

## **Monastery NS 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, interact and relate to their to their own environment.

Tours will be arranged at the discretion of the class teacher.

All school tours / outings should provide an educational experience for the children in addition to an entertainment and recreational value.

### **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;

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

Teachers will consult with the Principal concerning venue, dates, costs and additional supervisors required prior to booking the outing.

Tours will be structured in such a way as to provide an educational aspect in addition to an entertainment and recreational value.

It is school policy to avoid shopping in shopping centres due to the unnecessary dangers children can be exposed to and the difficulty in providing adequate supervision.

Support teachers, SNA's and the Principal may accompany mainstream classes on school outings to facilitate supervision and the care of pupils. Where appropriate individual parents /guardians may be approached to accompany the class as well.

*Mainstream class teachers on tour should have a maximum ratio of 1 adult to 15 children. This ratio can be reduced where additional appropriate vetted staff are available.*

## **Refusals**

The school will reserve the right to refuse to take a pupil on the school outing where that pupil has demonstrated through his behaviour, recorded over a period of time, that he would be a significant disruptive influence and / or safety risk to himself and / or others.

In such instances parents will be informed **at least 6 weeks** in advance that the school is applying this aspect of the School Tour Policy and the reasons for same will be outlined.

## **Parent(s) / Guardian(s) And School Tours / Excursions**

Where the class teacher deems it appropriate *and in consultation with the Principal, Dep. Principal and SEN Co-ordinator*, a parent / guardian may be requested to accompany their son(s) on tour to support the teacher. This may arise for example where a pupil has specific medical, mobility or management issues that may necessitate the presence of a parent /guardian.

*In circumstances where it is deemed appropriate to request a parent(s) / guardian(s) to accompany their son on a school tour/excursion then that parent(s) /guardian(s)*

- a) must be notified of the request at least six weeks prior to the outing*
- b) must agree to undergo Garda Vetting procedures in accordance with the policies and requirements of the Board of Management of Monastery National School*
- c) must agree to cooperate and comply with all supervising teachers on the outing in accordance with Monastery National School Tours/Excursions Policy.*

*The school reserves the right to decline a request from a parent(s) / guardian(s) to accompany their son(s) on a school tour where it deems such support is unnecessary and where it is confident that it can provide adequate supervision and care for the child /children concerned.*

## **Safety**

On occasion and where particular adventure activities may warrant it, the organising teacher(s) will need to consult the school's insurers, Allianz, to confirm that such an activity is covered under the school **insurance** policy.

- Pupils' behaviour on tours will comply with the standard set down in the School's Code of **Behaviour**.
- Children must co-operate with their supervisors at all times.
- When boarding the bus for the first time at the beginning of the tour, children will take / be allocated, a specific seat with a specific partner. Then, as an aid to supervision children should sit on these same seats with the same partner on each and every occasion that they return to the bus.

- Children must wear seat belts at all times and 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.
- Pupils may not eat or drink on the bus with the exception of water.
- Mobile phones / i-pods /*smart watches* or other IT / communication devices must be handed up to the class teacher before embarking on the bus and will be returned when the tour is over.
- Roll calls/head counts will be taken on a regular basis and specifically when children return to the bus after each segment of the tour and before departing for home.

The class teacher(s) and accompanying support teachers are always responsible for the care of the pupils.

Tour venues frequently provide supervisors to assist and instruct the children with their activities but the ultimate responsibility for the care and safety of pupils rests with the teacher.

Teachers should be present at all times to observe and support their pupils throughout the day. This can be done by assigning teachers to specific groups and /or by the class teacher circulating around the groups to observe.

The care of the children should not be left solely to venue supervisors who are not familiar with the children by name or temperament.

Where the teacher/support teacher considers an activity unsuitable /unsafe for a child, a group or all the children, then the teacher must intervene irrespective of whether the venue supervisor agrees or not.

If the teacher deems the behaviour / language /comments of a venue supervisor dealing with the children to be inappropriate / not in keeping with the ethos of Monastery National School then the teacher should intervene to protect the children.

### **Success Criteria**

- Most/all of the children in the class grouping went on tour.
- Positive experiences for all.
- Children having a safe enjoyable experience.
- Teacher/Parent Satisfaction.

## **Review**

At the end of a school tour the organising teachers will meet and review the outing in the light of the children's experiences on the day, value for money and the quality of the venue, their staff, activities and equipment. This will inform decisions for future years.

## **Transport**

The transport organiser of the tour will ensure that:

- Tenders are sought for the price of a bus(es) for the day.
- 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.

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 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, clean and litter free.

## **Tour Kit**

Leaders will take a tour kit on all outings. These will be available from the office /staffroom. The kit will contain:

- First aid materials, refuse and illness bags, kitchen roll.
- Specific medication for individual pupils where warranted.
- Phone, maps of the locality.
- Lists of pupils / groups/ pupil contact numbers /school contact number.

## **Cost**

The teachers will ensure that the cost of the tour is reasonable and represents value for money. The Principal should be consulted in relation to cost. 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**

Tours will be booked early in the 2nd term or 3rd term, for a date in the 3rd term. Teachers will be conscious of the likely "busier" days. Refer to the school calendar. 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 teachers will be "au fait" with venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities). Teachers may need to personally visit a venue to check out its suitability especially if this is a new venue, one never visited by the school before. Teachers will ensure that venues are suitable for pupils with special needs.

## **Weather Conditions**

Depending on the weather rain and head gear may be required for all children and a change of clothes may be necessary, depending on the venue. Teachers will check out the weather forecast for the day and inform the children in advance.

## **Uniforms**

Teachers travelling together will decide in consultation with the Principal /*Dep Principal* whether uniforms should be worn.

## **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.).

## **Informing Parents**

Teachers will ensure that Parents are given sufficient notice of:

- Itinerary & Timetable for the tour.
- Cost
- Special clothing necessary and packed lunch.

## **TOURS CHECKLIST**

### **Before the tour**

- Venue booked
- Transport booked
- Venue contacted and all arrangements confirmed one last time.
- Individual parents informed, where it arises, of travelling embargo on disruptive pupils
- Classwork prepared for pupils not travelling
- Timetable organised
- ***Specific arrangements have been made for children with special needs/medical needs***
  
- Parents informed by standard letter of
  - itinerary
  - timetable
  - cost
  - lunch arrangements
  - clothing necessary

### **Agreement on**

- Leader
- Spending money
- Acceptable behaviour on bus
- Uniforms
- ***Extra supervisors***

### **Day of Tour**

Tour leader will ensure;

- Tour kits / first aid kits are available
- Cheques / payment for venues
- Cheques / payment for bus

### **After Tour**

- Review success or otherwise of the day