

Scoil Mhuire Abbeyleix

School Tour/Excursions Policy

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by the staff of Scoil Mhuire and circulated to the Board of Management & the Parents Association for observations and feedback. Taking into account the age and interests of the children and the curriculum being covered, school tours will be arranged by 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 teacher.

Rationale

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.

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.

Policy Content

It has been the policy of the school over the years to organise both single class tours & tours with a similar age grouping for example, 1st & 2nd.

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

Class teachers must submit their request for approval to the Principal, by completing the Tour Proposal Form. (See Appendix 1) Included in the proposal, should be the educational or other benefits that the students will derive from the tour. The request must be received two weeks before the tour date. The tour shall not be deemed to have been authorised for advertising until the principal has formally approved the tour by signing the proposal form.

The class teacher is responsible for his/her class. However, it is school policy to have a ratio of a minimum of one adult to 15 pupils. This becomes possible as Special Educational Needs teachers will travel with a mainstream class. This ratio may vary depending on the age and needs within a class. There will always be a minimum of 3 adults on each tour in the event that 1 adult should have to accompany an injured child to hospital in an ambulance.

Inclusion

It will be our policy to include all children in school tours. Decisions on any exclusions will be by the Principal in consultation with the class teacher. Children from Naomh Bríd and those in the mainstream with SEN will require SNA access, provisions for these children will be discussed with the parents beforehand if necessary.

Transport

The class teacher/organiser of the tour will ensure that:

- Tenders are sought for all tours
- A form of transport, appropriate to the distance and the numbers travelling will be chosen.
- The bus company/suppliers and drivers accept the following conditions.

Conditions of hiring

- All transport supplied will be suitable & well-maintained.
- Each child should have their own seat with a working safety belt.
- Teachers have the right to refuse any bus they find unsuitable for their outing. If the bus proves unsuitable a replacement will be supplied or the money refunded.
- The driver will be used to dealing with children and have a thorough knowledge of and follow the itinerary and timetable for the tour.
- The driver is responsible for the safety of the children while they are travelling, but teachers have the right to intervene if it is felt that the safety of the children is compromised.
- The group will have access to the bus for the full day.
- If the weather conditions are unfavourable the group will have the use of the bus for sheltering.
- Consumption of food on the bus is not allowed.
- Buses will be left as they were found.

Tour bag

Leaders will take a tour bag on all outings. If there is more than one bus travelling, a tour bag will be required for each bus. Class teachers will ensure a checklist (see appendix 2) is completed prior to the school tour. Each tour bag will contain:

- Fully stocked first aid kit with surgical gloves.
- Medicines & care plans for any individual children with chronic health conditions, allergies, medical conditions, inhaler, anapen, epilepsy medication etc.. (in line with our policy on the administration of medicine)
- Refuse and illness bags, newspaper, kitchen roll, surgical gloves & wipes.
- An umbrella

In addition to the tour bag, each class teacher should ensure that they have a mobile phone & a copy of the parents contact numbers. All staff on tour should have contact numbers for each other & the school number stored in their phones.

Cost & spending money

The teachers will ensure that the cost of the tour is reasonable and represents value for money. All children will be actively encouraged to save towards the cost of the tour. If the class teacher is aware of any financial difficulties with a particular family, this should be brought to the attention of the Principal.

Children are only permitted to bring spending money if it is stated in their permission letter to parents. If spending money is allowed, a maximum amount will be stated in the 'tour permission letter.' Under no circumstances will the class teacher and/or school take responsibility for any monies lost or stolen on tours.

Venue

Not more than two year groupings will travel together, unless venue and transport arrangements warrant otherwise. Where more than one class travels, one teacher will accept the role of 'leader'. The teachers will be 'au fait' with the venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded and services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities)

Weather Conditions

Rain and head gear will be essential for all children. A change of clothes may be necessary, depending on the venue.

Tours list

A list of suitable tours for all classes will be available. Class teachers may choose a venue suitable for their own level or lower but not from levels above. Teachers will ensure that venues are suitable for pupils with special needs. If there are any queries of accessibility for individual children, the principal should be consulted. (See appendix 3)

6th Class Tour

As this is the children's final year in Scoil Mhuire it is acceptable that the 6th Class tour is a larger tour. The children will be encouraged to use money from their Confirmation money to cover the cost of the tour. This can be a one or two day trip but will not include an overnight stay.

Uniform

Children can wear a tracksuit bottoms or shorts of their choice on the tour but must wear their Scoil Mhuire crested tracksuit top for ease of identification. Children will not wear name badges as per child protection guidelines.

Informing Parents

Teachers will ensure that parents are given sufficient notice of the school tour. The letter to parents should contain the following information:

- Itinerary and timetable
- Deadline for accepting and payment of deposit
- Cost
- Information re: instalments over a period of time if any
- Special clothing necessary and packed lunch
- Permission slip to be signed by parent/guardian and returned to class teacher. Verbal permission is not sufficient, if a child has been absent, the school will make every effort to contact parents/guardians to ask them to sign permission slip.
- School website address where a copy of the school tour policy can be read.
- A line that states the organiser reserves the right to make minor changes to the itinerary.
- A receipt can be given to parents for monies received on request.

Safety and Supervision

Teachers will be extra vigilant when taking children out of the school. Special attention will be paid to:

- Road safety

- Behaviour on the bus
- Risks posed by particular venues (eg, adventure playgrounds)
- Any children deemed as flight risks
- The minimum supervision ratio of 15:1 adult.
- Roll call prior to leaving, after each segment of tour & when children return to the bus.
- A record must be kept of all incidents
- The principal must be informed of any such incidents upon return to school.

In the case of an accident, a teacher will accompany the injured child to hospital while the remaining teachers & SNAs shall remain with rest of the children. All procedures under our Health & Safety and Critical Incident policies will be adhered to. The following steps should be followed:

1. Seek medical attention, call an ambulance if needed.
2. Contact the injured child's parents.
3. Phone the school & report to the principal.
4. Teacher should accompany the child in the ambulance to the hospital.

School rules for tours/excursions

Scoil Mhuire's Code of Behaviour applies to all school related activities including school tours.

- Children must obey their teachers/supervisors at all times.
- Children must remain seated with buckled seatbelt while the bus is in motion.
- Children are not allowed to eat or drink on the bus.
- Children are not allowed to bring electronic devices with them.
- Children should not bring money with them unless told otherwise by the class teacher.
- Children must remain with their allocated groups and supervisors at all times.
- Children will line up in their individual groups on disembarking from the bus.
- Children will not attend a bathroom alone.
- Chewing gum is discouraged on school tours.

Success Criteria

- Positive experiences for all
- Children having a safe enjoyable learning experience
- Teacher & parent satisfaction

This policy was implemented after ratification on 24th March 2019

This policy will be monitored & reviewed on 24th March 2020

Appendix 1: School Tour Proposal Form

Proposed date of tour: _____

Proposed departure & return times: _____

Destination: _____

Class(es): _____

No. of students _____

SEN pupils & pupils from Naomh Bríd: _____

Arrangements/requirements to include these children: _____

Name of lead teacher: _____

Names of other teachers: _____

Names of additional staff to ensure minimum ratio of 15:1: _____

Main aims/objectives of the outing: _____

Cost:

Transport: _____ Entrance fee: _____

Spending money: _____ Total per child: _____

Please complete & return to Mr Mcevoy two weeks, where possible before the proposed date.

Approved _____

Not approved _____

Comment: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix 2: Checklist for School Tours

Date: _____ Tour: _____

Class(es): _____ Lead teacher: _____

Other teachers & staff supervising: _____

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fully charged mobile phone | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| School contact number | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Class list contact details | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Kitchen roll/blue roll | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Plastic bag for rubbish | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Plastic bags as precaution for travel sickness | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bottle of water | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Change of child's clothing trousers/underwear | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| School camera | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cheques for venues/bus | | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Medication if any | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please take note of any medical conditions/allergies pupils in your class may have. Please note any precautions you need to make because of this: _____

Checklist completed by: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Suggested Venues for School Tours

This list of suggested venues is open to expansion; teacher/staff are invited to offer further suggestion of venues. If you wish to add to the list, please contact a member of the senior management team.

Infants

- Nore Valley Pet Farm, Bennettsbridge.
- Rancho Reillys, Carlow.

First/Second

- Lullymore, Rathangan.
- The Zoo
- Castlecomer Discovery Park
- The Watershed Kilkenny

Third/Fourth

- Tayto Park
- Viking Splash, Dublin.
- Bunratty Folk Park
- Fort Lucan

Fifth/Sixth

- Fort Lucan
- Clara Lara
- Dublin Castle & Christchurch
- Croke Park & GAA Museum
- National Gallery
- Birr Outdoor Activity Centre

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