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Off-Campus Educational Activities Policy

There is a wide divergence in the type of college trip provided for students at St. John's Central College. These range from short trips to vocationally relevant locations in the immediate hinterland of the college to international college tours. The objective of an educational activity should be to provide a significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the participating students in a way that cannot be provided by in-college activities alone.

To meet this aim college off-campus activities should be an extension and reinforcement of course activities and where the activity is aimed at a specific subject or vocational group should be designed to include the maximum number of students possible from that group. Every effort should be made to keep the cost as low as possible so as to ensure that the cost involved does not unduly prevent any student from participating.

Staff involved in the organisation of these activities should comply with the provisions in this document and those set down in the Department of Education and science circular letter M 20/04. (http://www.education.ie/servlet/blobServlet/ppm20_04.doc)

1. General Provisions

On behalf of the college staff involved in the organisation of off-campus educational activities should ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place.

The college management should be given adequate notice to allow for alternative arrangements for those students not participating on the activity. To this end the Deputy Principal must be given adequate notice of all off-campus activities. For college tours and trips attention should be made to (1) College Trip/Tour Organising Doc and (2) Guidelines and Checklist Doc. A Trip/Tour Notification Form must be fully completed and given to the Deputy Principal which ideally should be done at the beginning of the academic year and noted in the course handbook. Such events should be also noted on the college calendar.

Where college off-campus activities impinge upon the standard college year the following guidelines are to be observed as to the type of educational visit acceptable to the college:

1. Educational visits involving an exchange of groups of students with another college.
2. Educational visit involving attendance at a vocationally relevant course of instruction.
3. Educational visit involving active participation in a vocationally relevant festival e.g. film, photography, art etc.
4. Educational visit to a conference or exhibition of clear vocationally relevant educational value
5. Educational visits (inside or outside the state) involving significant linguistic or cultural benefit to the maximum number of students.

All college off-campus activities should have stated aims and objectives in line with the curricular aims of the college. This should include a statement on evaluation procedures and follow-up work.

Financial aspects of the activity should be open and transparent, receipts obtained and retained for all money spent.

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2. Health & Safety

In organizing an off-campus activity such as a trip/tour it is good practice to have a risk assessment in the planning and execution of the off-campus activity.

(See: http://www.hsa.ie/eng/FAQs/Safety_in_Schools/)

3. The College Board of Management:

- is responsible for the general conduct of the college
- need to be sure that a college off-campus activity has a clear educational value
- must ensure that arrangements are in accordance with any Cork education and Training Board guidelines and regulations
- must ensure that the college can run efficiently in absence of anyone on the trip

4. The Principal

- is responsible for seeing that the Cork Education and Training Board and Board of Management policy is implemented
- has a responsibility to ensure that all college activities comply with Cork Education and Training Board and college regulations in every respect; and if this responsibility is delegated, it must be to a “competent” person
- must ensure that activities are properly planned and supervised and that the pupils’ safety is paramount

5. Teachers

- Have a common law duty to act as a “reasonable” parent where a student participating on a college trip is less than eighteen years of age
- Must ensure the meticulous planning and preparation of the college activity including in the interests of good practise a risk assessment of all activities.
- Students are to be reminded of their responsibilities as outlined in the Student Contracts

In all cases, the duty remains with the Principal and the organising staff to ensure adequate supervision for the particular group and for the particular activity.

6. Disruptive students

The Off-Campus activities should be available to all students; but the general disposition and good conduct and discipline of the students is crucial to the success of any activity. All normal college codes of conduct apply during college activities and should be strictly observed.

The organising staff in consultation with the class teachers may consider the general disposition of students and exclude disruptive students from going on a college activity. Careful consideration should be given before taking a student whose behaviour record (or medical record) gives cause for concern. In such cases it may be appropriate to discuss areas of concern and reach an agreement with the student in advance of the activity. All matters of this nature should be brought to the attention of the Principal well in advance of the proposed dates for the activity.

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7. International Projects Policy

International projects are defined as projects involving a partnership between St. John's Central College of Further Education and Training and an Educational or Training institute in a country other than Ireland. St. John's Central College of Further Education and Training is committed to promoting this international dimension of vocational education and training.

Through our participation on international projects we seek to:

1. Introducing students to the practical use of other languages and familiarise them with a variety of cultures.
2. Familiarising students with the European Idea
3. Improving social competence.
4. Achieve a better understanding of qualifications needed and opportunities available in the European Union and International Job market
5. Improve the students qualification for the home job market by improved foreign language skills.
6. Consolidate and enhance existing partnerships.
7. Exchange experience of educational delivery with our partners and identify and implement examples of best practice across the Vocational education sector.
8. Involve teachers in educational exchange visits, work shadowing and international courses.

To achieve these objectives we aim to participate in and seek funding for a wide variety of project types. Through participation on these projects we can provide support for the transnational mobility of people undergoing or responsible for vocational training. We seek to improve the skills and competencies of people in initial vocational training at all levels, to improve the quality of, and access to, continuing vocational training and the lifelong acquisition of skills and competencies and to promote and reinforce the contribution of vocational training to the process of innovation, with a view to improving competitiveness and entrepreneurship. In addition we aim to increase student's motivation, capacity and confidence to communicate in other European languages.

In addition we will participate in the process of establishing collaborations between providers of adult education in different countries through involvement in multilateral projects around a specific theme or the organisation of conferences, exhibitions and visits in order to exchange experiences, practices and methods. These outcomes can take the form of: the development of models of good practice, development of teaching and learning material for staff and learners, website, videos, newsletters or magazines.

8. Organisation

A member of staff has been designated at Assistant Principal level to coordinate the colleges International project activity, to define and advise on the colleges International objectives and priorities, and to establish what future possibilities there may be in this area. We will strive to involve as many teachers as possible in our International project activities.

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9. Project Application

All project applications will be completed under the guidance of the Assistant Principal with responsibility for International projects. Project proposals should be submitted for discussion before work on an application begins. In the case where the number of applications for a project type is limited additional restrictions will be put in place. Projects of this type will be submitted solely by the Assistant Principal following discussions with the relevant teachers and Principal, they will be cross curricular and will over time seek to be as inclusive as possible of all vocational areas being studied in the college.

10. Student Selection

Participation on International projects is open to all students of the college. We aim to achieve a good balance between male and female participants across a wide age spectrum, to include students with disabilities and those with educational or social disadvantage.

Students must make a formal application to participate on a project. A formal evaluation process will then take place. The student's attendance record, record from previous participation on work placement, vocational ability and general application to their studies will be examined. Where these areas are judged to be satisfactory students will be called for an interview. Primarily the function of the interview is to ensure that the student fully understands the nature of the project for which they have applied and that they are fully committed to all aspects of the project. Other factors may also be taken into account depending on the nature of the specific project. These may include language ability, student ability to contribute to the project as a whole etc. The needs and limitations of our partner college and available accommodation will also be taken into account and these may impose limitations on the range of vocational areas that may be included in a project, the age range of the students, the male/female balance etc.

Once a student has been selected to participate on a project they will be asked to sign a formal project contract. Participating students will be expected to participate fully in language and cultural preparation classes as well as other project related activities.

During the mobility phase students will be expected to participate fully on all aspects of the project, to comply with all reasonable instructions given by our partner college and host employer and to behave in a manner that generally enhances the image and reputation of St. John's Central College. Students on mobility remain subject to the college's Code of Conduct and Work Experience Code of Conduct.

Within two weeks of the completion of the mobility phase students must return all project documentation including: receipts, project report, supervisors report etc. to the Project teacher.

11. Project teachers

Project teachers for individual projects will be appointed on an annual basis following consultation between the Principal and the Assistant Principal with responsibility for International Projects. Participation as a project teacher is voluntary. With support from the Assistant Principal with responsibility for International Projects, project teachers will take on the following responsibilities:

In respect of visiting students from the project partner college

1. Organisation of work experience, project activities and accommodation
2. Arrangements for transfers from the airport to accommodation etc.
3. Arrange and accompany students on Cultural and Social activities
4. Assist with arrangements for student activities within St. John's Central College

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12. In respect of mobility to the partner college

In advance of the mobility phase to collect and return to the Assistant Principal:

1. Application forms from students wishing to participate on the outgoing mobility
2. Project contracts (Original and 1 Photocopy)
3. Financial deposits (where required)
4. Other required documentation e.g. photocopies of student passports, European Health Insurance card, Curriculum Vitae etc.

Within three weeks of the completion of the mobility phase to collect and return to the Assistant Principal:

1. Receipts, boarding cards, student reports and financial statement (including 2 Photocopies of these items)
2. Completed final mobility financial statement
3. Completed project work where appropriate

To participate on project mobility as required and during this time:

1. Ensure that student accommodation is adequate
2. Supervise student behaviour and provide help and support to students where necessary
3. Visit our partner college
4. Visit employers participating on the project
5. Supervise Cultural visits etc.
6. Supervise and/or participate fully in project activity, meetings etc

13. Dissemination

We recognise the importance of dissemination for all International Projects. To this end the Assistant Principal with responsibility for International projects will keep staff and students informed about current projects. Dissemination to a wider audience will be achieved through providing information about International Projects in college literature e.g. Prospectus, Student diary etc., through reports to the college board of management and through the local media.