

EXTRA CURRICULAR POLICY

Scope:

Extra-curricular activities are activities for the whole student body of Ballinrobe Community School. Ideally there should be a diverse range of activities to cater for all students.

Policy Statement

Within our holistic approach to education, we see the provision of a wide range of Extra Curricular Activities (E.C.A.) 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.

VISION / AIMS:

- To foster confidence in our students and teachers to develop their talents and abilities
- To respect the diversity of our student body
- To encourage students to be positive in their outlook on life and make a positive contribution to their school and society
- To prepare students for further education and world of work
- To nurture the values of tolerance, inclusion and care within the school and wider community

RATIONALE

Ballinrobe Community School recognises how extra-curricular activities can help in the achievement of all of the above aims of the schools mission statement. It is because of this recognition that the school has such a high emphasis on extra-curricular activities and encourages all students to participate in these.

GOALS

- To plan and implement a broad and diverse programme of Extra Curricular Activities (E.C.A.)
- To encourage as many students as possible to take part in E.C.A.s
- Ensure consistent approaches to the planning and implementation of Extra-Curricular activities in the school
- Provide the school community with a clear understanding of the role of Extra-Curricular activities in the school
- Enable students to take full advantage of Extra-Curricular activities with a view to achieving a rounded education
- Encourage parents to take an interest in and share responsibility for their children's overall development through support of the school's Extra-Curricular activities
- Provide teachers and other staff members with assurance and guidelines to help them with what is effectively voluntary work for the benefit of the students and the whole school community.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The following are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements

- Availability of First Aid equipment
- Identification of staff members qualified in First Aid, and the availability of training in First Aid
- Safe environment for the E.C.A.s
- Adequate levels of Supervision (See below)
- Appropriate Insurance Cover (See below)
- Compliance with Child Safety Procedures
- Appropriate Transport
- Suitable dress be worn for E.C.A.s (*On the day of an E.C.A. students are required to wear the official school uniform. Opportunities to change into sports gear will be given to students before they depart for the event or at the venue. Students not in uniform may be refused permission to take part in the E.C.A.*)

It is the responsibility of the teacher/supervisor to maintain the equipment. Sports gear should be washed and collected as soon as it is used.

There is a responsibility on parents and pupils to inform the organisers of an E.C.A. of any relevant medical concerns.

Students will be requested to fill out a permission slip for ECA's where necessary.

School management is to be informed of all planned ECA's in advance.

The final decision on participation is at the discretion of the School management following consultation with the E.C.A. organiser.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Management

- ensure that the policy is developed and evaluated going forward
- approve the policy
- consider reports from the Principal/Deputy Principal on implementation of the policy
- support and affirm teachers involved in ECA

In-School Management

- put in place the structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy
- monitor the implementation and facilitate review of the policy
- support and affirm teachers involved in ECA

ECA Teachers

- implement the policy and provide feedback on its application
- keep records of ECA incidents and report these to the Principal/Deputy Principal
- ensure student awareness and acceptance of the policy.

Parents

- read, understand, and support the policy
- provide any relevant information requested by the school regarding their children and ECA
- encourage their children to participate in ECA
- support and affirm teachers involved in ECA

Students

- obey all instructions of supervisors of ECA and Ballinrobe school rules
- always act in a safe manner when involved in ECA
- acknowledge the work being done through ECA on their behalf by always being respectful
- gain enjoyment and fulfilment from their involvement.

With relation to school work missed

It is be expected that all work missed due to extra-curricular activities (including homework) should be caught up on by the pupil. The onus is on the student to get this work themselves.

Withdrawal of student from E.C.A.

The provision of ECA's by the school is regarded as a "privilege" for students. This decision may be made by school management, parent or teacher in charge.

A student's record of behaviour will be taken into consideration when deciding if they are to be withdrawn from an E.C.A. trip or tour.

A class teacher may recommend withdrawal of a student from ECA to management or teacher in charge in certain circumstances. The school Principal, following consultation with the relevant teachers, will have the final decision in this matter.

Insurance

The school's state indemnity insurance covers Employers and Public Liability. All students are encouraged to take out Personal Accident Insurance Cover which is available through the school.

In the case of overnight trips/trips abroad the required group travel insurance is put in place.

Supervision

Adequate levels of supervision are in place for each E.C.A.

Levels of supervision will vary according to the ECA being undertaken, its duration and the ages of the students taking part.

Transport

Transport must be suitable and well-maintained and must be compliant with relevant safety regulations.

Behaviour and Discipline

The school's Code of Behaviour applies to all extra-curricular activities. The school has the right to withdraw a student or group of students from an activity for any breach of the school's code of behaviour.

Trips Abroad/Overnight Stays

All trips abroad or overnight stays must be sanctioned by the Board of Management.

When ECA events require that a group of students spend one or more nights away from home, there are added issues that the school must address. These include, among other things:

- Ensuring that the accommodation is clean, safe, and appropriate for the students
- Ensuring students are adequately prepared for the trip
- Having an evacuation plan in the event of a fire and ensuring that the students are familiar with this
- Establishing and policing a curfew for students
- In cases of overseas trips, making provision for medical care if it should be required
- A letter outlining the itinerary to be sent to the parents (See sample below)
- An information meeting for parents of students traveling abroad may be held where the need arises.

Good Practice on School Tours/Outings

1. A letter to Parent(s)/Guardian(s) is required (Insurance purposes) explaining the precise details of the tour and seeking the signature of the parents and students on a permission slip.
2. Inform the students/parents in good time the total estimated cost of the trip/tour.
3. Teachers should bring the school mobile phone on tours and the number should be made available to Parents: 087-2871262
4. Please inform the caretakers that you require the school bus on that day.
5. If the school bus is not available and you have to book an outside bus please satisfy yourself that the bus is compliant with recent legislation regarding Safety. (Recent controversy re: seat belts, two students per seat etc.). Always ask the Bus Company before you book. Overcrowding on buses is illegal.
6. Try and get the best deal possible – agree and record the price. The price agreed will have to be checked against the invoice. Some bus companies may forget the agreed price, particularly when invoices come after a few months and fuel prices have risen in the meantime. **KEEP A RECORD OF THE AGREED PRICE.**

7. Prudent supervision must be exercised on School Tours, you are in “Loco Parentis”.
8. School Tours abroad must be booked through a Bonded Travel Agent (Recent Legislation).
9. School Tours abroad must receive the permission of the DES if they are taking place during school time (Department Circular on School Tours). School Tours/Outings over one day also require Board of Management permission.
10. All School Tours should be relevant to the curriculum/school programme for E.C.A.s e.g. Sport/Debates/Careers/Quizzes/ T.Y. Events etc.
11. It is best practice to plan well ahead, inform the Principal/Deputy Principal in good time so that it does not clash with other school activities and that arrangements can be made for class cover.
12. All monies collected for school tours/trips should be lodged to school accounts and invoices submitted to the office for payment.

Child Protection

A school policy on ECA must refer to and be based on the school's/Trustees/DES issued Child Protection Procedures. All of the earlier issues will, in various ways, be influenced by the aforementioned guidelines. The ECA Policy, in particular, should remind participants that as many ECA's involve locations and people external to the school premises/community there is an additional onus on the school personnel to ensure that good practice prevails at all times. At the same time this issue should be dealt with in a sensitive manner so as to avoid teachers becoming over concerned and declining to organize ECA's.

Review and Evaluation

This programme is subject to a yearly review and evaluation. The review team will include representatives of the ECA Committee, the Principal, and the Deputy Principal. This review will gather the views and experiences of all involved in relation to the success of the provision of ECA's within the school. The policy will be analysed to examine the impact of the policy on the ECA program, and address any policy areas that need amendment or improvement. It will be carried out annually with teachers involved and from time to time with parents and students.