



Policy and Procedures in Respect of School Tours and Outings

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of Scoil Naisiúnta Mhuire, Rathpeacon 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, in so far as is possible, while partaking in same.

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.
- Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd classes will undertake at least one educational school tour per year. Children in classes from 3rd to 6th may be involved in multiple school outings including but not limited to: Sciath na Scol matches, quizzes, spelling bees, library visits, half day field trips as well as an annual tour.
- Teachers at each class level, will, in consultation with the Principal:
 - 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.
- **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 “au fait” with the venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities). Where no phone facilities exist, the most senior class teacher will have a pre-arranged plan to deal with emergencies.
- **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.
- **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 and written Consent Form, which must be returned to the school signed, in order for a pupil to participate.
- For local short trips, for example to a Sciath na Scol match or to the local church, parents will be informed by school letter and/or text.
- The **Consent Form** (which is available on the school shared storage system) for annual school tours or longer trips will
 - Include details of the tour itinerary
 - Request details of phone numbers for contact in the event of an emergency during the day/times of the tour (as specified). Mobile phone numbers should be supplied on this form.
 - Allow medical advice to be followed in the event of injury/illness where it is not possible to contact parents/guardians in the time available. In the event of accident/injury, medical opinion will be sought immediately and best practice will be followed as set out in the school's Administration of First Aid Policy.
 - Request information in writing of any special medical needs or medication required by their son/daughter while on tour. This is in accordance with the school's Administration of Medicines Policy.
- 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 firmly adhered to by all pupils during the course of the school tour. Appropriate sanctions will be taken against pupils who misbehave while on school tour.
- Where it is felt that a child's conduct would pose a safety risk or inhibit the educational benefit for self or others, the child may be refused permission to travel by the Class Teacher who will have first consulted with the Principal. Parents will be advised of this in advance.
- 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

- 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
- Chewing gum is not allowed on school tours.
- 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, Administration of First Aid Policy, Administration of Medication Policy any other relevant school policies will be adhered to.
- The most senior teacher will ensure that a 'tour kit' is taken on all outings. This will be available from the school office. The kit will contain:
 - first aid materials
 - refuse and illness bags
 - water
 - kitchen roll
 - sun cream
 - school mobile phone
- 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.

- A first aid kit will be brought by the first aider - usually an SNA - who will be on tour. First Aid will be administered if necessary in line with the school's Administration of First Aid Policy.
- 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 teachers and SNAs 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. This is in line with the school's Acceptable Use of I.T. Policy.
- A mobile telephone will be given to the most senior teacher on the school tour. The number of this phone may be given to parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to departure for use only in case of emergency.

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.
- Newly qualified teachers and substitute teachers should be accompanied by an experienced member of staff on all outings for the first school year or in the event of nature walks on school grounds, receive permission of Principal/Deputy Principal.
- The ratio of members of staff to pupils will be one to ten. This ratio may be increased/decreased at the discretion of the Principal giving due regard for the school's Supervision Policy.
- The school will endeavour to have a minimum of four adults on each outing. This allows for two adults to accompany an injured child to doctor or hospital while leaving two adults with the rest of the pupils.
- Parent Volunteers who have been Garda Vetted by the school may be asked to accompany and assist on school tours/walks/field trips. They will be advised of what is expected of them and will be under the overall general supervision of an experienced teacher. Parents Volunteers will be given a guideline sheet in advance of the tour.

Water Sports and Swimming while on School Tours and Outings

Please refer to the school's Policy on Swimming.

Emergency Procedures for School Tours and Outings

1. 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.
2. If the teacher is unable to contact the parent/guardian as many members of staff as is possible/practical in the circumstances shall come together. They shall agree on an outline of the details of the incident/accident and taking into account all the facts as they are known at that time, shall decide on a course of action. The details and the decision(s) taken shall be put in writing as close to the event as is reasonable. The Board accepts that in cases where there is lack of consensus over the course of action, the most senior teacher available has the final decision.
3. Teachers and all members of staff accompanying the tour must ensure that, if it becomes necessary to question a student about a potentially serious matter, another adult be present.

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.
- It will be the responsibility of the class teacher to provide an up-to-date copy of the class list including contact numbers (as given on consent forms) for each child to the Principal/Deputy Principal and School Secretary on the morning of the school tour. 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 problems 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 March 5th 2018. It will be further reviewed after there has been a material change in any matter to which this document refers.

An original signed copy is on file in the school office.

Frank Maguire

Chairperson of Board of Management
Management

Susanna O'Neill

Principal/Secretary to the Board of