

Policy and Procedures for School Tours and Outings

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of Scoil Ghobnatan supports and encourages school outings and school tours. It concurs with Department of Education (12/79) 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".

Taking into account the age and interests of the children and the curriculum being covered, school tours and outings will be arranged by teachers and the school to present the children with a new environment in which they can observe, investigate and relate their findings to their own environment. Tours will be arranged at the discretion of the class teachers and principal.

The need for this policy arises due to children being exposed to a wide variety of different experiences while on school outings, and the necessity to have a framework for good practice in place to cover all eventualities.

Teachers responsible for school tours, educational visits, field trips and nature walks continue to be in loco parentis. It is well recognised that supervision is more difficult in these circumstances. While accidents may occur during the best organised and supervised tours, careful planning and reasonable supervision is essential so as to avoid foreseeable injury to pupils.

Child Protection

All school outings will take place in accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First, National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 and the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.

It is of the utmost important that all staff who organise and take pupils on school outings do so in accordance with agreed policies and procedures in order to protect all parties involved.

Aims of this Policy

- To make teachers aware of their overall responsibility to the pupils in their care at all times.
- To ensure all practical possibilities are covered in reducing the exposure of children to risk on outings
- To facilitate an enjoyable educational experience for all children while maintaining their safety.

General Procedures for Outings and Tours

- School tours, educational visits, field trips, matches, nature walks and any other outing that involves teachers and pupils leaving the school grounds should be communicated to the Principal by the class teacher well in advance of the proposed date. They should have the approval of the Principal who acts on behalf of the Board of Management.

- All classes will go on one educational school tour per year. Children in classes may be involved in multiple school outings including but not limited to: matches, quizzes, debating competitions, library visits, cinema trips and field trips as well as an annual tour.
- Teachers at each class level, will, in consultation with teacher responsible for tour organisation :
 - Agree a destination
 - Arrange the hiring of transport with the school secretary. (In the hiring of transport, the safety of the children will be paramount and take precedence over cost)
 - Agree a price to include the total cost to each pupil.
 - The details of the tour: venue, transport etc. should be confirmed by the school secretary one week before the tour.
- Before final decision Principal will be consulted and grant permission in conjunction with Assistant Principal with responsibility for co-ordinating school tours and trips.
- Cost: The teachers will ensure that the cost of the tour is reasonable and represents value for money. Children will be actively encouraged to save and contribute towards the cost of the tour.
- Venue: The teacher will be consult with the venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (risk assessment in relation to Child Protection, toileting, emergency facilities, special needs facilities).
- Weather Conditions: Parents should be aware of changing weather conditions depending on the time of year. Rain gear may be essential for all children and a change of clothes may be necessary, depending on the venue/activities. Likewise, sun screen should be applied by parents before children depart on tour and sun hats supplied.
- Equality of Access: Teachers will ensure that, in so far as is possible, venues are suitable for pupils with special needs, physical disabilities or other individual considerations. Teachers should consult with Principal about choice of venue if there are any queries of accessibility for individual children.
- For annual school tours, children will be issued with an itinerary. Consent for all off campus trips is requested from parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year.
- For local short trips, for example to the library, parents will be informed by school text.
- Parents will receive the itinerary well in advance and should be on time for both drop off and collection. The teacher in charge will inform the Principal/Deputy Principal if the tour is delayed for any reason. The Principal/Deputy will issue a text message to the parents/guardians informing them as soon as possible.

Behaviour on Tours

The school's Code of Behaviour and school rules must be adhered to by all pupils during the course of the school tour.

Children earn the right to go on school tour by being well behaved and focused throughout the school year. Where it is felt that a child's behaviour would pose a safety risk or inhibit the educational benefit for self or others, the child may be unable to travel. The Class Teacher will have first consult with the Principal. The issue will be discussed with parents in advance of the school tour date.

Where parents/guardians are unhappy with such a decision they may appeal following the school's Grievance and Complaints Procedure. The Board of Management's decision regarding inclusion or exclusion of a child or children on school tour is final.

Pupils will be reminded of the following prior to leaving the school:

- Children will leave the school in an orderly fashion led by the class teacher.
- Children must obey their supervisors and teachers at all times
- Children must remain seated with buckled seatbelt while the bus is in motion
- Children are not allowed to bring any electronic devices with them
- Children must not bring money with them unless advised otherwise in school tour note.
- Children must remain with their allocated grouping/supervisor at all times
- Children will line up in their individual groups on disembarking from the bus
- Children should always ask permission to go to the toilet and should never attend a bathroom alone
- Roll calls/head counts are taken when children return to the bus or centre after each segment of the tour
- A packed lunch and drinks will be brought by each child on the day. For safety reasons, children will not be allowed to bring drinks in glass bottles.
- Treats are allowed in line with the school's Healthy Eating Policy.
- School uniforms or school tracksuits must be worn on all school outings. Children and parents will be informed beforehand as to which is more appropriate. In the case of sports/adventure tours, children should bring a change of clothing appropriate for sport/adventure activities.

Health and Safety

Procedures under our Child Safeguarding Statement, Health and Safety Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Safety statement.

Staff will ensure that a 'tour kit' is taken on all outings. The kit will contain:

- first aid materials
- refuse and illness bags
- water
- kitchen roll

Class teachers should also bring:

a class list with contact details of all children on tour

their own mobile phone

any additional medication needed by an individual child (in adherence with our Administration of Medication Policy)

It is primarily the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that their child is prepared for all weathers.

Where a child is in danger of sun burn, sun cream may be applied by school staff or by the child themselves in the case of older children.

Any medication (inhalers, epi-pens etc.) normally stored in the classroom must be brought on the tour by the class teacher or SNA.

In cases of accident or emergency, two staff members, one of which will be a teacher, will accompany an injured child to a doctor or hospital, while the remaining staff supervise the rest of the children.

Only a school camera (or a class teacher's mobile phone) may be used on the day of the tour. No other photographs should be taken – by pupils, parents etc.

Photographs taken on mobile devices by the class teacher will be uploaded on the school website and deleted from the phone as soon as is practicable.

In case of emergency and you need to contact your child contact school secretary and she will contact the teachers on tour.

Safety and Supervision

Teachers will be extra vigilant when taking children out of the school. Special attention will be paid to issues of child protection, road safety, behaviour on bus, risks posed by particular venues (e.g. adventure playgrounds, areas of water etc.). Adequate arrangements for the supervision of all pupils at all times should be arranged well in advance of the tour.

The responsibility of the school and the teacher in charge will extend throughout the whole course of the school tour and may extend beyond normal school time. Teachers will remain with pupils until they are collected on their return to school.

Emergency Procedures for School Tours and Outings

In the event of a serious incident/accident, the supervising teacher will make every effort to contact the Principal and pupil's parent/guardian as quickly as possible using the information they provided on the consent form.

If the teacher is unable to contact the parent/guardian a decision will be taken to address the care needs of the child e.g. hospital A and E, ambulance.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the collective responsibility of the Board of Management, Principal, I.S.M Team and Class Teachers, SNAs and school staff and to oversee and ensure the implementation of this policy.

It is the responsibility of each class teacher to implement this policy in full when undertaking any school outing. The class teacher must ensure that the pupils are supervised fully at all times, in accordance with the school's Supervision Policy.

Each teacher is to have the Principal and Deputy Principal's mobile number as well as the school number in case of emergencies.

As previously stated, the Principal is always to be consulted with and kept informed of all school outings.

Where issues have arisen, teachers will report them to the Principal.

Success Criteria

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

Ratification

Staff (led by the In School Management Team), members of the Parents Association and Board of Management were consulted in the drafting of this policy on School Tours and Outings.

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on----- . It will be further reviewed after there has been a material change in any matter to which this document refers in line with changing legislation.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: _____

Date: _____