

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No: 01125B

School Tour Policy

1. Introduction

This policy was drawn up by staff of St. Joseph's N.S. in December 2018 following a review of the existing policy which was in place for many years and current practices in the school.

Taking into account the age and interest 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.

The frequency duration and destination of tours will be arranged at the discretion of the class teacher and in consultation with the principal.

2. 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.

3. Aims of the policy

- To benefit the intellectual, cultural and social development of our pupils.
- To present the children with a new environment in which they can observe, investigate and relate their findings to their own environment.
- To provide school tours or trips taking into account the age and interest of the children and the curriculum being covered.
- To afford all children the opportunity to go on school tour with their peers.
- 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.

4. Transport

The teacher/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 and drivers accept the following hiring conditions: -

4.1 Conditions of Hiring

- All transport supplied will be suitable and well maintained.
- The bus hired for the trip must be equipped with seatbelts, one for each child.
- The driver will have knowledge of and follow the itinerary and timetable of the tour. The driver is responsible for the safety of the children while they are travelling. However, as the teacher has overall responsibility for the children's safety on a school trip s/he has 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 or as agreed with the teacher organising the tour
- The consumption of food on the bus-at an acceptable level – will be at the discretion of the teacher and in consultation with the driver.
- Buses will be left as they are found.
- The driver should provide the teacher with a contact mobile phone number.

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- The teacher will check that all children, once seated, put on their seatbelts.

It has been the policy of the school over the years to organise separate tour dates and destinations for: -

- a) Infant Classes
- b) First and Second Class
- c) Third and Fourth Class and
- d) Fifth and Sixth

5. Cost

The teachers will ensure that the cost of the tour is reasonable and represents value for money. Parents are asked to send in the money to the class teacher. Parents will be allowed to pay for the cost of the tour in installments over a period of time. Once the money has been collected, it will be lodged into the school account by the secretary.

6. Spending Money.

Our practice is that no spending money is necessary on tours, except as a special treat in Senior Classes. Teachers will agree and notify their group of the upper limit on spending money and discuss this as appropriate with their class. Under no circumstances does the class teacher or school take responsibility for monies lost on school tours.

7. Tours List

An up to date file of suitable tours for all classes is available in the staffroom. Teachers will choose a venue suitable for their own classes and will ensure that venues are suitable for pupils with special needs.

8. Uniforms

Teachers will decide whether school uniforms/ tracksuits should be worn.

9. Venue

Tours will be booked as early as possible. All venues and venue personnel will comply with current Garda Vetting Legislation and hold current, valid Garda vetting disclosures or enter into a Garda Vetting Agreement with the school as directed by the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois.

Classes are permitted to travel together if the venue and transport arrangements allow. The teachers will be familiar with the venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities) and possible risks associated with the activity. Where no phone facilities exist, the leader will have a pre-arranged plan to deal with emergencies and will carry a mobile phone.

10. Contactability

Teachers will be contactable by school secretary and school principal by mobile phone and will alert the school immediately in the event of an emergency, time delay or significant change to the tour schedule. Teachers will also bring a class data base, with parent contact details, should they need to contact a parent directly in the event of an emergency. Pupils are not allowed bring Mobile Phones/ Smart phones, tablets or any type of electronic device on a school tour, in line with the school policy on 'Smart Phones, Tablets and Electronic Devices'.

11. Informing Parents

Teachers will ensure that parents are given sufficient notice of the school trip. Parents will be given information about: -

- cost
- details of the itinerary and destination
- special clothing requirements as necessary
- packed lunch requirements as necessary (no glassware)
- Approx. time of return to the school

Parents are required to sign a consent form for each child travelling. This is in addition to the consent for trips from the school signed on the school Admission Form. The teacher in charge will bring these forms on the school tour along with a mobile telephone so that contact with the school or parents can be made if necessary.

In line with the school 'Policy on Smart Phones, Tablets and Electronic Devices' pupils are not permitted bring mobile phones or any electronic devices on school trips and tours, unless the principal has given permission to do so. The teacher(s) on the trip/ tour will contact either the school or parent if necessary to do so. Please see the school 'Policy on Smart Phones, Tablets and Electronic Devices' for more information.

12. Weather Conditions

Parents should be aware of changing weather conditions depending on the time of year. It is essential that all children bring rainwear. For some venues a change of clothes will also be necessary. Likewise, sunscreen should be applied by parents before children depart on tour.

13. Tour Kit

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

- Basic first aid materials
- Refuse bags, kitchen roll, newspaper
- Mobile phone
- List of pupils' names, consent forms and contact telephone numbers
- Money
- Any additional medication needed by an individual child (according to our policy on the administration of medicine)
- Any other item which the teacher(s) consider necessary for the trip. Teachers will use their professional discretion on any such items.

14. Reports

Where problems arise either with venue or transport, teachers will report back to the school and discuss it with the Principal. All pupil injuries must also be reported to the coordinator of the venue as well as the principal upon returning to the school.

15. Conduct on Tours:

Pupil's behaviour on tours must comply with the standard set down in the School's Code of 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 in consultation with the principal may refuse the child permission to travel. The child will come to school as usual on that day. Parents will be advised of this in advance.

In the event that a child's behaviour doesn't comply with the school's Code of Behaviour on a school trip, the teacher will immediately contact the principal and parents to advise them of this. If feasible, the parents will be asked to collect the child. If this is not practicable the child will be required to remain with the teacher in charge for the remainder of the trip and will not be allowed to take part in activities that might endanger him/herself or others.

15.1 School Rules for Tours

- Children must obey their supervisors and teachers at all times.
- Children must remain seated while the bus is in motion. Seat belts must be worn.
- Children must remain with their allocated grouping and supervisor at all times.
- Children will line up with their individual groups / partners on disembarking the bus.
- Roll calls/ head counts are taken when children return to the bus after each segment of the tour.
- Items such as tablets, mobile phones and other electronic devices are not permitted on school tours. Teachers or school will not be responsible for children's belongings.
- Children are not permitted to have chewing gum on a school trip.

16. 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

The ratio of adults to children is to be decided on an individual basis and will depend on the venue and the supervision provided there, the nature of the activity/ venue and the age of the pupils attending. This becomes possible as Special Needs Assistants and Special Educational Teachers may accompany mainstream classes on school outings.

If a child is not going on a school trip, for any reason, the child will be supervised in another class in school for the day. There is one exception to this. In the event that all classes in the school are going on a trip/ tour on the same day/ date pupils not going on the trip/ tour will have to stay at home from school on the day in question.

16.1 Plans for dealing with Emergencies, Sick/ Injured children while on school tours

In line with schools Accident and Administration of Medicines Policy:

- Teachers will seek immediate medical attention – call an ambulance.
- Contact the injured child's parents.
- Phone school and contact the Principal
- Accompany the child in the ambulance to hospital. (The class teacher of the injured pupil will accompany the child to hospital leaving the other teacher(s) with the remaining pupils/ classes)

17. Teacher's checklists

The teacher will ensure:

Before the tour.

- Appropriate venue is booked
- Transport is booked
- Timetable organised
- Adequate supervision and pupil: teacher ratio calculated

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- Parents informed by standard letter and consent form signed (*this is available from the school office*)

Include:

- Itinerary
- Timetable
- Cost
- Lunch arrangements
- Necessary clothing
- List of *up to date* contact mobile phone number for all parents

Day of tour

- Teachers will ensure tour that the following is brought on the trip: -
- cheques for venues
- cheques for bus (*if necessary*)
- money
- consent forms
- mobile phone for emergency
- any necessary medication for individual children

Tour Kits should contain:

- First aid materials as per school policy
- Refuse sacks / kitchen roll/ newspaper.

After tour

- Report back to office

18. Success Criteria

- Positive experience for all
- Children having a safe, enjoyable experience.
- Parent / Teacher satisfaction.

19. Ratification, Review and Communication

This policy will be presented to the Board of Management for discussion and ratification in January 2019. Once ratified it will be implemented immediately. All teachers will be given a copy of this policy and it will be uploaded to the school website for all parents and the wider school community to access and read. This policy will be due for review again in December 2020, or sooner should the need arise.