St. Joseph's Patrician College, Galway.

'THE BISH'

School Trips Policy

Ratification Date:

Revision Number	Date:	Approved by BOM
1	24th March 2025	24th March 2025
2	03rd November 2025	18th November 2025
3		

Next Review Date: As Required

This procedure is in keeping with the Child Protection Procedures as adopted by the Board of Management. Teachers are reminded that they are mandated persons and must be familiar with their obligations with reference to the Children First: National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Children First Act 2015

St. Joseph's Patrician College - School Trips Policy

1. Introduction

At St. Joseph's Patrician College (The Bish), we recognize the educational, cultural, and social value of school trips in enhancing students' learning experiences beyond the classroom. These excursions must align with the Department of Education guidelines, including Circular M20/04, and the school's Code of Responsibility and Behaviour (CORAB).

This policy applies to all students, staff, and volunteers involved in school-organized trips and outlines the expectations for safety, planning, supervision, and student conduct.

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2. Objectives

- To provide meaningful educational and cultural experiences that complement the curriculum.
- To foster student development, teamwork, and interpersonal skills.
- To ensure that all trips are well-planned, inclusive, and adhere to health and safety guidelines.
- To establish clear expectations regarding student behaviour, supervision, and risk management.

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3. Planning and Approval

Approval Process:

- Domestic day trips require Principal approval.
- Overnight and international trips require Board of Management (BOM) approval, booked through licensed and bonded Travel Agent.
- Overnight and international trips require additional planning, including travel insurance, passport verification, and emergency funding for contingencies.
- Accommodation must be in a hotel, no homestays permitted.

Advance Planning:

- Trips should be scheduled well in advance to allow for parental notification, financial planning, and logistical arrangements.
- A formal request form (Appendix 2) must be submitted to the Principal and, if applicable, the BOM.

Risk Assessment:

- Each trip must undergo a thorough risk assessment covering transportation, accommodation, activities, and supervision.

Supervision Ratios:

- The appropriate teacher-to-student ratio must be determined based on student age, activity type, and location.
- While general guidelines will be followed, staff input will be considered to ensure adequate supervision while maintaining educational value.
    - **Local Class Trip** – supervising class teacher.
    - **Local Event (Sports / Activity)** – minimum 2 adults (teachers / staff / vetted adults), dependant on size of group.
    - **National Event (outside Galway)** – minimum 2 adults (teachers / staff / vetted adults), dependant on size of group.
    - **International Event** – minimum 3 adults, 1:15 ratio, (teachers / staff / vetted adults), dependant on size of group & Travel Agent recommendations. An exception to this required teacher/student ratio will be international trips where students are engaged mostly in timetabled supervised educational activities, such as the Erasmus Trips.
- All non-teaching adults must be Garda vetted and approved by the BOM.

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4. Educational Justification

In alignment with Circular M20/04 *(Appendix 1),* school trips must provide a significant benefit to students' educational, intellectual, cultural, and social development.

Tours should be an extension of classroom activities and provide experiences that cannot be replicated in school.

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5. Parental Involvement

- Parents/guardians must provide written consent via the Compass system for their child's participation.
- Parents will be informed of:
    - Objectives, itinerary, and duration of the trip.
    - Costs and payment methods.
    - Health and safety precautions, including emergency contacts.
    - Student behavioural expectations.
- Parents are required to provide up-to-date medical and emergency contact information for their child.

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6. Financial Considerations

Cost Transparency:

- The full cost must be communicated at the planning stage.
- Where applicable, payment plans may be offered.

Fundraising:

- Fundraising activities must be pre-approved by the school.

Refunds & Cancellations:

- Refund policies depend on the nature of the trip and contractual obligations with service providers.

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7. Admission Criteria

7.1 Individual Consideration:

All trip applications will be reviewed thoughtfully and fairly, taking into account each student's suitability for participation. Factors considered include attendance, past behaviour, and adherence to the School Code of Responsibility and Behaviour (CORAB). While the school aims to include as many students as possible, participation in school trips is a privilege that must be earned through responsible conduct.

7.2 Eligibility Criteria:

To ensure a safe and positive experience for all participants, students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- **Attendance:** A consistent attendance record and demonstrated commitment to attending school regularly.
- **Behaviour & Conduct:** Students must adhere to the school's Code of Responsibility and Behaviour and have a record that reflects respectful engagement with staff and peers.
- **Maturity & Responsibility:** Group leaders must be satisfied that the selected students can represent the school appropriately while on the trip.
- **Safety Considerations:** Students whose behavioural history indicates a potential risk to themselves or others may be deemed ineligible.

While meeting these criteria strengthens a student's application, every effort will be made to consider individual circumstances. Final decisions on eligibility rest with the school, and spaces on trips may be limited based on staffing, logistics, and other resources.

7.3 Decision Process:

Applications will be assessed based on:

- Eligibility criteria as outlined in *Section 7.2.*
- Professional judgement from teaching staff and trip organisers.
- Available places, determined annually based on staffing, facilities, and resources.

Where demand exceeds available places, a fair allocation process, including a lottery system, may be used. Students who meet the criteria but are not immediately offered a place will be placed on a waiting list.

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8. Student Conduct & Discipline

8.1 Expectations for Behaviour:

All students participating in school trips are expected to uphold the highest standards of behaviour. While the school's Code of Responsibility and Behaviour (CORAB) applies to all trips, additional behavioural expectations may be set by trip leaders to reflect the unique circumstances of travel, including adherence to local laws and customs.

8.2 Trip-Specific Rules:

Group leaders and staff will establish specific rules regarding:

- Curfews and supervision protocols
- Travel arrangements.
- Social conduct and respect for others.
- Compliance with safety guidelines and local regulations.
- Appropriate representation of the school while abroad.

All students, parent(s) and guardian(s) will be informed of these rules prior to departure, and compliance is mandatory.

8.3 Consequences for Misconduct:

School trips are a privilege that offer students valuable learning experiences beyond the classroom. All students are expected to show respect, responsibility, and integrity, representing themselves, their families, and the school in a positive way. Any serious breach of conduct may result in:

- Immediate removal from activities.
- Further disciplinary action upon return to school, up to and including suspension or expulsion.

The following are examples of serious breaches of conduct that will result in disciplinary action. This is not an exhaustive list, and the school reserves the right to take action against any behaviour deemed inappropriate, unsafe, or detrimental to the trip, the school, or others.

- **Possession, purchase, or consumption of alcohol** at any point during the trip.
- **Possession, purchase, or consumption of drugs** (including but not limited to tobacco, snus, vapes, cannabis, ecstasy, opioids, cocaine, or any other illicit substance).
- **Refusal to comply with reasonable instructions** from a group leader / teacher, particularly if it results in disruption to the scheduled itinerary or poses a safety risk.
- **Leaving accommodation without permission**, including after "lights-out" or before the scheduled wake-up time.
- **Abusive, intimidating, or threatening behaviour** - physical or verbal - toward any group leader, teacher, student, staff member, or member of the public.
- **Engaging in any activity that poses a health and safety risk** to themselves, others on the trip, or the public.
- **Theft, destruction, or damage to property** - whether belonging to individuals, businesses, or the accommodation.
- **Involvement in illegal activity** or breach of local laws and customs.
- **Inappropriate use of social media** or digital devices that causes harm, distress, or reputational damage to individuals, the group, or the school, as per our Acceptable Use Policy.
- **Any behaviour that brings the school into disrepute**, either during the trip or in connection with the trip.

All students, parent(s) / guardian(s) will be required to acknowledge these expectations before departure. The school Principal and Senior Management Team retain full discretion in determining appropriate disciplinary measures should any breach occur.

8.4 Duty of Care:

During all school trips, staff will act ***in loco parentis***, ensuring students' well-being and enforcing behavioural expectations. The school reserves the right to make decisions in the best interest of the group’s safety and reputation.

The school is committed to maintaining a safe and enriching environment for all students on school trips. Any concerns regarding eligibility or conduct should be discussed with the relevant trip coordinator before the application process begins.

9. Insurance and Safety

Insurance

- The BOM of the school ensures that trips are adequately insured.
- Parents are encouraged to avail of 24-hour school insurance.

Health & Safety

- A fully equipped first-aid kit must be brought on all trips.
- Emergency procedures must be reviewed before departure.
- In the event of an incident, an **Accident / Incident Report Form** must be completed *(Appendix 2).*

Emergency Contact Plan

A clear and structured emergency response plan must be in place for all trips, outlining responsibilities and procedures for situations such as:

- Medical emergencies *(Appendix 4)*
- Serious incidents *(Appendix 5)*
- Extreme or unforeseen events *(Appendix 6)*

Key Responsibilities

- The lead teacher must ensure all students and staff are briefed on emergency procedures before departure.
- A contact list for all students, parent(s) / guardian(s), and local emergency services must be maintained.
- In the event of an emergency, the school Principal must be notified immediately as per the school's **Critical Incident Plan** *(Appendix 3).*

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10. Specific Guidelines for International and Overnight Trips

Additional Approval:

- Overnight and foreign trips require BOM approval using the designated request form.

Travel Documents:

- Passports and visas are the responsibility of parents/guardians.
- A photocopy of the guardian's passport must be provided for international trips.

Accommodation:

- Students must not share beds; this requirement must be communicated to travel agencies in advance.

Health & Safety Precautions:

- Students must have a valid **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** where applicable.
- All international trips must have emergency contingency funds accessible to the lead teacher.

Communication with Parents:

- Any changes to the itinerary or incidents must be communicated to parents and the BOM promptly.

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11. Impact on the School Year

- In accordance with **Circular M20/04** *(Appendix 1)*, school tours should ideally take place during school holiday periods.
- If a tour takes place during the school year, the BOM must ensure that students who do not participate are adequately catered for.
- The absence of teachers accompanying students should be minimized, and alternative class arrangements should be made.
- The following types of educational visits may be regarded as school days:
    - Student exchanges.
    - Attendance at a course of instruction.
    - Participation in music or drama festivals.
    - Attendance at educational conferences or exhibitions.
    - Visits that provide significant linguistic or cultural benefits.

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12. Post-Trip Review

- The lead teacher must submit a post-trip report outlining:
  - **Achievements** of the trip.
  - **Financial Summary** (ensuring the trip adheres to the approved budget).
  - **Incidents/Issues** that arose.
- The BOM reserves the right to review the trip and adjust policies as needed.

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13. Review & Ratification

- This policy will be reviewed as needed in response to significant legislative changes or incidents.

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the:	DATE: 18th November 2025
	Signed:
Kieran Kavanagh Chairperson	
Sarah Gleeson Secretary of the BOM	
Date of next review:	Annually

Appendix 1

St. Joseph's Patrician College Galway.

Circular Letter M 20 /04

To the Management Authorities of all Post Primary Schools

Educational Tours by School Groups (both inside and outside the State)

The objective of an educational tour should be that it should provide a significant benefit in the educational, intellectual, cultural and social development of the maximum number of pupils in the particular grade(s) taking part in the tour and which benefit cannot be provided by in- school activities alone. Where a Board of Management is satisfied that a school tour meets the above criteria, such a tour may be undertaken without seeking prior approval from the Department. However, the template attached as appendix 2 should be completed by the teacher/guardian involved in the planning of a school tour and should be retained in the school for examination by a Departmental Inspector in the course of normal school inspection.

Authorisation to grant approval for educational tours by school groups both inside and outside the State is hereby devolved to the school board of management subject to the following criteria:

- School tours should be an extension and reinforcement of classroom activities and should be designed to include the maximum number of pupils in a class. The tour should, accordingly, enhance the learning process of as many pupils as possible by providing educational experiences which the classroom alone cannot provide.

- Tours should be planned, in consultation with parents, well in advance of tour dates and preferably before the start of the school year. The full cost of the tour should be communicated to parents at the planning stage. This will have the added advantage of facilitating financial preparation with a view to allowing maximum pupil participation. Every effort should be made to ensure that the cost involved does not prevent any pupil or group of pupils from participating in the tour.

- By international standards, the school year in Ireland has long holiday periods. Educational tours of more than one day's duration should be arranged to coincide with normal school holiday periods.

- Schools should ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place and that written parental approval is obtained for each pupil to take part in the tour. Such written approval must not seek to devolve any liability to the parent for any aspect of the tour.

- The Board of Management must ensure that pupils who are not participating in the tour (including pupils from other classes who will be affected by their subject teacher's absence) are adequately catered for while their teachers are away on the tour. Appropriate arrangements should be made for the conduct of those teachers' classes in their absence in accordance with Circular PPT 01/03. Schools should on all occasions consider the effect that the absence of accompanying teachers will have on the normal work in the school and numbers absent should be kept to the minimum level required.

Where school tours impinge upon the standard school year, the following guidelines are put forward as to the type of educational visit envisaged by the Department as acceptable for the purposes of regarding absence on such visits as school days:

(a) Educational visit involving an exchange of groups of students with another school.

(b) Educational visit involving attendance at a course of instruction.

(c) Educational visit involving active participation in a music or drama festival.

(d) Educational visit to a conference or exhibition of clear educational value (e.g. Young Scientist Exhibition, Higher Options Conference or Exhibition on Careers and Guidance Counselling).

(e) An educational visit should be appropriate to the age group/grade concerned (e.g. The Higher Options Conference would be more appropriate for senior cycle students than for junior cycle students).

(f) Educational visits (inside or outside the State) involving significant linguistic or cultural benefit to the maximum number of pupils.

This list is given by way of example and is not intended to be exhaustive.

This circular supersedes and replaces Circulars M87/78, M62/83, 12/79 and Circular Letter to the Boards of Comprehensive and Community schools entitled "Out of School Educational Activities within the State" and dated 19 February 1987.

Mathew Ryan Principal Officer
Post Primary Administration.

Appendix 2

St. Joseph's Patrician College The Bish
Incident/Accident Report

PART A – ABOUT THE PERSON WHO HAD THE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT

Full Name:					
Class			**Other (visitor, contractor, member of the public):**		
Home Address:					
				Post code:	
Phone No:		**DOB:**		.	

PART B – ABOUT THE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT

Date of Accident/Incident		Time (use 24hr format)	
School Building *(Please Tick √)*	**Main School The Monastery Rowing Club Outside School Grounds**		
Exact Location of the Accident or Incident (*where on the premises did the incident occur eg. room No)*			
Description of Accident or Incident (please provide *a summary of events leading up to the Incident / Accident with details of the circumstances immediately prior to the event plus working*			

conditions such as weather, visibility, temperature, housekeeping standards, unusual conditions etc., that may have contributed to the incident)	
What immediate actions were taken? (*First aid given,, Ambulance called, parents contacted)*	
Were there any Witnesses to the Accident or Incident? (*If yes, please provide name and Class of Witnesses*)	
If the person suffered any injury, say what the injury was: *i.e. cut, graze, strain etc.*	
Location of Injury *Please be specific, i.e. left hand, right side of forehead etc.*	
Did the injured party attend or get admitted to hospital?(*please give details of any treatment they received, including gluing wounds or topical ointments)*	
If Injury is to a teacher/staff member, is the injury likely to cause a loss of working time (or missed school days)?	

What was the accident/incident? (<u>Please tick only one</u>)

Contact with Electricity		Contact with Machinery		Cuts and Lacerations	
Drowning or Asphyxiation		Explosives (fireworks, chemical reactions etc.)		Burns or Scalds	
Harmful substance – Liquid (Bleach, acids, deasil etc.)		Harmful Substance – Gas (Chlorine Gas, Carbon monoxide etc.)		Harmful Substance – Particulate (Asbestos, concrete dust, powdered alkaline)	
Slip, trip or fall at floor level		Fall from height		Injured by animal	
Lifting and handling injuries		Physical Assault (Malicious)		Physical Assault (Reactive)	
Verbal Assault		Cyber or written threats/abuse		Lodging in the ear/nose	
Striking against an object		Struck by object		Struck by vehicle	
Trapped under collapsed structure		Unintentional injury caused by another person		Allergy	
Pre-existing medical condition (seizures etc.)		First instance of medical condition		Near Miss	
Pinching or trapping injury		Ingestion of hazardous substance		Other *(please provide details below)*	
Details:					

PART C – DETAILS OF THIRD PARTIES

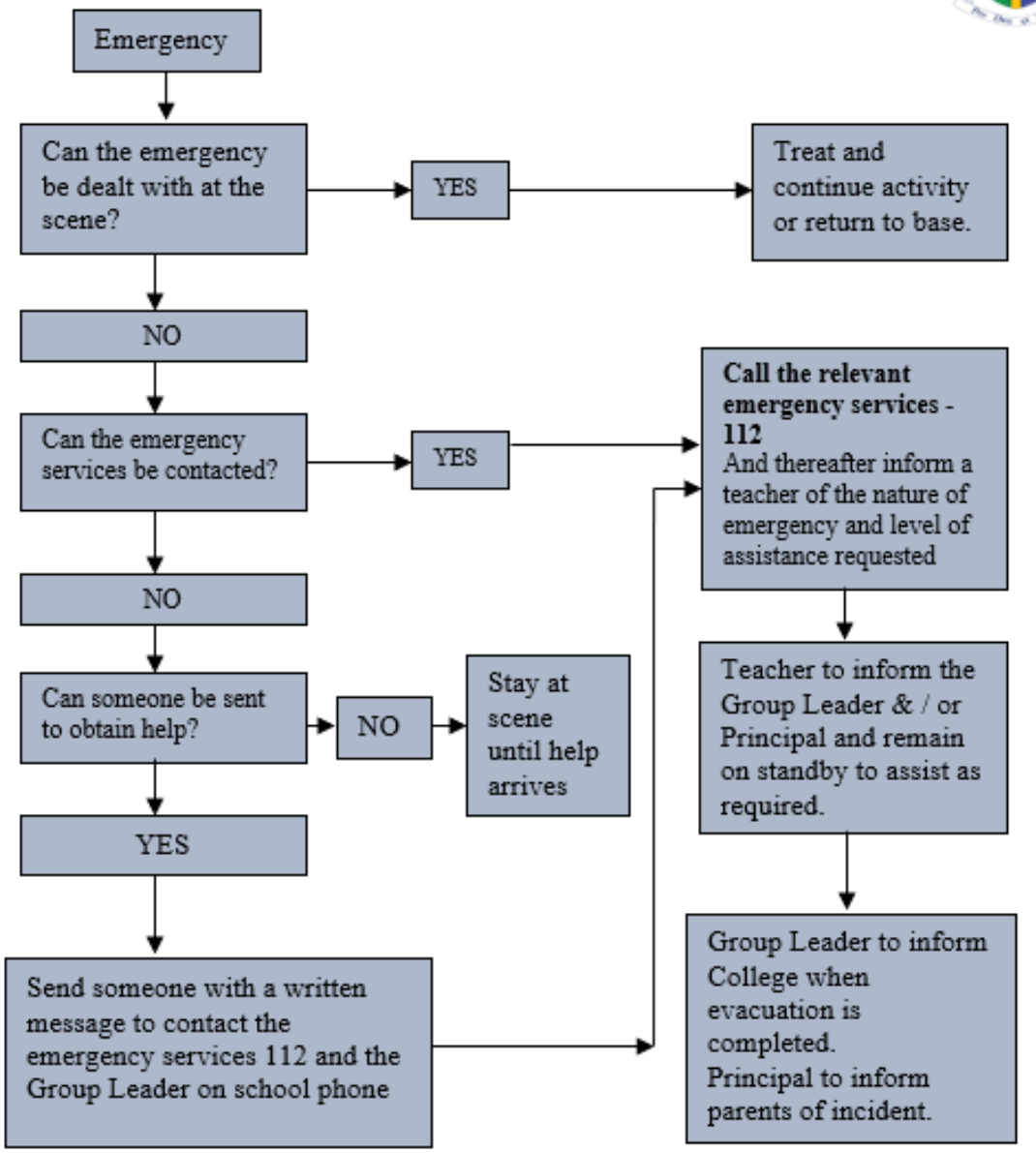
Did the incident occur as a result of working with persons with SEN requirements? (e.g. dysregulation, sensory overload, seeking sensory stimulation, positive handling)		*Please give details*
Does the person have an individual risk assessment, Behavioural Support Plan, Pastoral Support Plan or similar assessment & support documentation?		
Was the injured party aware of the procedures in place within these plans?		

PART D – ABOUT YOU, THE PERSON COMPLETING THE FORM

NAME (print):		
Address:		
		Post code:
Designation:		
Signature: **Date:**		
Manager/Principal's Signature: **Date:**		

Appendix 4

Emergency Procedure



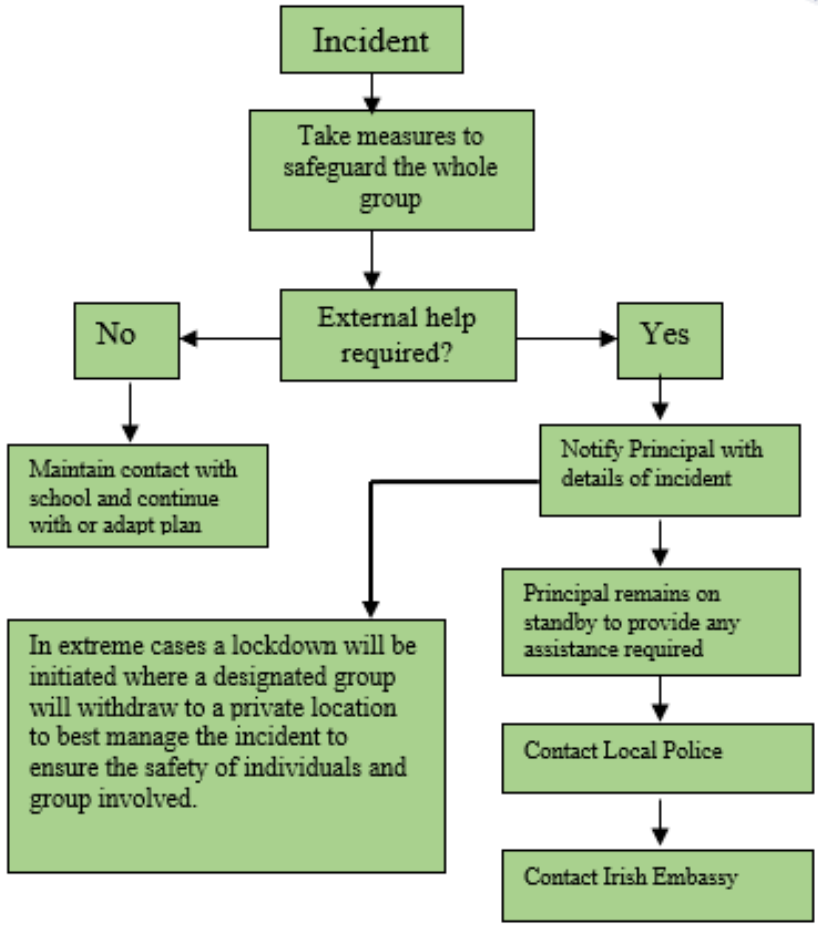
Ms. Sarah Gleeson – Principal

Mr. Barry McDermott – Deputy Principal

Mr. Robert Grealish – Deputy Principal

Appendix 5

Serious Incident Procedure



1. One appointed person will serve as a point of contact for any public statements or press questions.
2. All incoming inquiries will be directed to a single point to avoid miss communication.
3. All statements will be given at an appointed time and place and not before.
4. No press statement can be issued until the family of the individual / group concerned has been contacted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Appendix 6

Extreme Incident Procedures

Guidelines for Incidents Involving a Terror Threat or Attack

Staff and trip leaders are responsible for overseeing the following procedures in a group setting. However, all individuals—staff and students alike—should be aware of and adhere to these principles in the event of an extreme incident.

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1. Communication & Mobile Phone Use

- **Sharing Contact Information:** Leader and student phone numbers should be shared within the group for coordination.
- **Risk of Mobile Phones:** In an emergency, particularly during a 'run and hide' scenario, mobile phones should be turned off to avoid detection.
- **Backup Communication:** A WhatsApp group or similar messaging platform may be useful for updates and alerts.
- **Potential Network Disruptions:** In case of network shutdowns, ensure each person has a physical card with:
    - The designated meeting place and address
    - Hotel address
    - Key destination addresses
    - 24/7 emergency contact number

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2. Situational Awareness & Risk Assessment

All individuals must be vigilant and practice ongoing risk assessment in public spaces. This includes:

- **Recognizing High-Risk Locations:**
    - Crowded public areas (e.g., train stations, markets, festivals)
    - Enclosed spaces (e.g., theatres, stadiums, cinemas)
    - Airports (particularly pre-security check areas)
- **Key Safety Strategies:**
    - Observe people for unusual or suspicious behaviour
    - Identify exits and potential hiding places in enclosed spaces
    - Stay alert to unexpected movements or sounds in crowded areas
    - Minimize time spent in vulnerable areas, such as airport check-in zones

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3. STAY SAFE Principles

Firearms and weapons attacks are rare, but understanding the STAY SAFE principles can help mitigate risk.

3.1 RUN

- Escape if possible
- Identify the safest route
- If safe, encourage others to leave with you
- Leave belongings behind

3.2 HIDE

- If escape is not possible, find a secure hiding place
- Take cover from gunfire—glass, wood, and thin walls do not provide adequate protection
- Stay out of sight and remain quiet
- Silence mobile phones
- Lock/barricade doors where possible
- Move away from entry points

3.3 POLICE RESPONSE

- Follow officers' instructions
- Remain calm and do not make sudden movements
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Move to a safer area if directed

3.4 OFFICER ACTIONS

Be prepared for officers to:

- Point weapons at individuals for security reasons
- Issue firm instructions
- Question individuals to assess the situation
- Treat all individuals as potential threats until cleared
- Conduct evacuations only when safe to do so

3.5 STAY SAFE Final Considerations

- Have a personal emergency plan in place
- Familiarize yourself with local emergency procedures
- Resume communication only when it is safe to do so

By following these guidelines, we aim to ensure the safety of all staff and students during extreme incidents. All trip leaders should review these procedures regularly and communicate them clearly to students before departure.