

Scoil Mhuire Cúl an Áirne



School Tours/Excursions Policy

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by the staff **Scoil Mhuire Cúl an Áirne** and circulated to the Board of Management (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 separate tour dates and destinations for;

- Junior Classes (Infants 1st. Class)
- Middle Classes / Senior Classes (2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th)

The tours are structured in such a way as to provide an educational aspect in addition to an entertainment and recreational value. It has been recent school policy to limit shopping in shopping centres due to the unnecessary dangers children can be exposed to and the difficulty in providing adequate supervision.

No teacher is responsible for more than 15 pupils. It is school policy to assign individual groups of 10 children approximately to individual teachers. This becomes possible as our support teacher and Infant class teacher accompany mainstream classes on senior school outings.

- Children must obey their supervisors at all times.
- Children must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Children must remain with their allocated grouping and supervisor at all times.
- Children will line up in their individual groups on disembarking from the bus.
- Head counts are taken when children return to the bus after each segment of the tour.

Success Criteria

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

Transport

The transport organiser of the tour will ensure that:

- 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 and well-maintained. 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

All drivers will be garda vetted. 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 the 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 or for eating lunch.
- The consumption of food(snacking) and singing on the bus - at an acceptable level - will be at the discretion of the teacher in consultation with the driver
- Buses will be left as they were found

Tour Kit

Leaders will take a tour kit on all outings. The kit will contain:

- Class lists
- First aid materials
- Refuse and illness bags,
- Kitchen roll
- School mobile phone
- Parent Contact numbers

Cost

The teachers will ensure that the cost of the tour is reasonable and represents value for money.

Spending money Teachers travelling together will agree and notify their group of the upper limit on spending money. This will be based on age and venue.

Venue

Tours will be booked early in the 1st or 2nd term for a date in the 3rd term. Teachers will be conscious of the likely "busier" days. The teacher will be "au fait" with venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (toilets, emergency facilities).

Weather Conditions

Rain gear will be essential for all children and a change of clothes may be necessary, depending on the venue. In the event of warmer weather, sunscreen should be applied prior to coming to school and children should bring sunscreen to be reapplied throughout the day.

Uniforms

School uniforms should be worn.

Conduct on Tours

Pupils' behaviour on tours will comply with the standard set down in the School's Code of Discipline. In certain circumstances parents may be asked to agree to a contract on behaviour. Where it is felt that a child's conduct would pose a safety risk or inhibit the educational benefit for self or others, the teacher may refuse the child permission to travel. Parents will be advised of this in advance.

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 bus, Risks posed by particular venues (e.g. adventure playgrounds etc.). The maximum supervision ratio will be 15:1 (adult).

Informing Parents

Teachers will ensure that Parents are given sufficient notice of:

- Itinerary & Timetable
- Cost
- Special clothing necessary and packed lunch (no glassware).
- Sunscreen to be applied prior to coming to school and be packed as it may be needed throughout the day.

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.

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.

Children should be appropriately dressed for the fieldtrip e.g. raingear, suitable footwear etc.

No child is to be refused participation in any proposed activity because of family inability to pay.

Buses booked for fieldtrips must be fitted with individual seatbelts and these should be worn by all children.

See also **First Aid Policy**.

This policy was updated and ratified by the Board of Management in June 2018

Signed: Cormac Guinan (Chairperson B.O.M.)

Date 11/06/2018

Signed Frances Lynch (Principal/Secretary B.O.M.)

Date 11/06/2018

Appendix 1

TOURS CHECKLIST

Before the tour

- Venue booked
- Transport booked
- Individual parents informed of travelling embargo/ behaviour contract in relation to any disruptive pupils
- Timetable organised
- Parents informed by standard letter
 - itinerary
 - timetable
 - cost
 - lunch arrangements
 - clothing necessary.
 - sunscreen

Agreement on

- Spending money
- Acceptable behaviour on bus
- Extra supervisors (maximum 15:1)

Day of Tour

Teachers will ensure;

- *Tour kits are available for each bus
- Cheques for venues
- Cheques for bus