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**St. Mary’s N.S. Partry**

**School Tours/Excursions Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy was drawn up by the staff. 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**

The school will organise tour dates and destinations for;

* Junior Classes (Junior Infants, Senior Infants, and 1st)
* Middle Classes and 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 is 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 20 pupils. It is school policy to assign individual groups of 10 children approximately to individual teachers. This becomes possible as support and special class teachers accompany mainstream classes on 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
* Roll calls/head counts are taken when children return to the bus after each segment of the tour
* Eating crisps/popcorn/chewing gum is discouraged on school tours.

**Success Criteria**

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

**Review**

The school will review the policy after 3 years.

**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

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. These will be available from the office. The kit will contain:

* First aid materials, refuse and illness bags, newspapers, kitchen roll
* List of the children on the tour and parents’ contact numbers
* The teacher will have a mobile phone with them

**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**

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.

**Weather Conditions**

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

**Uniforms**

Teachers travelling together will decide whether uniforms should be worn.

**Reports**

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

**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.).

**Informing Parents**

Teachers will ensure that Parents are given sufficient notice of:

* Itinerary & Timetable
* Cost
* Special clothing necessary and packed lunch (no glassware).

**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.

See also First Aid Policy.