

## Milford National School

# 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 and relate their findings to their own environment. **Tours are an extra-curricular activity and are 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

It has been the policy of the school over the years to organise age appropriate tours for all classes.

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 2 adults (ratio of 1/16) to each class on tour. This becomes possible as Special Needs Assistants and LSR teachers, and parents if required (subject to Garda Vetting), accompany mainstream classes on school outings.

- 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
- 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
- Value for money

### Review

Milford NS will review each tour under the headings of the Success criteria above and will

make recommendations on the venue and transport based on the class experience.

## **Transport**

- Tenders are sought for bus hire at the beginning of the school year by school secretary
- All tours will be booked with the chosen transport company to ensure best price.
- 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 (Also c.f. Bus Safety Policy)**

- All transport supplied will be suitable and well-maintained.
- 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.
- 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. The kit will contain:

- First aid materials, refuse and illness bags, newspapers, kitchen roll
- List of all children on tour and contact details of parents.
- Other items relevant to the outing

## **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 for a date as early as possible in the 3rd term. Teachers will be conscious of the likely "busier" days. Not more than two classes will travel together, unless venue and transport arrangements warrant otherwise.

The teachers will be "au fait" with venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities). emergencies.

## **Contactability**

Teachers will be contactable by school secretary and school principal by mobile phone

and will alert the school immediately by mobile phone in the event of an emergency, time delay or significant change to the tour schedule.

### **Weather Conditions**

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

### **Special Needs**

Teachers will ensure that venues are suitable for pupils with special needs.

### **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 will 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 Behaviour. 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. 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 16:1.

### **Notice of Tour**

#### **-Informing Principal and Secretary**

Teachers will give advance notice of tours to principal and secretary by completing tour form (attached) and will also add to school calendar on Aladdin.

#### **-Informing Parents**

Teachers will ensure that Parents are given sufficient notice of:

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

### **Activity/ Adventure Tours**

Activity/Adventure tours will be considered for 5<sup>th</sup>/ 6<sup>th</sup> classes. In the event of an overnight stay,(6<sup>th</sup> class only) teachers will give notice to parents early in the second term with details of cost, venue, activity and possible savings plan.

## **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. It is school policy to assign 2 adults to each grouping on a field trip. 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. Should a teacher become aware of special circumstances, the principal should be informed and the child's tour fee discreetly paid by school.

Buses booked for fieldtrips must be fitted with individual seatbelts and these should be worn by all children.

See also Accident/Injury Policy.

**The policy was ratified by the Board of Management on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2013**