



*"Let the rooms be
full of happiness"*

*Scoil Iósaf National School,
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School Excursions Policy

1. Introduction.

The Board of Management of Castlemartyr N.S. supports and encourages school tours. It concurs with the Department of Education guidelines which state that:

“the objective of educational tours for schools should be that they benefit in the intellectual, cultural and social development of the pupils taking part in them and any activity, in connection with the tour, which is in conflict with this objective should be avoided.”

Therefore Castlemartyr N.S. places particular value on off-site learning experiences as they are the most effective way to meet some learning objectives in a real-world environment. Teachers are encouraged to plan for, when possible, regular, curriculum-based learning experiences outside of the classroom. Tours and excursions for schools should be of benefit in the intellectual, cultural and social development of the pupils taking part in the. The school seeks to achieve this while simultaneously keeping costs for parents as low as possible.

Tours are an extra-curricular activity and are organised at the discretion of the class teacher.

This policy was drawn up by the school’s management team and was reviewed by the school staff and Board of Management in Term 2 of 2022.

2. Rationale.

School tours are an important part of a child’s education. School tours allow learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom and as such are an integral part of a balanced educational process.

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 and Objectives.

- To provide clear procedures for all off-site learning experiences that prioritise safety and pupil engagement.
- 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. Policy Content.

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 assign a minimum of 2 adults (minimum ratio of 15:1) to each class on tour from 1st-6th Class and a minimum of 10:1 in infant classes. This becomes possible as Support Teachers (SET's) and Special Needs Assistants (SNA's) accompany mainstream classes on school outings. At least two adults will be present on any outing.

- Children must obey their supervisors at all times.
- Children must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Each child will be restrained by a seat belt at all times while bus is in motion.
- Children must remain with their allocated grouping and supervisor at all times.
- Roll call is taken on the bus/in line in advance of leaving school premises.
- 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.

5. Procedures.

General Practices

- The Principal is informed of any excursions outside of the school, and this is reported to the Board as part of the Principal's Report.
- For excursions that require a bus journey, specific permission must be granted. This is to ensure that in case of emergency parents are aware that children will be away from the school vicinity.
- The level of supervision is dependent on activity and age of pupils. At a minimum, 2 staff members will be present. Minimum ratio of 15:1/10:1. This may include the class Support Teacher or a Special Need's Assistant.
- A first aid kit is brought on journeys as well as any medication children require such as inhalers.
- The school is a 'Nut Free Zone' and all school excursions will be treated as a 'Nut Free Zone' also.
- Please check Appendix 1 for school tour checklist.
- Children will walk in pairs, and adults will assist with safe crossing. Staff members are strongly encouraged to use designated crossings only.
- Staff members will take a phone with them as well as a laminated phone list in case of emergency.
- Arrangements are made by the teacher (in consultation with staff) re venue, transport, money & payments. The School Secretary will help with organisational matters.
- The Code of Conduct applies during all excursions and tours.
- Any arrangements required for children with special needs will be made to ensure participation.
- Children who do not have permission to participate will remain at the school with another class unless special arrangements are agreed with parents. This will be discussed with class teacher and principal in advance.
- Normally, school tours and excursions will take place during school hours. For older classes, parents will be informed of the approximate return time. Staff members will arrange to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) if there are delays. This may be done through the Aladdin system.

6. Guidelines for Teachers.

The tours are structured in such a way as to provide an educational aspect in addition to an entertainment and recreational value.

Teachers are to inform the school principal of any tour or excursion in advance.

It is school policy to assign groups of approximately 15 children to each teacher/adult at a minimum. This is a minimum of 10:1 with infant classes. At least two adults will be present on any excursion. The Special Education Teacher or Special Needs Teacher may accompany the class teachers on tour.

Where a teacher or the principal has concerns regarding the health and safety of any child attending a school tour, discussions will take place with the relevant parent/guardian outlining the concerns and permission may be refused for a child to attend.

Teachers must ensure that they have the following items:

- The school's fully-charged mobile phone.
- Contact list for parents.
- First-aid bag and any medical equipment needed for a child in their care.

7. Transport.

Bus Transport

- A form of transport, appropriate to the distance and the numbers travelling will be chosen.
- When a bus is used, the principal will ensure that a reputable company is used.
- Buses will be equipped with fully functioning seat belts for all.
- Teachers have the right to refuse any bus they find unsuitable for their outing.
- Pupils should board and alight the bus in an orderly manner, supervised by a teacher.
- Pupil should be head-counted before departure.
- All pupils should remain seated and seat-belted for the duration of the tour.
- The pupils should respect the bus company regulations regarding eating and drinking on the bus

8. Local Tours.

On a regular basis, classes may visit local nature areas such as the local woodlands.

- Class teachers will inform the principal in advance of such visits. If approved this will then be communicated with parents/guardians.

-Children are in the presence of an adult at all times and remain within predefined boundaries. The ratio minimum of 15:1 and 10:1 in infant classes will be in place.

- Staff members may set expectations regarding safety in response to potential hazards.

- Staff and children will ensure that no rubbish is left behind and that nothing is unnecessarily removed from these natural settings.

- Additional lunch items and drinks may be required for the trip. Suncream or rain gear may also be required, weather dependent. This will be communication to families in advance of the trip.

9. Swimming and other Sporting Events.

- Swimming lessons may take place for middle/senior classes.

- A bus will be hired to take children to and from the pool.
- Parents grant permission on an annual basis for all the swimming sessions that school year.
- For other sporting events including Sciath na Scol, GAA matches, Mini 7s, etc. buses are organized and permission is sought, as required.

10. Summer Tours.

- Each class will take one special summer school tour during the third term.
- Class teachers will decide on an age appropriate tour for their class. They will consider needs of the children and endeavour to find a tour that is both education and fun.
- Teachers should inform the principal of the destination and date of the tour as soon as possible. They must also ensure there is adequate supervision available on the day of their tour. This may include the support of SET's and SNA's. They must also record details in a log that will be in the school office to ensure tours are not booked on the same day to ensure there is sufficient staffing available for supervision.
- The ratio for supervision for a school tour will remain at a minimum of 15:1 (1st-6th class) and 10:1 for all infant classes. This may include the support of SET's and SNA's.
- Parents will be informed of the tour details as soon as possible.
- Expenses will be kept as low as possible. Usually the day will involve a variety of activities that are both educational and fun.
- Children will bring a normal school lunch, but may need additional food and drink. They may also bring a treat on the day. The school is a nut-free zone and this must be respected on school tours also.
- Additional clothing, including rain gear may be required. This will be communicated to families in advance of the tour. Sun cream is also advised for summer tours.

11. Cost.

The teachers will ensure that the cost of the tour is reasonable and represents value for money.

If there is a cost involved, parents may speak in confidence with the principal either to make an arrangement for staged payment or to seek financial assistance.

No child should be precluded from participating due to financial constraints.

12. Conduct, Safety and Supervision.

Conduct on Tours:

Pupils' behaviour on tours will comply with the standard set down in the School's Code of Conduct.

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. The pupil will be expected to attend school instead on the day of the tour.

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.). Children are the responsibility of the teacher at all times during the day. The minimum supervision ratio will be 15:1.

13. Success Criteria.

- Positive experiences for all.
- Children having a safe enjoyable experience.
- Teacher/Parent Satisfaction.
- Value for money.

14. Ratification and Review.

This policy was ratified on the date below. The policy will be distributed to all teachers and will be available electronically on the school website for access at any time. It will be reviewed as necessary but no later than 2025.

Signed:



Chairperson, Board of Management.



Principal, Secretary of Board of Management

Dated: 7th April 2022

Appendix 1:

TOURS CHECKLIST FOR TEACHERS

Before the tour:

- Principal consulted about venue and travelling arrangements.
- Venue booked
- Transport booked
- Timetable organised and details of tour sorted
- Code of Conduct reviewed with the class
- Parents informed by standard letter of:
 - o itinerary
 - o timetable
 - o cost
 - o lunch arrangements
 - o clothing necessary

Agreement on:

- Date and venue
- Spending money (if needed)
- Acceptable behaviour on bus
- Extra supervisors

Day of Tour:

Class teachers will ensure;

- Tour kits are available for each bus- check list below.
- Payment for venue and/or bus organised
- Roll call of children in attendance and adults for supervision
- Inform office of departure and return

Tour kits contain:

- First aid materials, refuse sacks, illness bags
- Medication / Inhalers / Epipens (where required)
- Roll and phone list

- Charged mobile phone
- Newspaper/kitchen rolls/bin bags (if required)