

**Extra-Curricular Activities Policy**

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**St. Ailbe’s School**

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# Policy Statement

St. Ailbe’s school strives to be a welcoming place, inclusive in intake, comprehensive in curriculum, fair and just in its structures and behaviour management strategies, and consultative in decision-making. St. Ailbe’s is taking positive steps to fulfil its mission in partnership with parents, staff, students, trustees, and the local community.

Within this holistic approach to the provision of education, an important element in a comprehensive curriculum is the provision of a wide range of Extra Curricular Activities (ECA), including sporting, artistic, musical, cultural, literary, social and leisure, and spiritual activities. These activities are a *sine qua non* for the school’s objective of full development of students based on the core principles of self-respect and respect for others.

# Policy Rationale

The school recognises that ECA represent a valuable aspect of the learning process and contribute to the development of a rounded individual. ECA supplement and complement in-school learning and activities and provide opportunities for students to broaden their horizons in ways that would not be possible within the confines of the school premises alone. This is particularly important for all pupils as ECA provide them with opportunities to explore and expand their gifts and talents in other areas.

# Policy Goals

Within the remit of school development planning and modern regulatory and legislative developments in education, the ECA policy should have the following goals:

* Ensure consistent approaches to the planning and implementation of ECA in the school.
* Provide the school community with a clear understanding of the role of ECA in the school.
* Enable students to take full advantage of ECA 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 ECA.
* 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.

# Policy Content (in no particular order):

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1. Parental Involvement and Consent
2. Scheduling of ECA
3. Insurance
4. Transport
5. Health and Safety
6. Behaviour and Discipline
7. Withdrawal of Student from ECA
8. Supervision
9. Coordination and Planning
10. Overnight Stays
11. Child Protection
12. Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

# Parental Involvement and Consent

As holistic education is dependent on a cooperative approach between parents and the school, it is vital that parents are fully aware of and committed to the success of the school’s ECA and ECA policy.

While the school will make every effort to inform parents regarding details of ECA, it is the parent’s responsibility to familiarise themselves with any activities that their child partakes in.

It is the responsibility of parents to inform the school of any illnesses that a pupil may have or medication that he/she is taking and granting authority to the school to act in an emergency medical situation in the event that a parent cannot be contacted (as per Administration of Medicines Policy).

For certain ECA, students may be asked to return a consent form to be allowed partake in the activity.

It is parents’/guardians’ responsibility to arrange collection for their son/daughter after any ECA.

1. **Scheduling of EC Activities**

St. Ailbe’s is cognisant of the importance of the enormous benefits associated with high levels of class attendance for every student. With this in mind, we propose that:

* When possible, whereby a student will be absent from class due to extra-curricular activities during a school week, to limit such events to a maximum of two per week;
* Ensure a collaborative approach to the organisation and participation of such EC events among all staff involved;
* Ensure that all EC activities, that could lead to student absence, will be entered into the school calendar well in advance, to aid planning and foresee potential difficulties;
* Ensure a collaborative approach to the organisation and participation of such EC events among all staff involved;
* Such collaboration will enable the discussion around the prioritising of certain activities/events (Multi school blitz or musical gatherings etc.), in the case of the school calendar displaying overlapping entries.

# Insurance

Students are covered under the school’s Pupil Protector Personal Accident Insurance through J.F. Dunne Insurance Ltd (AIG Europe). See the school student insurance details and documents on the school’s website (stailbes.ie).

# Transport

Transport must be suitable and must be compliant with relevant safety regulations.

# Health & Safety

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

* Availability of First Aid equipment
* Safe environment for the ECA
* Adequate levels of Supervision (See below)
* Appropriate Insurance Cover (See above)
* Compliance with Child Safety Procedures (Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment)
* Appropriate Transport
* Suitable dress be worn for ECA (On the day of an ECA, students are required to wear the official school uniform unless otherwise informed. 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 ECA)
* It is the responsibility of the teacher/supervisor for gear to be washed and collected as soon as it is used.
* There is a responsibility on parents and pupils to inform the organisers of an ECA of any relevant medical concerns.
* Students may be requested to fill out a permission slip for ECA 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 ECA organiser.

# 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.

1. **Withdrawal of student from ECA**

The provision of ECA by the school is regarded as a “privilege” for students.

This decision to withdraw a student 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 ECA 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.

# Supervision

Recognising that teachers and other staff members give up a large portion of their own time voluntarily to ensure the success of ECA, any ECA Policy should strive to provide teachers with assistance and guidance in their supervisory duties associated with activities.

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

# Coordination and Planning

Coordination and planning can contribute greatly to the smooth running of ECA, so an ECA Policy should establish procedures and parameters for effective planning of activities. To this end, it could make provision for an ECA Coordinator or ECA Committee. The Coordinator/Committee (C/C) would take primary responsibility for organizing the ECA of the school by helping arrange and coordinate inter-school activities and major school outings and functions. The C/C would participate in establishing goals, directions, and policies for ECA implementation and guide students toward proper concepts, encouraging them to participate in ECA. In such a role, the C/C would be responsible for the following:

* Recruiting and organising the necessary personnel for the implementation of ECA.
* Drawing up a yearly plan for ECA in the school (this may require amendment as the year progresses).
* Providing suggestions to the school management regarding the use of finances, allocation of resources, and equipment required for the operation of ECA.
* Promotion of the ECA program inside and outside the school.
* Promotion of behaviour and safety guidelines among teachers and students.
* Development of an evaluation and appraisal system to assess various ECA and thereby help improve planning of future activities.

# Overnight Stays

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 from a supervisory perspective above those associated with a daytrip. These include, among other things:

* Ensuring that the accommodation is clean, safe, and appropriate for the students.
* Establishing a list of the items that students should bring with them for such a trip.
* Parents inform school of any students who are prone to any problems that may have relevance to overnight stays (e.g., sleepwalking, bedwetting, or nightmares).
* Establishing and policing a curfew for students.
* Conducting a headcount every evening and morning to ensure that all students are accounted for.
* In cases of overseas trips, parents to inform school of any medical needs prior to trip.
* Providing students with a mobile phone contact number of a teacher that they can use if needed.

# Child Protection

St. Ailbe’s is fully complaint in all areas of Child Protection. Both the Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment are reviewed annually.

# Roles and Responsibilities of stakeholders:

The school has addressed the roles and responsibilities of the various parties that make up the school community regarding the ECA policy.

# Board of Management/TETB

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

# Principal/Deputy Principal

* + To put in place the structures and procedures for the implementation of the policy.
  + To monitor policy implementation.
  + To support and affirm teachers involved in ECA.

# ECA Teachers

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

# Parents

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

# Students

* + To follow all instructions of supervisors of ECA.
  + To always act in a safe manner when involved in ECA.
  + To acknowledge the work being done through ECA on their behalf by being always respectful.
  + To gain enjoyment and fulfilment from their involvement.

# Success Criteria

The school will use the following criteria to determine the success of the ECA Policy.

* Increased pupil participation in ECA.
* More teachers willing to supervise ECA.
* A reduction in the number of ECA injury events.
* A reduction in disciplinary incidents arising from ECA.
* More and varied activities for students to participate in.
* Reduced insurance premiums.
* Smoother running of the ECA process.

# Monitoring Procedures

Monitoring of the ECA Policy implementation involves teachers reporting to the ECA Coordinator/Committee (C/C) on individual activities; the C/C coordinating this material and working with the Principal/Deputy Principal on developments and issues to be addressed; and the Principal/Deputy Principal reporting to the Board of Management on implementation success and suggestions for the future.

# Review Procedures

The policy will be reviewed periodically, with the review team comprising the ECA Coordinator/Committee, the Principal, and the Deputy Principal. This review should survey the views and experiences of teachers, students, and parents in relation to the success of the policy, analyse the ECA records to examine the impact of the policy on the ECA program, and address any policy areas that need amendment or improvement.