

TOURS and EXCURSIONS



school policy

revised September 2008

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	3
2. Rationale	3
3. Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school	3
4. Aims	4
5. Organisation - advance	4
5.1 Purpose	4
5.2 Curriculum	4
5.3 Venue	5
5.4 Parental involvement	5
5.5 Transport	5
5.6 Cost	6
5.7 Insurance considerations	6
5.8 Notification	6
6. Organisation – on the day	7
6.1 Inclusion of pupils with special needs	7
6.2 Tour pack	7
6.3 Weather conditions	7
6.4 Clothing	7
6.5 Supervision	8
6.6 Conduct	8
6.7 Communication during excursion	8
6.8 Plan in case of emergency	8
6.9 Collection of children	8
6.10 Alternative arrangements for non-participants	9
6.11 Follow-up	9
7. Resources	9
8. Assessment	9
9. Success criteria	10
10. Ratification and communication	10
11. Implementation	10
12. Timetable for review	10
Appendix 1 – suggested venues	11
Appendix 2 – leaders’ guidelines, TEACHERS	13
Appendix 3 – leaders’ guidelines, HELPERS	16
Appendix 4 –TEACHER and PUPIL CHECKLISTS	18

1. Introduction

A comprehensive range of tours and excursions is included as part of the school programme for all classes throughout the school. These activities support and complement all curricular areas, and are arranged to be age and class appropriate.

2. Rationale

Taking into account the age and interest of the children, school tours, excursions and field trips are 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.

All activities off the school campus are arranged at the discretion of the class teacher, and all arrangements will be made in consultation with the principal. A file of suitable tours for all classes is kept at the school (ref also Appendix 1), and teachers choose a venue and activity suitable for their own class level, and complementary to the curricular programme of that class. Teachers will ensure that venues are suitable for their pupils who have special needs of any kind.

3. Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Within the school's Mission Statement, St Patrick's NS aims

- to recognise, encourage, and celebrate individual talents, interests and potential throughout the curriculum and beyond;
- to promote an understanding and appreciation of the moral, spiritual, religious, social and cultural values which shape our society and to foster respect for such values;
- to nurture an awareness of national and European heritage, helping the children to develop a deep sense of Irish identity within a European and worldwide context;
- to welcome children from other cultural backgrounds, and to respect and celebrate cultural and linguistic differences;
- to actively encourage the children to care for themselves, their families, their friends and their environment, placing priority on the development of a sense of personal and joint care, and responsibility, both within the school, family, parish and wider community.

4. Aims

Through its programme of tours and excursions, the school aims to provide the best support for the curriculum, through hands-on visits and experiences in the wider community, whether through art, music, theatre, science, physical activity, the environment, or local/wider community contact.

5. Organisation- advance

The teacher will consider a number of issues as part of the advance planning for any school excursion. General considerations include *tours' timing and frequency within the school year, tour duration, age and group appropriate destinations, as well as the requirement for Principal's approval. The Principal may refer proposed outings to the Board of Management for approval.*

There are a number of important issues that relate to the specific class, and it is the responsibility of the organising teacher to ensure that all arrangements are made, though some individual tasks may be delegated.

5.1 Purpose

All tours must be planned, taking into account the purpose and value of the particular activity as a means of promoting the school's educational programme.

5.2 Curriculum

Planning of excursions should be done in conjunction with general curricular planning, and should have specific aims relating to curricular areas, whether focused on one subject (eg Science – Young Scientists' Exhibition), or including cross-curricular links (Visual arts, Drama, Music and English – Lambert Puppet Theatre). Details of planned excursions should be included in teachers' long and short-term planning.

5.3 Venue

(ref Appendix 1)

It is the responsibility of the organising teacher to make all arrangements regarding a tour or excursion, including the selection and vetting of the venue. Some tours are

booked up to a year in advance, eg Gaeltacht, outdoor adventure centre, etc. Usually, not more than two classes will travel together, unless venue and transport arrangements warrant otherwise.

The teacher must be familiar with the venue, particularly with reference to educational opportunities, and services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities). Where no phone facilities exist, the leader will have a pre-arranged plan to deal with emergencies.

5.4 Parental involvement

Issues to be considered include desired level of parental involvement in actual trip, and if so clarity of role/responsibility, noting that the overall responsibility for the pupils rests with the teacher(s), as it would on a normal school day.

5.5 Transport

The organiser of transport for the tour will ensure that

- tenders are sought for all tours, and insurance cover is checked;
- a mode of transport appropriate to the distance and the numbers travelling will be chosen;
- the bus company and drivers accept the following conditions:
 - (a) 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.
 - (b) 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.
 - (c) The group will have access to the bus for the full day.
 - (d) If the weather conditions are unfavourable the group will have the use of the bus for sheltering or for eating lunch.

(e) The incidental consumption of food (snacking) and appropriate singing on the bus will be at the discretion of the teacher in consultation with the driver.

(f) Buses will be left in the same condition as they were found.

The school usually uses *Tony Doyle Coach Hire*, as their coaches comply with all our safety requirements, etc.

5.6 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. Parents are aware that the school can provide assistance with expenses, following confidential consultation with the principal. In consultation with parent representatives, teachers will inform pupils of rules regarding an upper limit on spending money, though such spending money is usually discouraged on tours.

5.7 Insurance

Teachers must check with the principal that their planned activities are in compliance with those permitted under the terms of the school's insurance policy, and may not extend the agreed range of activities on the day of the outing.

5.8 Notification

Having studied the logistics (times, transport, costs, safety arrangements, etc), a form is sent to parents outlining all details of the excursion, as well as a section that must be completed, signed by parents, and returned to the school giving permission for each child's participation. Parents, as well as pupils, are aware that the highest standard of behaviour by all pupils is expected, noting that pupils are acting as ambassadors of the school on such occasions.

6. Organisation – on the day

A standard checklist of arrangements for the day is adapted for each outing and is followed by all accompanying adults (under teacher's overall supervision). These arrangements include supervision and safety measures. A preparation check-list is also followed for pupils (ref Appendix 2 and 3).

6.1 Inclusion of pupils with special needs

The teacher will check in advance that all special needs within the class can be accommodated at the chosen venue, and on the selected transport, and will ensure that arrangements such as additional supervision, etc are in place. Every effort will be made to ensure that all children derive the maximum benefit and enjoyment from the activity.

6.2 Tour pack

Leaders will take a tour kit on all outings (ref Appendix 2 - 4). This may be supplemented by items arranged through the school office, ie

- first aid materials;
- refuse and illness bags, and kitchen roll;
- mobile phone;
- money to buy parents refreshments, as appropriate.

6.3 Weather conditions

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

6.4 Clothing

Uniforms are worn on school outings. Teachers, Teachers, in consultation with the principal, may make an exception eg particular sports kit, or as a special privilege.

6.5 Supervision

(ref Appendix 2 - 4)

Supervision is arranged appropriate to the venue, activities, age and ability of the pupils involved. All supervision is the responsibility of the teacher in charge, and accompanying parents are made aware of this in advance of the trip.

6.6 Conduct

Pupils' behaviour on tours will comply with the standard set down in the school's *Behaviour Charter*. 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 him/herself or others, the Board of Management may refuse the child permission to travel. Parents will be advised of this in advance.

6.7 Communication during excursion

The school's mobile phone is used if a situation arises in which the teacher needs to communicate with a parent during a school excursion, eg in the case of an accident or ill health.

6.8 Plan in case of emergency

The teacher in charge will bring a copy of all parent emergency contact information, as details regarding family doctor, allergies, permission for stitching, anaesthetic, etc. However, every effort will be made to immediately contact parents directly in the case of an emergency.

6.9 Collection of children

Parents will be given an estimated time of arrival back at the school, and are asked to collect their child on time, as it can be distressing for a child if they are not met on arrival home. The contact telephone number of a nominated parent, usually the class representative, or the school's text-a-parent facility is used as a means of communicating information regarding delays, etc.

6.10 Alternative arrangements for non-participants

The teacher will arrange that any pupils from the class who are not going on the tour are placed in the care of another teacher, under whose supervision he/she will remain while the group is away from the school. A programme of work will be prepared for the pupil, and discussed with the teacher.

6.11 Follow-up

'Thank you' cards to parent supervisors should be arranged by the teacher, and sent by the class.

7. Resources

(ref Appendix 4)

A range of resources are available to support excursions. These are stored in the Teachers' library, and include information on a range of locations, as well as clip boards, etc. Teachers review resources as part of their planning, and also refer to the check-lists provided for all excursions.

8. Assessment

Pupils will follow a range of revision and reporting activities, as appropriate to the activity, as well as their age and ability. A programme of work based on information gained and observations made by the pupils during their outdoor investigations is essential if the full learning potential of this type of work/activity is to be realised.

This work can involve recording, analysing and interpreting the information collected and presenting the findings using a range of media. Information technology can play a very useful role in analysing and presenting data as can the drawing of maps and graphs and the construction of models.

Discussing and comparing the findings of various groups and perhaps comparing them with information collected by groups in earlier years can enrich the process further.

Findings such as these may lead to new questions and can encourage further research and investigation.

9. **Success criteria**

Teachers will review each excursion, based on the children's experience, as well as their activities back at school. Advice and recommendations are shared with colleagues. Where serious problems arise either with a venue or transport, teachers will report back to the transport/tour organiser and the Principal.

10. Ratification and communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in September 2008, and communicated to staff immediately thereafter. Parents are informed that the policy is available through the school office.

11. Implementation

This policy is officially implemented from the date of ratification.

12. Timetable for review

While under constant review, as issues arise in the course of the school year, this policy will be fully reviewed in 2012.

Appendix 1

SUGGESTED VENUES

Infant classes

Glenroe Farm

Lambert Puppet Theatre, Monkstown

Magician (eg Civic Theatre, Tallaght)

Newbridge House (farm yard and picnic)

The Zoo

First and Second Class

Airfield Trust (farm), Dundrum

Aquarium, Bray

Glendalough/Annamoe Trout Farm

National Art Gallery

National Museum, Kildare St and picnic in Merrion Square/St Stephen's Green

Natural History Museum, Merrion Square and picnic

Newbridge Farm, gardens, house and forest walk

Pine Forest Art Centre, Kilternan

Third and Fourth Class

Annamoe Fish Farm

Avondale

Castletown House, Celbridge and Butterfly Farm

Christchurch Cathedral and Dublinia

Dolls Museum

Dublin Castle

ESB House, Fitzwilliam Street

Glendalough

Greenane farm and maze

Japanese Gardens, and National Stud

Trinity College Dublin

National Art Gallery

National Museum, Kildare St and picnic in Merrion Square/St Stephen's Green
Natural History Museum, Merrion Square and picnic
Newbridge Farm, gardens, house and forest walk
Newgrange
Powerscourt
Russborough House
Wexford Heritage Park, Ferrycarrig

Fifth and Sixth Class

Christchurch Cathedral and Dublinia
Croke Park
Dublin Castle
Kilkenny
Trinity College Dublin
National Art Gallery
National Concert Hall
National Museum, Kildare St and picnic in Merrion Square/St Stephen's Green
Natural History Museum, Merrion Square and picnic
Malahide Castle and Railway Museum
Maritime Museum, Dun Laoghaire
Ulster Folk Park

Appendix 2

SCHOOL TOURS AND EXCURSIONS

LEADER GUIDELINES - TEACHERS

Introduction

Tours and outings of educational merit are regularly organised by the school. The school's ancillary staff and parents provide extra adult supervision, when required.

Organisation of supervision

The class teacher is responsible for the organisation of the excursion and for the designation of sub-groups of children to each accompanying adult. Adult supervisors who accompany a school tour/excursion are responsible for the safety of the children assigned to their care, and children must be supervised at all times. The supervisory ratio will vary from one trip to another. Small sub-groups are organised in advance by the class teacher, in consultation with the principal. The children allocated to each adult must remain with the designated adult, unless a change is organised/sanctioned by the class teacher. *An adult must always sit at the emergency door on the bus.

Teachers

Teachers should refer to the following check-list before embarking on a tour/excursion:

for helpers:

to be thoroughly briefed on

- location;
- detailed programme of activities (noting where group should be, what they should be doing at all times, and report back/meeting arrangements);
- potential hazards;
- procedures in the event of accidents and emergencies;
- check lists of all pupils in their care;
- standard of behaviour deemed acceptable by class teacher / school, and procedure to be followed in case of misbehaviour;
- supplies (as required by class teacher).

for group:

- information on the latest weather forecast (if relevant to tour);
- a list of all participants;
- parental consent forms for each pupil;
- emergency contact numbers and medical information for each pupil;
- telephone numbers for local doctors, hospitals, Gardaí, rescue services and the school;
- emergency contact numbers for the principal and / or chairperson of the board of management;
- emergency cash;
- mobile phone;
- first aid kit;
- list of all helpers and those pupils assigned to them (pupils/supervisors may be given common badges for ease of identification);
- a detailed programme of activities (to include agreed times for snacks, breaks and the use of toilet facilities, and indicating where each group should be, and what they should be doing at all times)
- activity sheets, work guidelines and instructions; or trail booklets (as applicable);
- maps of the area (as applicable);
- maps, check-lists of pupils' names and safety instructions and guidelines for helpers;
- equipment needed for investigations, eg compasses, trundle wheel, plastic containers for samples/specimens, etc (as required);
- spare pencils and erasers;
- children's medication in accordance with the school policy (as required, and only when sanctioned by the board of management);
- 'report back' locations for all groups (for all supervisors);
- sack for litter.

for self:

- warm waterproof clothing (and suitable footwear!);
- good rucksack;
- lunch and drink.

Follow-up

Supervisors / helpers should inform the class teacher of any matter regarded to be of importance in reviewing the tour, and for future planning.

Appendix 3

SCHOOL TOURS AND EXCURSIONS

LEADER GUIDELINES - HELPERS

Introduction

Tours and outings of educational merit are regularly organised by the school. The school's ancillary staff and parents provide extra adult supervision when required.

Organisation of supervision

The class teacher is responsible for the organisation of the excursion and for the designation of sub-groups of children to each accompanying adult. Adult supervisors who accompany a school tour/excursion are responsible for the safety of the children assigned to their care, and children must be supervised at all times. The supervisory ratio will vary from one trip to another. Small sub-groups are organised in advance by the class teacher, in consultation with the principal. The children allocated to each adult must remain with the designated adult, unless a change is organised/sanctioned by the class teacher.

Supervisors/helpers

Before taking responsibility for a group of pupils, parents / assistants should:

- be briefed thoroughly on the tour location;
- have a detailed programme of activities (indicating where group should be, and what they should be doing at all times);
- be made aware of any hazards that could be encountered, and the procedures to be adopted in the event of accidents and emergencies;
- have a check-list of all pupils in his/her care;
- be aware of the standard of behaviour deemed acceptable by the class teacher, and of the procedure to be followed in case of misbehavior;
- have required supplies (as supplied by class teacher);

Special notes

Supervisors must ensure that the children in their care observe the following guidelines at all times:

1. Follow all rules / safety instructions / guidelines as encountered
2. Leave the place as clean as the group found it (or cleaner!)
3. Be particularly cautious when crossing the street, and follow all rules of the road
4. Exercise special caution when close to machinery.

Follow-up

Supervisors should inform the class teacher of any matter regarded to be of importance in reviewing the tour (positive as well as negative!), as well as for future planning.

THANK YOU

Appendix 4

WORKING IN THE ENVIRONMENT - teacher checklist

- information on the latest weather forecast
- a list of all participants in the fieldwork
- parental consent forms for each pupil on which medical details and parental contact numbers are recorded
- telephone numbers of local doctors, hospitals, Gardaí, rescue services and your school
- on longer day trips the home telephone numbers of the principal and / or chairperson of the board of management may be useful
- cash and mobile phone
- first aid kit
- list of all helpers and the groups assigned to them
- a detailed programme of activities that indicates where each group should be and what its members should be doing at all times
- activity sheets, work directives or trail booklets for pupils
- maps of the area
- check-lists of pupils' names and safety instructions for helpers
- equipment needed for investigations (e.g. compasses, trundle wheel, plastic containers for specimens)
- spare pencils and erasers
- warm waterproof clothing and strong footwear
- lunch and drink
- some children may require access to medication and, depending on the school policy, this may be held by the teacher (remember to carry sufficient medication in case of delays)
- sacks for litter and refuse
- a rucksack to carry all these bits and pieces!

WORKING IN THE ENVIRONMENT - pupil check-list

- a clear understanding of the activities that they will undertake
- a clear understanding of the group to which they are allocated and the name of its leader
- school, class or group badge to help with identification in crowded areas
- warm waterproof clothing and strong footwear
- copy of work directive or trail booklet
- map
- pencils (not ballpoint pens) and eraser
- extra paper and crayons to take rubbings and make sketches
- small camera
- plastic containers to collect specimens
- compass and other equipment for investigations
- lunch and drink
- a rucksack to carry items and keep hands free for work!