



# **Rockwell College**

## **College Trips and Exchanges Policy**

## **Rockwell College**

Rockwell College is a recognised Voluntary Secondary College, providing Junior Certificate, Transition Year, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes as prescribed by the D.E.S. which may be amended in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). Rockwell College is a mixed ability, co-educational College. The pupil body comprises of boarders and day-boarders. The College operates under the Trusteeship of the Spiritan Education Trust.

## **Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to all staff members of Rockwell College who take pupils off site, to the pupils participating in the activity, and to their parents/ guardians/ agents.

This policy is formulated in the context of the College's Child Protection policy, Health & Safety Policy and Code of Behaviour. It also takes account of the College's Anti-Bullying Policy, Substance Use Policy, and other relevant policies. These apply to all pupils and to all College related activities which take place during or outside of normal College hours, whether or not an overnight stay is involved. The policy applies both on and off the College grounds to all pupils of Rockwell College.

## **Rationale**

College trips and exchanges are a central and valued part of education in Rockwell College. The College encourages the organisation of College trips for the educational, cultural, sporting, social and personal benefit of pupils

This policy is devised in line with the Child Protection Guidelines as set out in the College's Child Protection Policy to ensure the safety of all pupils and in line with the Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Colleges.

## **Glossary**

**Staff member:** Any person with responsibility or in a supervisory capacity for the well-being of a pupil during a school trip.

**Trip:** Movement of pupils outside school boundaries.

**Pupil:** Any registered pupil of Rockwell College and any pupil in the care of Rockwell College, including exchange pupils.

## **Aims of this policy**

- That the health, safety and welfare of the pupils are 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 careful assessment of any dangers to which the pupils may be exposed, and the demands on the physical resources of the pupils, having regard to their age and capacity.
- That staff are assisted in the planning of trips and outings.
- That trips and outings are managed efficiently and with a level of supervision firmly established within accepted guidelines.
- That expectations of behaviour are clarified for all trips.

- That pupils meet clear criteria before they are deemed eligible to take part in certain out of College activities and in particular any trips involving an overnight stay.
- That parents are given sufficient advance notice of any planned trips, and are fully briefed in advance and helped give a full and informed consent to their child's participation.

### **Approval of Proposal**

The approval of proposals is a matter for the Board of Management subject to the recommendation of the Principal or Deputy Principal. In granting approval, consideration will be given to:

- Conformity with the criteria set out in CC M20/04.
- The number of proposed events to take place.
- The timing of the event and its effect on other College activities.
- The implications for the normal teaching routine of the College.
- The suitability of travel and accommodation arrangements.

### **Eligibility to participate**

- Participation in College trips is not a right but a privilege, enabled by staff time and energy and, in the case of tours, significant financial investment by parents.
- Some trips/tours may be restricted to a particular year-group or to pupils taking a particular subject.
- Pupils will not be eligible to participate in a College tour unless all relevant costs have been paid to the College.
- The College reserves the right to cancel a pupil's place if a pupil's behaviour is a cause of concern. Given the importance of pupil safety while on a trip or tour, teachers will not be asked to be responsible outside the College for pupils who have shown they cannot follow instruction and behave in an acceptable manner while in College.

### **General principles and rules in relation to all trips and exchanges.**

- All College rules and policies apply on all College trips.
- The health and safety of pupils and staff is of paramount concern to the College. Therefore the College management reserves the right to disallow a trip or a pupil from participation in a College trip where, in their opinion, the health and safety of the pupil or other pupils or staff is at risk.
- The behaviour record of a pupil in College shall be taken into account in deciding whether to allow a pupil participate in a College trip.
- All trips are organised in as cost effective a manner as possible taking into account quality and value for money.
- Staff taking any trip will exercise due care and the Board of Management will rely on the professionalism, common sense and judgment of such teachers.
- The number of staff/adults that accompanies a group will be influenced by a number of factors including:  
The number of pupils travelling, age of the pupils, location of the trip, nature of the trip, whether additional supervision will be provided at the location, the group will be dividing into smaller groups, each requiring supervision and type of transport used.

- For any trip/activity taking place outside of the normal full College day (Including evening study), parental permission should/must be sought and the parents informed by letter/email or text. A permission slip should be completed by the parents/guardians prior to the trip taking place.
- Any pupil, who withdraws from a trip after a deposit or full monies have been paid, may not be entitled to a refund. A pupil, who is not allowed to travel for disciplinary reasons which occur following payment of a deposit or full amount, may not be entitled to a refund.
- Parents/ guardians/ agents of pupils who are in receipt of Special Needs support as recognised by the Department of Education and Skills need to inform the trip organiser at the time of their application to ensure that the required supports are in place for the trip/activity.

## **Staff procedures for arranging one day trips**

- An application form for the trip/activity must be submitted to the person (Principal/Deputy Principal) with responsibility for trips/activities as early as possible, preferably at least 3 weeks prior to the trip/activity taking place. The principal will fill in Appendix 1 of Circular Letter M20/04 and file a copy for College records.
- The staff member applying for the trip will check that all details are filled out and will check that there are no conflicts with other events or with notified tests/examinations.
- The Person with responsibility for trips will give permission for the trip/activity to go ahead or will refer to The Board of Management should any issue arise or need adjudication.
- The details of the trip/activity must be notified to the relevant pupils and parents/guardians/ agents so that they have sufficient notice to plan for the event.
- If class cover is required, class work should be given to the Deputy Principal the day before the activity/trip.
- An accurate list of pupils including departure and return times must be posted on the staffroom noticeboard at least one day prior to the trip/activity taking place and a notice placed on e-portal (or similar).

## **Additional procedures for College trips abroad or involving overnight trips.**

- Where a College trip abroad or overnight within the state takes place during the College term the procedures shall be as outlined in the Department of Education and Skills circular M20/04.
- Application for all trips abroad or overnight within the state should be submitted to the Board of Management, preferably at least 3 months prior to the trip taking place. It should give details of initial itinerary, the cost per pupil and the proposed number of pupils and staff participating. (This does not apply to Transition Year trips taken by all pupils or LCVP trips which will be ratified by the Board of Management at its final meeting of each year in June to run for the following year.)
- Taking into account the cost of a trip every effort should be made to ensure that there is sufficient time to allow for families to budget for the trip and to make the necessary arrangements to pay the costs.
- Written parental/guardian permission will be required for all such trips. This form will outline the following:
  - The nature, dates, times and duration of the trip
  - The cost of the trip
  - That all College rules and policies apply on the trip
  - That in case of an accident or emergency staff has permission to seek emergency treatment. That in the case of misbehaviour the pupil may be sent home at the expense of her/his parents
  - That staff are notified of any medical issues/conditions and use of medication
  - That any dietary concerns or preferences are notified on the form

- The contact details of the person in charge and destination are available
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians in conjunction with pupils to ensure that all documents necessary for travel abroad (e.g. passport, identity card) are up to date and in order. The College cannot take responsibility for a pupil whose personal documentation is not in order and who is prevented from travelling abroad as a result.
- Parents/ guardians will receive a written overview/ itinerary of overnight trips and will be required to give written consent to their son/daughter taking part.
- Pupils will be informed, prior to going on the trip that College rules apply. A pupil may be sent home, at his or her own expense, if the conduct of the pupil is warranted. In this event, a parent/guardian will be asked to come to collect the pupil or they will consent to the pupil travelling home alone.
- The College expects that all pupils travelling on an extended tour will display a level of maturity commensurate with their age. Pupils on trips, which involve an overnight stay in Ireland or abroad, cannot be supervised on a 24 hour basis and all extended College tours will involve periods of time without direct supervision. Parents who are concerned that such a level of supervision is inadequate should not permit their daughter/ son to take part in such trips.

#### **Garda Vetting, Foreign exchanges and hosting of pupils**

- The College's Garda vetting policy applies to school trips and exchanges. All staff members responsible for Rockwell College Pupils must be Garda vetted. In an activity, where the leader of that activity is not Garda vetted, a member of staff from Rockwell College must be with the group in a supervisory role.
- Any person or family hosting a pupil of Rockwell College overnight must be Garda vetted if a staff member is not on the premises to supervise or equivalent if overseas. If no equivalent overseas, then a family or person cannot host a pupil of Rockwell College in a trip or foreign exchange organised by a staff member of Rockwell College.
- If a parent wishes to send their child on a foreign exchange, whereby, the school cannot Garda vet the host or provide a staff member to be with the pupil, then it is the responsibility of the parent to organise their own exchange at their own risk. The school will not play a role in arranging the logistics of the exchange or be responsible for the pupil while on the exchange.
- Any parent of a pupil in Rockwell College, must be Garda vetted if they host a pupil from another school on a visiting trip to Rockwell College or a foreign exchange program. It is the responsibility of the Rockwell College staff member organising such trips or exchanges to look after the vetting procedure.
- Foreign Exchange trips take place in cooperation with other schools. Pupils are expected to act in manner that will reflect positively on Rockwell College to ensure good relations between the participating schools. This includes the good treatment and inclusion of exchange students for the duration of their return stay in Ireland.

- In applying to participate in any exchange, the pupil & parents are entering into a verbal agreement to participate fully if selected. It is not acceptable to withdraw from an exchange agreement once it is in place, unless in the most sensitive of circumstances.

### **Additional rules and Code of Behaviour on College trips**

All College rules apply as normal as pupils are representing their College and still under College supervision. Below are additional rules that pupils must adhere to on College trips:

1. The excessive consumption of behaviour effecting drinks such as Red Bull, espresso coffees or other drinks with enhanced caffeine is prohibited.
2. Pupils are to remain with the group at all times, unless, otherwise stated.
3. Pupils are expected to treat teachers/supervisors/instructors/tour guides with respect at all times in line with Substance Use policy and Code of Behaviour.
4. Teachers reserve the right to search pupils' bags/ rooms at any time if they suspect contraband is present in line with substance misuse policy and code of conduct.
5. All pupils are expected to be punctual for all events and activities.
6. Foul language is not acceptable from any pupil on the trip at any time.
7. Co-operate in all aspects of the tour.
8. Co-operate so as to ensure the success of the tour. Respect your peers and do not exclude any members of the group that limits their enjoyment or participation of the trip
9. Behave during any leisure period in a manner which reflects well on the reputation of the College.
10. Respect property of others.
11. Respect online property, hotel property, buses etc.
12. Go to bedrooms at the appointed time.
13. Remain in own bedroom.
14. It is forbidden for male pupils to enter the rooms of female pupils and for female pupils to enter the rooms of male pupils unless given permission to do so by a teacher.
15. FREE TIME – during trips it is common for pupils to be given some 'free time'. During such time pupils should always travel in groups (minimum of 3). Under no circumstance should any pupil walk on their own. During this time pupils are expected to treat their surroundings with the utmost respect and are also expected to adhere to all the College rules applicable above.

### **Management of incidents**

Failure to comply with this policy and the rules of the trip will lead to sanctions which will be decided by the teachers/ supervisors on the trip. Sanctions might include fines, loss of pass for certain activities, etc. More serious breaches of rules will result in phone calls to parents/guardians with possible follow up action in the College after the trip. Where necessary disciplinary meetings will be convened by the staff. In the event of very serious and incidents outside of College control, pupils may be required to return home. The costs in such an event will be charged to the parents/ guardians. This will be done after full communication with the parents/guardians.

The teachers accompanying the group reserve the right to amend any rule during the trip as necessary. Clear notice, will be given of any such changes, to the pupils.

**Transition Year, LCVP, Regular season long Sports activities e.g. Basketball, Hockey and Rugby and trips with the normal College day**

By default, parents enrolling their child in Rockwell College, grant permission for trips within the standard College day. All College rules mentioned above will apply.

On such trips, if a parent needs to contact their child for an emergency, they will do so as normal and contact the College reception. The receptionist can then contact the lead teacher of that trip.

**Boarders**

In the case of boarders, parents grant permission, upon enrolment for trips listed on the events calendar and other trips approved by the principal or residence manager throughout the year.

**Ratification and Review**

This Policy is subject to ratification by the Board of Management and to review within four years of the ratification date below. It is available to staff, pupils and parents via the Rockwell College website.

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Chairperson Board of Management

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Date