



## POLICY ON CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

### **Preamble:**

Formation, through co-curricular activities and through experiential learning, is intrinsic to Clongowes education. With a proud tradition in the fields of arts and culture, the College places strong emphasis on cultural development. In addition it emphasises the role of sport in formation. As a typical Jesuit school, with the particular advantages of very extensive facilities and amenities in a healthy and beautiful location, Clongowes offers a holistic approach to the provision of education. An important element in a comprehensive curriculum is the provision of a wide range of co-curricular activities, conceived precisely as that - not optional additions to the work of the classroom but integral to the overall educational process.

**The following is a list of activities in the current co-curricular programme. Others may be added as approved by Management:**

### **Formation**

Boys are encouraged to help organise and to participate in a number of activities of benefit to those less privileged than themselves. These include:

**The Duck Push:** A fund-raising walk by Transition Year students to raise money for a children's charity.

**Special Children's Holiday:** Students from Poetry and Rhetoric volunteer a week of their summer holidays on the Clongowes campus to care for people with special needs. This enables the children's families and carers to have a week of holidays.

**Social Outreach:** Organised during Transition Year, students travel each week to caring institutions located nearby to work with people with special needs or alternatively, teach them skills in the school.

**Lourdes Pilgrimage:** Boys from Rhetoric accompany the Dublin Diocesan Pilgrimage and work as *brancardiers*.

**Visit to Taizé:** During Easter, boys from Poetry travel to Taizé in France to participate in its unique experience of prayer and sacred music.

**Lesotho Trip:** This is week-long trip by Poetry students during which they work to help building projects etc. in Lesotho.

### **Other elements of formation**

**Transition Year:** During Transition Year in particular, boys receive the opportunity for many other out-of-College activities. This includes two weeks' work experience, one week of social work placement, exchanges with schools in France and Germany, outdoor pursuits, trip to Eastern Europe, trips to theatres, museums, art galleries, cinema etc.

**Ecumenism:** A significant aspect of co-curricular life is the 'twinning' with Portora Royal School in Enniskillen. This has both cultural and ecumenical dimensions. At various times throughout the year students from each school visit the other for various sporting, social

and cultural activities. The past students' unions of Clongowes and Portora sponsor the Joyce-Beckett award annually. In the circumstances of contemporary Ireland, this link with Protestant contemporaries in the North has great possibilities. A school like Clongowes has a responsibility to its students to educate them regarding other religious traditions in order to help to heal the wounds which divide it.

**Retreats/Spiritual Life:** Retreat experiences are provided for all year-groups, either in the College or at other venues. This work is organised by the Assistant Pastoral Co-ordinator. The current programme, for both boys and parents, needs to be kept under regular review. In recent years, the rich scope a boarding-school environment gives to the promotion of Christian community, prayer-groups and small-group liturgies has begun to be much more fully exploited. A particular retreat experience is offered to the Poetry students who are offered a Kairos retreat given to them by students chosen from Rhetoric under the direction of an adult leader.

**Parent formation:** A number of Parent Days and a Parent Retreat are organized for parents of each year. This work is organised by the Assistant Pastoral Co-ordinator

### **Sport**

A wide range of sports is available, which fully utilise the College's facilities: football pitches (for rugby - the most popular and successful sporting activity, soccer and gaelic), tennis courts, cricket pitch, athletics field and track, basketball court, sports hall, swimming pool and golf-course. In almost all of these sports, teams representing Clongowes compete in a wide variety of external competitions as well as playing regular friendly matches against other schools. Snooker, swimming and table-tennis facilities are available indoors. Under the supervision of parents some students represent Clongowes in show jumping and/or eventing.

**Drama** is regarded as an important component of Clongowes education. Each year, boys from Rhetoric perform a full-length play during the first term while other years perform one-act plays or extracts from longer works during the second term. Visits to the theatre are encouraged and occur throughout the year.

**Music** receives much attention with both individual instrument tuition and classroom tuition available. A rich musical life, both secular and liturgical, continues to flourish. The College choir and orchestra are active and well organised, and set very high standards. They perform two concerts annually and have performed in the National Concert Hall. A flourishing traditional group exists which performs regularly. There is also a *schola cantorum* for liturgy.

**Debating** in the College has a long and distinguished history and has associations with both Daniel O'Connell and Thomas Francis Meagher. (It was founded at the behest of Daniel O'Connell whose sons attended Clongowes and Thomas Francis Meagher was first secretary of the House Debating Society).

### **Exchanges**

There are exchange-relationships with French and German schools, with approximately thirty students each year spending a month or more in schools in France and Germany. The College also has a twinning with a Jesuit school in Mislolc in Hungary and host a

number of students for one term annually. Given their rich possibilities for the future, as European links grow closer and the need for our students to be fully 'European' in their outlook becomes more pressing, these programmes will require close examination and good organisation.

### **Other activities**

The old Jesuit tradition of the 'Academy' was revived by Fr. Lawton SJ in the 1950s, in the form of a society of senior students who deliver high-quality learned papers to an audience of their peers and staff. Transition Year students are also involved in a variety of capacities in the production of the school annual, The Clongownian.

Other aspects of co-curricular life include careers conventions and careers-talks, and visits by groups from the College to such conventions elsewhere, as well as to occasional plays, concerts and exhibitions

**A film society** and classroom discussions in Media Studies classes encourage students to be "media literate" and critical in their views.

### **Code of Behaviour for Out-of-College Activities**

The College Policy on Child Protection Guidelines and the Policy on Staff-Student Contact is to be rigorously followed on all out-of-College activities especially if they involve overnight trips. Some of these activities may involve non-Clongowes personnel and staff have a particular responsibility to ensure that good practice prevails at all times.

1. The College Code of Behaviour applies for out-of-College activities. Students are expected to follow the instructions of members of staff at all times. They are further expected to:
  - comply with the instructions of the bus driver or any other adult who is presenting an out-of-College activity such as instructors or guides
  - not to leave the tour group, for any reason, without permission.
  - strictly adhere to any health and safety precautions associated with a particular activity.
  - remain in assigned accommodation and rooms during overnight, or longer, trips
2. Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting a Clongowes student when they are representing the College on any out-of-College trip. Behaviour likely to bring the College into disrepute shall be considered a grave breach of the College Code of Behaviour.
3. The College dress code applies during all out-of-College activities. Students are expected to dress appropriately for each occasion or they will not be allowed to attend the activity.
4. It is College policy to encourage out-of-College activities of an academic, spiritual or cultural nature which complement the formation of the Students in accordance with the Profile of the Graduate
5. Field trips which are subject related will normally take place during school hours. Wherever possible, College trips for Co-curricular activities will take place outside normal class time. Due to the different nature of TY out of class activities are considered part of the normal curriculum of this year and can take place for a wide

range of reasons.

6. Trips to competitions or festivals for the choir or orchestra are considered to be an important part of formation and are to be encouraged. Should these clash with non-competitive sporting activities then the musical activities will normally be given priority.
7. Third Level College "Open Days" and other Career Education activities are important for the further education of the students. However, students are expected to decide which of the many possible "Open Days" are important to them as they need to balance the usefulness of the information days with the need for the work required to achieve their academic goals. The final decision regarding attendance at these activities will normally rest with the Guidance Counsellor (cf. Guidance Counselling Policy).
8. Trips which are subject specific i.e. science lectures or drama or music performances are considered important in the broader educational sense and are encouraged. However, consideration should be given to disruption of the normal running of the College and to budgetary constraints.
9. To preserve the integrity of the school day, friendly games shall take place out of class time on Wednesdays and Saturdays, except in exceptional circumstances. As far as possible, competitive fixtures shall also occur out of class time.
10. Where out-of-College activities require the absence of members of the teaching or prefecting staff, every effort will be made to minimise the disruption to classes. In general, staff should make every effort to give reasonable notice of any such proposed activity.
11. Trips which take place over a number of nights, with the exception of those for TY, should normally take place out of term time. Unless these trips have a very specific academic or pastoral function.
12. All overnight trips should have an academic, cultural or pastoral function. Similar sporting trips should have a representative and competitive function and should not be seen as purely sporting with the exception of cup panels.
13. Students who miss class due to an out-of-College activity are expected to complete all work missed.

## **Supervision**

Recognising that staff members give up a large portion of their own time voluntarily to ensure the success of co-curricular activities, they are therefore entitled to expect full co-operation from students. Clearly, staff members have to be extra vigilant when taking Students out of the College, having to pay attention to such things as road safety, behaviour on the bus, risks posed by particular venues or activities, and the health and safety of the students at all times.

When members of staff are taking students to events they must ensure that an adequate staff/student ratio is used to allow for the safe supervision of the students. This ratio will differ depending on the type of event and the age of the student attending. Some guidelines are given here to advise staff members.

1. At cultural or pastoral events where the students are in an enclosed area i.e. theatre, cinema or retreat centre, two staff members per year should be adequate
2. For team sporting events i.e. friendly rugby matches or athletic meetings two members of staff should attend. (This will allow one member to deal with any

medical emergencies that arise and the other can accompany the remaining team members home)

3. For sporting activities in adventure centres i.e. TY activities, --approximately one staff member per twenty unless the centre and/or the risk of the activity requires more.
4. For TY events such as prison visits or mini company visits, approximately one teacher per twenty students
5. For bus trips to cup rugby matches etc. one member of staff per bus is required.
6. Where small numbers of students (up to twenty) are representing the College i.e. debating or ecumenical events, --one staff member can accompany the students
7. For any bus trip or as a second or subsequent supervisor GAP students will be considered as members of staff – they should not be the sole responsible adult unless they are accompanying students to a medical appointment or to hospital.

Staff members should ensure that they have a mobile phone in case of emergency. Staff bringing students to sports matches will be supplied with basic first aid kits by the Games Master and basic first aid training will be provided to all such staff members. On overnight or overseas trips staff will be provided with an emergency phone number to contact the College should reception be closed.

### **Overnight Stays:**

When co-curricular events require that a group of students spend one or more nights away from the College or their homes, the staff member in charge will Follow appropriate child protection guidelines

1. Ensure that the accommodation is clean, safe, and appropriate for the students.
2. Establish a list of the items that students should bring with them for such a trip.
3. Check with the parents or College nurse to be aware of whether students are prone to any problems that may have particular relevance to overnight stays.
4. Having an evacuation plan in the event of a fire and ensuring that the students are familiar with this.
5. Establish and police a curfew for students.
6. Conduct a head-count every evening and morning to ensure that all students are accounted for.
7. In cases of overseas trips, make provision for medical care if it should be required.
8. Provide students with a mobile phone contact number of a staff member that they can use if needed.
9. In the case of overseas trips adequate information and a schedule of activities will be provided to the parents

### **Insurance:**

Staff arranging any co-curricular activity will ensure that the cooperating organisation/facility/host of off-campus activities has adequate insurance cover in case of accident involving a student or member of staff. Travel insurance will be necessary if the activity involves overseas travel.

### **Travel:**

The staff member organising the journey away from the College should ensure that the transport supplied is appropriate for the numbers travelling and for the distance being travelled.

Transport supplied must be suitable and well-maintained. Staff should feel within their rights to refuse any vehicle they deem unsuitable for the outing.

On return to the College, the staff member in charge should ensure that the vehicle is left in good condition and free of litter.

#### Health and Safety:

- Staff are encouraged to ensure that appropriate Health and Safety standards apply at all times. This includes accommodation, food, and all equipment supplied by outside agencies.
- There must be close supervision of those students who have a higher health risk than normal (e.g. students with asthma or epilepsy).
- There must be adequate levels of supervision. This ratio will depend on the particular activity and the age-profile of the students.
- Staff should have a mobile phone with them at all times, in case of emergency.
- Reasonable care must be exercised in the following:
  - the nature of the activity chosen
  - the venue
  - the means of transportation
  - the physical demands on the students, having regard to their age and capacity
  - the dangers to which students may be exposed.