be given to the information and training provided to students before supervision can be withdrawn. Parental consent must be sought.
 - 5.1. Appropriately qualified personnel should provide the information and training. The project leader should be satisfied that the students have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability, judgment and skills to be left without direct supervision.
6. The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four-stage process.
 - 6.1 Accompanying the group.
 - 6.2 Shadowing the group.
 - 6.3 Checking regularly at agreed location
 - 6.4 Checking occasionally at agreed locations.
7. Students should be familiar with all equipment used or taken without direct supervision, and in addition to training, an initial element of adult supervision in the use of equipment may be required. The condition and suitability of any equipment, particularly safety equipment, taken or used during these activities should be assessed separately.

B. COASTAL VISITS AND WATER

1. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. The group leader should bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity:
 - 1.1 Tides, currents, weeds and sandbanks are potential hazards. Timings and exit routes should be checked.
 - 1.2 Ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags.
 - 1.3 Establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return, if separated.
 - 1.4 Look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire, sewage outflows, etc.
 - 1.5 Some of the group's time on the beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds.
 - 1.6 Cliff tops/caves can be highly dangerous even during daylight hours. The group should keep to a path at all times.
2. Swimming in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities. They should only be allowed as formal or supervised activities preferably in recognized bathing areas, which have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. Students should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.
3. The group leader, or another designated teacher in the group, should preferably hold a relevant current life saving award, especially where lifeguard cover may not be available.
4. The group leader should:
 - 4.1 Be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers.
 - 4.2 Ascertain for themselves the level of the students' swimming ability.
 - 4.3 Be aware of the local conditions – such as currents, weeds, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom.
 - 4.4 Designate a safe area of water for use by the group.
 - 4.5 Be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water.
 - 4.6 Ensure that students have not eaten (at least 30 minutes) before swimming.
 - 4.7 Ensure that the activity is safe for students, especially any with disabilities.
 - 4.8 Adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall.
 - 4.9 Ensure that the students behave appropriately in and out of the water.
 - 4.10 Ensure that proper changing facilities are available and that propriety is observed regarding gender separation. In mixed groups there should be at least one male and one female supervisor.

C. FARM VISITS

1. Farms can be dangerous, even for people who work on them. Taking young people to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with Ecoli D157 food poisoning and other infections.
2. The group leader should check that the farm is well managed, that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good hygiene standards.
3. Students should be reminded:
 - 3.1 Not to place their faces against the animals
 - 3.2 Not to eat until they have washed their hands
 - 3.3 Not to drink from farm taps
 - 3.4 Not to ride on tractors or other machines
 - 3.5 Not to interfere with farm machinery.
 - 3.6 To stay away from hazardous areas such as slurry tanks etc.

3.7 Not to wander away from the main group.

D. FIELD STUDIES

1. Field Studies associated with a range of subjects including geography, biology, history, CSPE etc. may take students to industrial sites and urban areas as well as into the countryside and to the coast. The scope of field studies means that the group leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, should also be competent to lead and instruct their students within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk.

E. RESIDENTIAL TRIPS

1. Issues for the group leader to consider include:
 - 1.1 The group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the pupils. The group leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance.
 - 1.2 There should be a reasonable pro-rata gender balance of teachers for mixed gender groups.
 - 1.3 Ideally each room should have en-suite facilities, but as a minimum requirement there should be separate male and female bathroom facilities for students and adults.
 - 1.4 The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the groups use.
 - 1.5 There should be safe heating and ventilation.
 - 1.6 The entire group should be aware of the layout of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits, its regulations and routine.
 - 1.7 Where the reception area in a particular building is not staffed 24 hours per day, appropriate security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors.
 - 1.8 The manager of the accommodation should be asked, through the tour operator, for assurances that the staff including temporary workers have been checked as suitable for work with young people.
 - 1.9 Locks on doors should be operable in all rooms, but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times.
 - 1.10 There should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc. and for the safe keeping of valuables.
 - 1.11 There should be adequate lighting at all entrances, corridors and rooms.
 - 1.12 There should be provision for students with disabilities as appropriate.
 - 1.13 Balconies should be stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe.
 - 1.14 Where possible students should not be lodged in ground floor rooms.
 - 1.15 The fire alarm should be in certified working order throughout the building.
 - 1.16 There should be recreational accommodation/facilities for the group.
 - 1.17 The hotel/hostel management should undertake not to supply or sell alcohol or tobacco to students.
 - 1.18 There should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby every night.
 - 1.19 A curfew time of not later than 12 midnight should be set for students.
 - 1.20 The easy accessibility of medical personnel/facilities should be assured.
 - 1.21 The availability of a safety deposit box.
2. The group leader should confirm prior to departure that the hotel/hostel has proper and accessible fire exits and that it meets local regulations. After arrival fire evacuation procedures should be outlined to the students.
3. The group leader should also confirm prior to departure that the hotel/hostel meets all local hygiene regulations.

F. TRIPS ABROAD

1. Travelling abroad can be hugely rewarding for students, but it is important that careful and detailed preparation takes place.
2. All trips abroad, with the exception of school exchanges, should be booked through a reputable travel agency with experience in the organisation of trips for schools and young people.
3. It is good practice to make an exploratory visit to the location. If this is not possible, the group leader should gather as much information as possible on the area to be visited from:
 - 3.1 The tour operator
 - 3.2 The provider of facilities at the location
 - 3.3 The Department of Foreign Affairs
 - 3.4 Embassy/Consulate
 - 3.5 Other schools who have been to the area/used the facilities
 - 3.6 The Local Authority and/or schools in the area
 - 3.7 The Internet, books and magazines
4. A minimum supervision ratio of 1 teacher to 10 students should apply. There should be enough teachers/supervisors in the group to cover an emergency.
5. Factors to consider for trips abroad include:
 - 5.1 Language – particularly common phrases
 - 5.2 Culture e.g. body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc.
 - 5.3 Airline and ferry regulations
 - 5.4 Drugs, alcohol usage
 - 5.5 Food and drink
 - 5.6 Money – how to carry currency, money and valuables discreetly
 - 5.7 How to use phones abroad and the code for phoning home
 - 5.8 What to do in an emergency
6. It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to meet teachers and others who will be taking the students overseas.
7. The group leaders must ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance.
8. It is desirable that one of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country.
9. The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip. A group passport may suffice.
10. A photocopy of each individual passport or of the group passport should be taken for emergency use.
11. If a group includes students whose national or immigration status or entitlement to an Irish passport is in doubt, it is advisable to make early enquires to the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Justice and Law Reform and the Passport Office.
12. Students other than EU nationals may require a separate passport and/or visa and may need to use separate passport control channels from the rest of the group.
13. If a student is subject to a care order, foster parents will need to ensure that Social Services consent to any proposed trip. If a student is a Ward of Court, the principal should seek advice from the Court in relation to trips abroad well in advance.

14. Emergency medical facilities are available through reciprocal health care arrangements in EU countries to EU nationals. The **European Health Insurance Card** from the local Health Service Executive is the means of entitlement and must be carried by the group leader.
15. It is advisable for the group leader to take a contingency fund in case treatment has to be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later.
16. The group leader should ensure that he/she obtains and takes with him/her:
 - 16.1 Travel tickets, passports, visas, accident reports forms and other essential documentation. It is advisable to carry a separate list of the numbers of any travel documentation/passports and photocopies of the group's documents in a sealed waterproof bag.
 - 16.2 A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency and/or centre/hotel, if appropriate.
 - 16.3 Medical documentation e.g. **European Health Insurance Cards** and significant medical histories. The group leader should carry these at all times.
 - 16.4 Parental consent forms and permission for the group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf.
 - 16.5 The phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the Principal and/or of the school contact.
 - 16.6 The names and addresses of parents and telephone numbers (home and work) where they can be contacted.
 - 16.7 Copies of a list of group members and their details.
 - 16.8 Details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number.
 - 16.9 The name, address and telephone number (including emergency number) of the Travel Agency.
 - 16.10 The name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation.
 - 16.11 Details of local hospital/medical and emergency services.
17. Full details of the trip must be retained by a designated person in the school while the trip is in progress. This should include:
 - 17.1 The itinerary and contact telephone numbers/addresses of the group.
 - 17.2 A list of group members and their details.
 - 17.3 Contact names, addresses, telephone numbers of the parents and next of kin.
 - 17.4 Copies of parental consent forms.
 - 17.5 Copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers, etc.
 - 17.6 A copy of the contract with the Travel Agency, centre/hotel etc., if appropriate.
18. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that this information is available at all times. This is particularly important if the trip takes place when the school is closed.
19. The group leader must ensure that each student knows what action to take if there is an emergency or a problem.
20. The group leader and supervisors should know where the nearest Irish Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number.
21. The group leader needs to be aware that some diseases are more prevalent in some countries than in others and should know what action to take should a member of the group become infected, and what actions to take to prevent infections.
22. Many of the health problems of pupils on longer trips are caused by lack of food, liquid or sleep. The group leader should plan to minimize these risks.
23. The group leader should carry a contingency fund to cover the eventuality of a student running out of funds. This contingency fund should be used solely for the purpose of providing food and drinks for the student.

24. If appropriate, parents should be asked to provide suitably factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses and students should be advised about the dangers of over exposure to sunshine.
25. It is advisable, if appropriate, to check that the ship/aircraft or coach being used by the Travel Agency has a wheelchair service and lifting facility.
26. The group leader should resist any attempts to split the group while travelling. If this has to be done then each group should have a separate group leader.
27. The group leader should ensure that all supervisors are aware of their duties and responsibilities during the trip.

G. EXCHANGE TRIPS

1. The success of an exchange trip depends largely on good relationships and communications with the partner school.
2. School exchanges differ from other trips abroad in that students will spend most of their time with host families and are, therefore, not always under the direct supervision of school staff.
3. The group leader should remember that host families are not subject to Irish law.
4. Students must be made aware of behavioural expectations agreed with the host family. The group leader should ensure the following:
 - 4.1 A good personal knowledge of the host school and its environs.
 - 4.2 Satisfactory 'pairing' arrangements. The partner school should inform the host family of any special, medical or dietary needs of their guests, age and gender.
 - 4.3 Matches should be appropriate.
 - 4.4 Parents, students and the host school should be clear about the arrangements for collecting and distributing students to families, and for transporting students throughout the exchange.
 - 4.5 The principal should retain a list of all the students involved and their family names, addresses and telephone numbers
 - 4.6 Students living with host families should have easy access to their teachers, usually by telephone.
 - 4.7 Parents should be made aware that their children will be living with host families and will not always be under direct teacher supervision.
4. The group leader should ensure that host families are thoroughly vetted including criminal background checks insofar as these are available. The group leader should, as a minimum requirement, seek assurances from the partner school as to host family suitability.
5. The exchange organiser should ensure that all necessary insurance arrangements are in place.

H. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. Teachers and others in charge of students during a school trip have a duty of care to ensure that the students are safe and healthy. They also have a duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent.
2. Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school trip.
3. If an accident/incident happens, the priorities are to:
 - 3.1 Assess the situation.
 - 3.2 Safeguard the uninjured members of the group.
 - 3.3 Attend to the casualty.
 - 3.4 Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know about the incident.

4. The group leader should take charge in an emergency and ensure that back up cover is arranged. All those involved in the school trip should be informed of the proposed arrangements in advance.
5. There should be a named school contact with all the necessary information about the trip. This person is the school's link with the group, the parents and the VEC (where appropriate), and to provide assistance as necessary.
6. If an emergency occurs on a school trip, the main factors to consider include:
 - 6.1 Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible.
 - 6.2 Ensure that the group is safe and looked after.
 - 6.3 Establish the identity of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them.
 - 6.4 Ensure that parents are informed and in cases of minor injury adequate arrangements should be made, where appropriate, to get the student home, to liaise with the parents and to ensure that the injury is monitored.
 - 6.5 Ensure that all members who need to know are aware of the incident, and that all group members are following the emergency procedures.
 - 6.6 Ensure that teaching personnel accompany casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together.
 - 6.7 Notify the police if necessary.
 - 6.8 Notify the Irish Embassy/Consulate, if abroad and if appropriate.
 - 6.9 Inform the school contact
 - 6.10 The following details should be passed on to the school via the school contact:
 - 6.10.1 Nature of incident
 - 6.10.2 Date and time of the incident
 - 6.10.3 Location of the incident
 - 6.10.4 Names of casualties and nature of injuries
 - 6.10.5 Names of others involved so that parents can be reassured
 - 6.10.6 Names of witnesses
 - 6.10.7 Action taken so far
 - 6.10.8 Action yet to be taken and by whom
 - 6.11 Notify insurers, especially if medical attention is required. This may be done by the school contact.
 - 6.12 Notify the Travel Agent or transport operator. This may be done by the school contact.
 - 6.13 Ascertain telephone numbers for future calls. Landlines should be used, where practicable, to ensure quality of communication.
 - 6.14 Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details, and preserve vital evidence.
 - 6.15 Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident.
 - 6.16 Complete the Committee's accident report form as soon as possible. Copies should be brought on residential and foreign trips.
 - 6.17 No one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to families. Media enquiries should be referred to a designated media contact in the home area.
 - 6.18 No one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.
 - 6.19 In the event of an emergency at home parents should contact the group leader/school contact, who will then liaise with the student.
 - 6.20 In the event of an emergency on the trip, students should not contact home directly, before the group leader/school contact has done so or as directed by the group leader.
 - 6.21 Appropriate first aid equipment should be brought on all trips, as well as a person who is competent to use the contents of the first aid box.
7. It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other students or staff in the school have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. It is advisable for schools to contact local community support services and to seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the school as a whole to cope with the effects of a particular incident.

PART 3

FORMS

CO. WICKLOW VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Form ST1

Local and one-day events and activities

To be completed by the event organiser and retained by the school Principal.

Name of School _____

Date & Duration of Tour: _____

No. of Students: _____ No. of Teachers: _____ Age Group: _____

Mode of Transport : _____ Cost to each Student: _____

Destination: _____

Nature of Trip: _____

(Attach itinerary and details of Insurance Cover attached herewith).

Any Other Information: _____

School Principal's/Centre Coordinator Signature:

DATE: _____

Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee

Form ST2 – Outline Proposal for Educational Tour/Extended Field Trip

Part 1 of this form has to be completed and signed by the tour leader. Part 2 must be completed and signed by the Principal and retained in the school for inspection by a Department of Education and Science Inspector as part of a normal school inspection, under the terms of CL 20/04 or by a designated officer of Co. Wicklow VEC.

Part 1

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

Roll Number: _____

Tour Dates: From _____ to _____

Number of school days: _____

Brief outline of tour: _____

Number of students participating: _____

Total number of students in relevant grade: _____

If some students are not participating, outline the reasons why: _____

Expected benefits to accrue from tour: _____

Why is the tour deemed necessary: _____

Number of class teachers accompanying the tour: _____

Number of other teachers accompanying the tour: _____

Number of other adults accompanying the tour: _____

Please outline resources required and an estimate of the costs: _____

How will the tour be funded? _____

Signed: _____ (Organising Teacher) Date: _____

Part 2

Were appropriate arrangements made in accordance with Circular PPT 01/03 for those classes whose teachers were absent with the tour? Yes _____ No _____

Was adequate insurance in place to cover all risks while on tour? Yes _____ No _____

Was parental permission secured for each student who participated on the tour?

Yes _____ No _____

Signature of Principal: _____ Date: _____

Coiste Gairmoideachais Cho Chill Mhantáin
Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee

Form ST3

APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF EDUCATIONAL TOURS/FIELD TRIPS BY THE
PRINCIPAL/BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Not all sections will be relevant to every proposed trip:

PLEASE COMPLETE IN CAPITALS.

School: _____

Group: _____

Group Leader: _____

The group leader should complete this form as soon as possible once the preparations are complete. Approval in principle should already have been received and the Principal should have received regular updates on the progress of the preparations. Parental consent should also be sought (Form ST5).

When approval is given on Form ST4, one copy should be retained by the Principal and another by the group leader. The Principal should be informed of any subsequent changes in planning, organisation, staffing and he/she should inform the Board of Management of any such changes.

Purpose of the trip and specific educational benefits:

Destination and places to be visited:

Dates and times:

Date of departure: _____ **Time:** _____

Date of return: _____ **Time:** _____

Transport arrangements:

Organising tour company /agency:

Name and address: _____

Contact Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Proposed cost and financial arrangements:

Bank Account Branch and Number: _____

Closing balance on date of application: _____

Insurance arrangements for all members of the proposed party, including voluntary helpers:

Name of insurance company: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Insurance cover: _____

Policy Number: _____

Accommodation to be used:

a)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

b)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Programme of activities:

Day 1: _____

Day 2: _____

Day 3: _____

Day 4: _____

Day 5: _____

Day 6: _____

Day 7: _____

Details of any hazardous activity and associated planning, organisation and staffing Please attach ST6:

Names, relevant experience, qualifications and specific responsibilities of staff accompanying the group:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Name, address and telephone number of the contact person in the home area who holds all information about the trip in case of an emergency:

Name address and telephone number of Media Contact Person in the home area (In the event of an emergency):

Existing knowledge of places to be visited:

Size and composition of the group:

Age range: _____ Number of boys: _____
 Number of girls: _____ Adult to student ratio: _____
 Gender ratio (adult to student) Boys: _____ Girls: _____

Information on whether the group leader has received all consent forms duly completed and signed: _____

Number of outstanding consents: _____

Will these consents be forthcoming? _____

Please attach copy of information sheet sent to parents, and the parental consent form

Names of students with special needs in the context of the trip:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee

Form ST4

**LETTER OF APPROVAL TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SECRETARY
TO THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:**

To the group leader: _____

Your application dated _____ has been put before the Board of Management and the Board is satisfied with all aspects including the planning, organisation and staffing of the trip. Approval is granted.

Please ensure that I have all relevant information including a final list of group members, final details on parental consent and a detailed itinerary at least 14 days before you are due to depart.

Your report and evaluation of the trip including details of any incidents should be with me as soon as possible but no later than 28 days after your return.

Signed: _____ *(Secretary BOM)* *Date:* _____

A copy of the completed application form and details of any subsequent changes should be retained by the Principal. A copy should also be available for inspection by the Chief Executive Officer of Co. Wicklow Vocational Education Committee or the designated representative of the CEO.

Coiste Gairmoideachais Cho Chill Mhantáin
Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee

Form ST5
PARENTAL CONSENT FOR EDUCATIONAL TOUR/FIELD TRIP
(To be distributed with an information sheet giving full details of the trip)

School /Group: _____

Details of visit to: _____

From: _____ Date/Time: _____ To: _____ Date/Time: _____

I agree to _____ Date of birth _____
taking part in this tour/trip and have read the information document.

I agree to _____'s participation in the activities described.

I acknowledge the need for _____ to behave responsibly and in accordance with the Behaviour Policy of the school and of Co. Wicklow VEC. I accept that any student who uses, supplies or is found to be in possession of drugs, alcohol, solvents, inhalants or other dangerous substances and/or who engages in behaviour or actions that are deemed to be a risk to the safety of any member of the group will result in the offender being sent home immediately and we the parents will bear the resultant costs.

Medical information about your child

a) Any conditions requiring medical treatment, including travel sickness, and medication required?
Y/N

If YES, please give brief details: _____

b) Please outline any special dietary requirements (resulting from a medical condition) of your child and the type of pain/flu relief medication your child may be given if necessary:

Students may not bring non-prescribed medication with them. The school will supply this type of medication as per the information supplied. (Checked with GP)

c) Does your child suffer from any condition requiring prescribed medication? Y/N

If Yes please give FULL details of illness and/or medication:

d) To the best of your knowledge, has your son/daughter been in contact with any contagious or infectious diseases or suffered from anything in the last four weeks that may be contagious or infectious? YES/NO

If YES, please give brief details: _____

e) Is your son/daughter allergic to any medication including non-prescriptive medications? Y/N

If YES, please specify: _____

f) Has your son/daughter had a tetanus injection in the last four years? Y/N

I will inform the Group Leader/Principal as soon as possible of any changes in the medical or other circumstances of my son/daughter between now and the commencement of the journey.

Declaration

I/we agree to my/our son/daughter receiving medication as instructed and any emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment, including anesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present. I understand the extent and limitations of the insurance cover provided. I further agree that supervisors, under the direction of the group leader, may administer non-prescriptive medications in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Ability To Swim

Give details of your child's ability to swim _____

Other Relevant Information: _____

Contact telephone numbers

Work: _____ Home: _____

Home address: _____

Alternative emergency contact:

Name: _____ Telephone number: _____

Address: _____

Name of family doctor: _____

Telephone number: _____

Address: _____

Signed: _____ (Parent 1)

_____ (Parent 2)

Date: _____

I have read and understand the meaning and implications regarding all aspects of this form

Signed: _____ (Student)

Date: _____

Full name (capitals) _____

THIS FORM OR A COPY MUST BE TAKEN BY THE GROUP LEADER ON THE TOUR/TRIP.

A COPY SHOULD BE RETAINED BY THE SCHOOL CONTACT.

Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee

Form ST6

RESIDENTIAL / FOREIGN TOUR RISK ASSESSMENT

Complete this form for all Residential/Foreign Tours with students and submit to Principal along with Educational Tours application form

GENERAL ACTION CHECKLIST TO REDUCE RISK

ALL RESIDENTIAL VISITS		Y / N	COMMENTS
1	Has the status of the tour operator/activity centre provider been checked?		
2	Does the Tour Operator/activity centre provider specialize in the organisation of the relevant tour/activity?		
3	Have you checked out background information on the area and the hotel/centre for suitability (e.g. hotel is not situated in areas renowned for violence/muggings/prostitution etc)		
4	Have you checked that student rooms have individual locks to ensure personal safety		
5	Is the ratio of supervisors to students adequate for the trip and complying with the conditions set out in the Educational Tours Policy of Co. Wicklow VEC		
6	Have you drawn up an itinerary, including details of activities and any free time allowed		
7	Have you made clear arrangements for the supervision of free time including contact arrangements (i.e. checklist of names and intended destinations of students, agreed curfew times, safety of money, keeping in groups)		
8	Is any of the party qualified in First Aid? If not who is the appointed person taking responsibility for First Aid Box		
9	Have arrangements been made for special needs including access during travel and accommodation (e.g. disability/diet/medical etc)		
10	If additional hazardous activities are included in the schedule have specific risk assessments been done to cover the activities (e.g. Skiing/Sailing/Swimming/Mountain walking/Theme Parks etc)		
11	Have you provided a written briefing to both the students and their parents to cover the above, and provided them with appropriate contact numbers		
12	Have you checked the safety/suitability of any equipment to be used?		
13	Have you obtained Parental Consent?		
14	Has planning for inclement weather/protection from sun been accounted for		
15	Have you organised adequate insurance cover?		

ADDITIONAL RISK CONTROLS FOR FOREIGN TOURS		Y/N	NOTES
1	Have students been briefed about local customs and behavioural, dress codes etc		
2	If vaccinations are necessary, have arrangements been made		
3	Are supervisors clear on how to contact any Emergency Services and Irish Embassy in the country of visit		
4	Have the students obtained a European Health Insurance Card (available from the Health Service Executive) to ensure sufficient medical cover		
5	Have you verified that all passports are valid		

Telephone number of Irish Embassy/Consulate in country to be visited: _____

Signed (Group Leader) Date

**Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee
Form ST7**

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

To be completed before the trip. Copies to be held by the group leader and school contact.

School/group: _____

Name of group leader: _____ *Home Phone No:* _____

Name of Deputy Group Leader: _____ *Home Phone No.* _____

Visit departure date: _____

Return information: Date: _____ *Time:* _____ *Location:* _____

Group: Total Number: _____ *Adults:* _____ *Group Members:* _____

Do you have an emergency contact list for everyone in the Group? Y/N
(If no, obtain one. If yes, attach it to this sheet.)

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

During school hours:

Principal: _____ *Tel:* _____

Deputy/other: _____ *Tel:* _____

Out of hours:

Principal: _____ *Tel:* _____

Deputy/other: _____ *Tel:* _____

Travel Company:

Name/Address: _____ *Tel:* _____ *Fax:* _____

Company Travel Rep: Name: _____ *Tel:* _____ *Fax:* _____

Insurance/Emergency Assistance: _____ *Tel:* _____ *Fax:* _____

Hotel: _____

Address: _____

_____ *Tel:* _____ *Fax:* _____

Other emergency numbers: _____

Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee

Form ST9

EVALUATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL TOUR/FIELD TRIP BY GROUP LEADER

(Use an additional page as appropriate)

School/Group:	
Group Leader:	
Number in group:	Boys: Girls: Supervisors:
Date/s of trip:	
Purpose/s of trip:	
Venue:	
Commercial Organisation:	

	<i>Rating out of 10</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<i>1. Pre-visit organisation by external agency:</i>		
<i>2. Travel arrangements:</i>		
<i>3. Educational benefits:</i>		
<i>4. Instruction:</i>		
<i>5. Equipment:</i>		
<i>6. Suitability of environment</i>		
<i>7. Accommodation</i>		
<i>8. Food:</i>		
<i>9. Evening activities:</i>		
<i>10. Student behaviour</i>		
<i>11. Supervision:</i>		
<i>12. Incidents/close-calls etc</i>		

Signed: _____ **(Group Leader)** **Date:** _____

To be forwarded to the Principal with financial balancing statement no later than 28 days after the group's return.

Coiste Gairmoideachais Cho Chill Mhantáin
Co Wicklow Vocational Education Committee

Form ST10

Student Exchange

Surname: _____

First Name/s: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Are you male/female: _____

Telephone No: _____

Number of brothers: _____

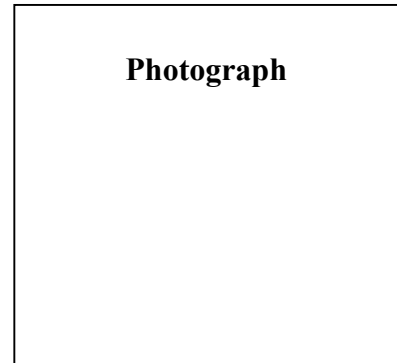
Names and ages of brothers: _____

Number of sisters: _____

Names and ages of sisters: _____

Fathers' Occupation (Optional): _____

Mother's Occupation (Optional): _____



+++++

What year are you in? _____ Class: _____

How would you describe your standard of _____ (name language):

Very Good

Good

Average

Apart from yourself does any other member of your family speak _____? Yes/No

If 'Yes' give details: _____

Are you taking any medication? _____

If 'Yes' give details: _____

What is the dosage? _____

Can you administer the medicine yourself? _____

Have you any allergies/phobias? _____

If 'Yes' give details: _____

Have you any special dietary requirements? _____

Do you suffer from travel sickness? _____

+++++

How would you describe your personality? _____

What are your hobbies/interests? _____

In what leisure activities might your partner be invited to partake? _____

Do you live in the town/village or country? _____

Will your exchange partner have his/her own room? _____

Do you like animals? _____

Do you have a pet at home? _____

Explain briefly why you have decided to participate in this exchange? _____

Signature of Student: _____ Signature of Parent/s _____

Note: Forms ST2, ST3, ST4, ST5, ST6, ST7, ST8, ST9 must also be completed in relation to foreign exchanges.

