



Aston Village ETNS

School Tours/Excursions Policy

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by the staff and circulated to the Board of Management (BoM) and 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 school does provide a lot of extra-curricular activities, visits and opportunities for the school which take place in the school environment. Where possible, children will have the opportunity to experience new opportunities outside of school.

The need for this policy arises due to the objective that children be 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
- To include parents in the selection of school tours
- To ensure tours are low cost for parents.

Policy Content

It is school policy to organise separate tour dates and destinations for;

- Junior Classes
- 1st and 2nd Class
- 3rd and 4th Class
- 5th and 6th Class

The tours are structured in such a way as to provide an educational aspect in addition to an entertainment and recreational value. Tours must be booked/organised early in the school year. However, weather conditions usually determine the outcome/venue. Parents must be informed and a saving scheme set up to cover the costs over a period of time.

No teacher is responsible for more than 20 pupils. It is school policy to assign individual groups of 10/12 children approximately to individual teachers. This becomes possible as support and special class teachers accompany mainstream classes on school outings, as well as parent volunteers.

- Children must obey their supervisors at all times
- Children must remain seated while the bus is in motion with seat belts fastened at all times.
- 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
- Roll calls/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
- Value for money

Transport

The transport organiser of the tour will ensure that:

- Tenders are sought for all tours, where practicable.
- 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.
- If public transport is being used teacher should complete a risk assessment prior to tour.
- In the case of late return to school as a result of traffic etc. the lead teacher will contact the school to inform parents. For this purpose, 5th and 6th class may bring their mobile phone on the tour to contact parents. All phones will be collected on arrival at the venue.

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

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:

- Selt belts must be provided for each child/adult
- 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 must contain:

- First aid materials, refuse and illness bags, newspapers, kitchen roll
- Maps of the locality, umbrella
- Money to buy parents coffee while on tour or a flask of hot water, tea bags, milk and biscuits
- Tip for driver (teachers will use their own discretion)
- Thank you cards to send to parent supervisors.
- Lead teacher must have a mobile phone on the tour and leave phone number, as well as register of children present, in the office before departure.
- A register on a clipboard should also be taken on the tour.

Cost

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.

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

It is proposed that all classes have the opportunity to experience a school tour of some sort during the year.

Tours will be booked early in the 1st or 2nd term for a date as early as possible in the 3rd term. Teachers will be conscious of the likely "busier" days. Not more than two classes 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 teacher will be "au fait" with venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities). Where no phone facilities exist, the leader will have a pre-arranged plan to deal with emergencies.

It is proposed that 6th class go on a residential trip during the year. This could be a 1-2 night visit to a suitable venue. This proposal should be discussed with parents in relation to costs and the benefit of such a trip for the children.

Weather Conditions

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

Reports

Where problems arise either with venue or transport teachers will report back to the transport/tour organiser who will in turn will discuss it with the Principal.

Conduct on Tours

Pupils' behaviour on tours will comply with the standard set down in the School's Positive Behaviour Policy. 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 or insist that a parent accompany the child on the tour. Parents will be advised of this in advance.

With regards the proposed residential for 6th class, parents/children should be made aware of behaviour code for such a visit. In the case of serious mis-conduct children will be

collected from venue and returned to school.

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 minimum supervision ratio will be 12:1 (adult).

Parent supervisors (if required) must be picked at random and fairly. Parents should be made aware that younger, pre-school children may not accompany them on the tour.

Informing Parents

Teachers will ensure that Parents are given sufficient notice of:

- Itinerary & Timetable
- Cost – saving scheme details
- Special clothing necessary and packed lunch (no glassware).

Possible School Tours

(Majority free access or low cost entry, packed lunch, cost will only be for transport)

- Newgrange Farm
- Farm in the Naul
- Glendalough/Annamoe Trout Farm
- Smarmore Castle & Trip to Seashore or Farm
- Aquarium Bray
- Newbridge Farm, gardens, House and Forest Walk (Approx €5/child)
- Places of interest in town - Museum, Gallery, picnic in St. Stephen's Green.
- Dublin Trinity College Dublin Castle Christchurch
- Local Beach
- Glendalough - Fish Farm, Powerscourt
- Russborough House & Avondale
- Newgrange – Tomb
- Japanese Gardens
- Castletown House - Celbridge, Butterfly farm
- Drogheda - St Oliver Plunkett's Head, Millmount Museum
- Sonairte
- ESB House - Fitzwilliam Street, Dolls Museum
- Aquarium Portaferry, Armagh, Tara
- Belfast/Ulster Folk Park
- Sonairte & Laytown Beach
- Dublin Castle & Christchurch
- National Concert Hall
- Croke Park
- Malahide Castle & Railway Museum
- Maritime Museum
- National Gallery
- Hill Walk
- Coca-Cola

<http://www.seomraranga.com/links/school-tours/> (extensive list of school tours nationwide)

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 parent / guardian should accompany the class on the trip.

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.

Educational Tours/Outings

Proposed date

Proposed departure and return time

Proposed itinerary

Content

1. What are the Aims/Objectives of the outing?
2. What are the long/short term activities planned to achieve these aims/objectives?
3. What activities are planned for the centre(s) visited:
4. What follow-up activities are planned?

Cost

1. What is the cost involved:
 - (a) Transport €...
 - (b) Visits
 - (c) Spending €...€...
 - (d) TOTAL €...
2. Has a Special Saving Scheme been started in class or are all children involved in existing scheme?
3. What provision has been made for those who can't afford the cost?

Supervision

1. What ratio of supervision is necessary?: (minimum 12/1)
2. Have additional supervisors been approached?: Who?
3. What arrangements have been made for disabled children (if any in class)?
4. What alternative arrangements been made in the event of inclement weather?

Organiser _____

TOURS CHECKLIST

Before the tour

- 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 (minimum 12:1)

Day of Tour

Tour leader will ensure;

- *Tour kits are available for each bus
- Cheques for venues
- Cheques for bus
- Money for coffee
- Tip for drivers
- Phone number and register left in office

After Tour

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

ORGANISER.....

**check tour kits contain*

- *First aid materials, refuse sacks, illness bags*
- *Newspaper/kitchen rolls*
- *Mobile phone, umbrella per teacher, map of locality*
- *Flask - (tea/coffee/milk/biscuits) or money for coffee*

This policy was formulated by staff, led by Brian Quinn. It will be revised in October 2013. It will be presented to the B.O.M in late 2012.