

# Scoil Naomh Mhuire NS Staplestown, Donadea

## School Tours/Excursions Policy

### Introduction

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Mhuire NS supports and encourages school tours. It concurs with Department of Education guidelines which state that:

"the objective of educational tours for schools should be that they be of benefit in the intellectual, cultural and social development of the pupils taking part in them and any activity, in connection with the tour, which is in conflict with this objective is to be avoided".

School tours require good preparation and organisation to optimise the learning experience for students. While the procedures outlined in this policy have been in operation since 2012, the policy itself was devised and written in the summer term of the 2014/2015 academic school year and reviewed in February 2019. This policy was drawn up by the staff to reflect previous practice and decisions already ratified at Board of Management meetings.

### Rationale

School tours are an important part of a child's education. School tours allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced educational process.

### Aims

- To ensure all practical possibilities are covered in reducing the exposure of children to risk on outings
- To provide an enjoyable educational experience for all children
- To endeavour to give the children a fun, educational experience that is appropriate to their age and development levels.
- To alternate the school tours from year to year so that pupils will not experience the same tour twice

**The Board of Management has approved venues for school tours. This list is not prescriptive and may be subject to change, depending on availability and class needs. Tours and excursions that have been successful in past years include:**

### Junior Classes

Lullymore Heritage Centre

Clonfert Pet Farm

Donadea Forest Park

Trips to local venues to support the Aistear curriculum framework

Curricular outings (Science, History etc.)

### Senior Classes

Croke Park Museum

Kilmainham Gaol

Sea Life, Bray and Bray Head

Dublinia

Field trips of local interest

Confirmation Retreat

Lilliput Activity Centre

Outdoor Adventure and Activity Centres

Curricular outings (Science, History etc.)

## **Whole School Excursions**

National Concert Hall

Christmas Pantomime

St Benignus and Cooleragh Church (sacrament preparation, choir, and mass)

Timahoe and Coill Dubh schools

## **Guidelines for teachers**

The tours are structured in such a way as to provide an educational aspect in addition to an entertainment and recreational value.

No teacher is responsible for more than 20 pupils. It is school policy to assign groups of approximately 12 children to each teacher. The Special Education Teacher may accompany the class teachers on tour. Where a teacher or the principal has concerns regarding the health and safety of any child attending a school tour, discussions will take place with the relevant parent/guardian outlining the concerns and permission may be refused for a child to attend.

Teachers must ensure that they have the following items:

- The school's fully-charged mobile phone
- Contact list for parents
- First-aid bag

The revised rules for school tours are as follows:

## **General Rules**

- Parental permission must be given for children to go on the school tour
- Parents must inform the school of any medicinal requirements that the child may have in accordance with our Administration of Medication Policy
- Parents should notify teachers of any travel sickness issues.
- Parents must give teachers the permission to seek professional medical attention for their child if deemed necessary
- Normal school rules apply on school tour.
- Mobile phones and other electronic devices are not allowed on school tours.
- Children are not allowed to bring spending money on school tour
- Pupils should bring a healthy packed lunch and plenty to drink. The school's Healthy Eating Policy applies while on school tour.
- Pupils must wear the school uniform or tracksuit except in special circumstances.
- Pupils should arrive at the school 15 minutes before departure time, when the teacher will take the class roll.
- Pupils will be partnered with another child for the tour. The decision of the teacher is final in this matter.
- Children must stay with their group at all times, and must notify their teacher/ group supervisor if they need to use the toilet. No fewer than two children may visit the toilet at the same time, under the supervision of the teacher.
- Rain gear and/or sun screen (depending on the season) will be essential for all children and a change of clothes may be necessary, depending on the venue.

## **Transport**

### **Bus Transport**

- When a bus is used, the principal will ensure that a reputable company is used.

- Pupils should board and alight the bus in an orderly manner, supervised by a teacher.
- Pupil should be head-counted before departure.
- All pupils should remain seated and seat-belted for the duration of the tour.
- The pupils should respect the bus company regulations regarding eating and drinking on the bus.

### **Parental Transport**

In order to minimise the cost of the school tour, and to maximise the number of field trips for pupils, private bus hire will not always be used. For trips or tours to local venues, parents may be asked to transport their own children to and from the venue. For trips or tours on public transport, parents will be asked to transport their own children to and from the train station/bus stop.

Parents/guardians will remain responsible for their own children until such a time as the supervising teacher assumes responsibility at the agreed time and venue.

These times may be before or after normal school opening/closing time, depending on the school tour.

### **Fieldtrips**

Fieldtrips which relate to a particular curricular area are encouraged. These trips can range from simple walks around the school to organised trips to relevant places of interest.

The principal must be informed in advance if it is proposed that a class leave the school grounds.

Teachers are encouraged to plan and prepare children in advance of the trip and to carry out some follow up work in the classroom following the fieldtrip.

Teachers should ensure adequate supervision at all times. Where necessary, an SNA or SEN teacher may accompany the class teacher. Occasionally parental help may be required, however the teacher will always be responsible for the supervision of his/her class.

### **Sports Events**

The pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class participate in Cumann na mBunscol GAA games. These generally take place either during or just before/after normal school closing time. Parents are responsible for transporting their children to and from the venue. Pupils must be signed out of the school. If a child is not being collected by his/her own parent, the school must be notified of this fact and of the collection arrangements. Once children have been signed out, the parent assumes responsibility for the child.

### **Success Criteria**

- Positive experiences for all
- Children having a safe enjoyable experience
- Teacher/Parent Satisfaction

### **Review**

This policy is based on what has been successful in the past, however further reviews will be conducted in the light of experience.

**This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Signed Maeva Caldwell**

Chariperson

**Mary McDowell**

Principal

Date of next review: October 2021

## **TOURS CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS**

### **Before the tour**

- Principal consulted about venue and travelling arrangements.
- Venue booked
- Transport booked
- Individual parents informed of travelling embargo on disruptive pupils
- Timetable organised
- Parents informed by standard letter
  - itinerary
  - timetable
  - cost
  - lunch arrangements
  - clothing necessary

### **Agreement on**

- Leader
- Spending money
- Acceptable behaviour on bus
- Extra supervisors

### **Day of Tour**

Tour leader will ensure;

- \*Tour kits are available for each bus
- Cheques for venues
- Cheques for bus
- Petty cash for tea/coffee/refreshments

### **After Tour**

- Report back to office
- Send thank you letter to parents etc

ORGANISER.....

\* *check tour kits contain*

- *First aid materials, refuse sacks, illness bags*
- *Medication / Inhalers / Epipens (where required)*
- *Newspaper/kitchen rolls*
- *Mobile phone*
- *Roll and phone list*