

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
St. Attracta's Junior National School
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SCHOOL TOURS POLICY
JUNE 2017



PRINCIPLES

The school is committed to incorporating educational visits into its schemes of work, providing that they will enhance pupils' relevant understanding and experiences, and that their inclusion is practicable, considering the constraints of staffing, cost and time.

Educational visits will to the best of our ability be available to all of the pupils concerned and will be organised with due consideration being given, especially when selecting venues and organising transport, to any pupils who have S.E.N.

In considering and planning a tour venue, educational visits should have clear, relevant and achievable aims and objectives.

A major consideration in the organisation of any visit must be the safety of the participants. The minimum adult-to-pupil ratio is dependent on the nature of the visit, and the age of the pupils, and class composition. However the supervision ratio for outdoor venues could range from one adult to six children (1:6), to one adult to eight children (1:8) depending on the venue/location.

If an SNA is allocated to a class, she/he will **ONLY** be responsible for the child/children who have access to the SNA in that class. SNAs are not counted in the calculation of pupil: adult ratio for supervision purposes.

In the case of children with significant medical needs, and/or SEN pupil with serious behavioural issues, such as a "flight risk", serious consideration will be given to the "risks" attached to the visit. Where it is deemed necessary, and following consultation with parents/guardians, a parent/guardian or designated other who is acceptable in loco parentis may, as well as an SNA, be required to accompany the child on tours.

Volunteers who assist on school tours will be advised, that they must ensure that they remain in the company of at least one other adult and avoid being left alone with individual children for the duration of a tour, and to avoid taking photographs/video recordings of children and school staff while in a volunteering capacity with the school (Appendix 1).

The organiser must be satisfied that the venue is a suitable one and that the officials from the venue involved in the visit are suitably qualified, and dependable.

The organiser of the visit will ensure that the cost of the tour is reasonable and represents value for money. No child will be excluded from a visit by virtue of his/her parent's inability to pay. All parent's / guardians must sign the consent form giving their consent for their child to go on tour.

SOME SUITABLE VENUES

- ❖ Lambert's Puppet Theatre
- ❖ Imaginosity
- ❖ Dublin Zoo
- ❖ The National Gallery
- ❖ The Natural History Museum

- ❖ **The National Concert Hall**
- ❖ Marlay Park/St. Enda's Park/ Airfield
- ❖ Aquarium Bray
- ❖ Newgrange Farm
- ❖ Causey Farm
- ❖ The Municipal Gallery
- ❖ Lullymore

VENUES

Tours will be booked early in the first term, for a date as early as possible after the First Holy Communions in May. All the children in the same stream will go to the same venue. The teachers will be "au fait" with the venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded and services available.

WALKING TO A VENUE

Venues such as Marlay Park and St. Enda's Park are wonderful local amenities and are within easy walking distance of the school.

When children are visiting outdoor venues or travelling to venues on foot parents are asked to:

- Provide a backpack so that children's hands are free
- Provide children with suitable raingear and something rainproof to sit on
- Protect children's skin by applying a high factor sun screen

The following safeguards are in place while children are travelling on foot to venues:

- Teachers must leave the school and the venue in the company of another teacher and his/her class so that there is one teacher at the top of a line and another at the end of the line
- The children will walk in pairs
- The pupil/supervisor ratio will be a maximum of 6-8:1
- Care is taken to ensure that children who are inclined to stray are in the immediate company of a supervisor
- A teacher will stand in the middle of the road at crossings and pedestrian traffic lights so as to ensure that all children get across the road safely

TRANSPORT

The organiser will ensure that:

- Tenders are sought for all tours
- A form of transport, appropriate to the distance and the numbers travelling will be chosen
- Only coaches **WITH SEAT BELTS** will be hired

- 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 being compromised
- All buses will be left as found by those on tour

TOUR KIT

- Basic First Aid materials will be brought to each venue
- The administration of prescription medicines will adhere to the Administration of Medicine Policy.
- Each teacher will have a contact list for his/her own class in the event of needing to contact a parent urgently.

INFORMING PARENTS AND PARENTAL CONSENT

- Approximately 10 days prior to the visit the tour's organiser will ensure that each parent receives a letter informing him/her of the venue, date and purpose of the visit, cost, time of departure, time of arrival home, clothes to be worn/taken, sun protection and the date by which the cost of the tour and **CONSENT FORM** have to be returned to the class teacher.
- Slightly closer to the date of the visit the class teacher may write to the parents advising in greater detail about clothes, food, drink etc.
- ***No child will be taken out of the school on tour without a signed consent form from the parent/ guardian***

CONDUCT ON TOUR

Pupils' behaviour when on tour will be discussed with the full class prior to departure. It is expected that behaviour will comply with the standards set down in the School's Code of Behaviour. In certain circumstances parents may be asked to agree to a contract of behaviour.

Where it is felt that a child's conduct would pose a safety risk or inhibit the educational benefits for self or others, the principal and class teacher may, following discussion with the parents decide that the child does not go on tour.

As our children are young they are not allowed, for reasons of safety, to visit shops, kiosks etc therefore they should not bring spending money.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Coming up to tour dates we keep a close eye on the weather forecast. If it appears that it is going to be very wet alternative arrangements will be considered where practicable.

FINANCE FOR TOURS

It is the responsibility of the organiser to account for all income and expenditure. It is also the responsibility of the organiser to count and bag all monies received and to have a lodgement ready for banking.

TOURS CHECKLIST

BEFORE THE TOUR

- Venue booked
- Transport booked
- Parents informed by standard letter
 - itinerary
 - cost
 - timetable
 - lunch/dress
 - appropriate sun protection
 - consent forms
- Agreement on acceptable behaviour on the bus/at the venue
- BOM letter to tour volunteers (Appendix 1) to be distributed
- Consent forms be returned to, and checked by the class teacher at least two days before the date of the tour

DAY OF TOUR

- Each teacher ensures that there is a signed Consent Form for each child
- The tour organiser will:
 - Advise all teachers over the intercom to check that he/she has a Contact List
 - Advise all teachers to call the roll
 - Organise First Aid Kits - one per venue
 - Organise cheque payment for venues
 - Organise cheque payment for buses
 - Check that the appropriate and expected number of adults are present
 - Check that the agreed provisions for prescriptive medicines are in place

AFTER THE TOURS

- Tour Organiser to prepare bank lodgement and lodge monies
- Get feedback from teachers on buses, venues, etc

RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy was formally ratified by the Board of Management on 13th June 2017.
The policy will be made available to all school personnel and to the parents of SEN pupils.

Signed:

Date:

Paddy Gough, Chairperson BOM

Tommy Neary, Principal

APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO PARENT HELPERS ON SCHOOL TOURS

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

ST. ATTRACTA'S JUNIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL

MEADOWBROOK

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June 2017

RE: FOR THE ATTENTION OF SCHOOL TOUR VOLUNTEERS

Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for volunteering to assist on St. Attracta's Junior N.S., school tour. Volunteers who assist on school tours, cannot have un-supervised access to children and should therefore ensure that they remain in the company of at least one other adult and avoid being left alone with individual children for the duration of the tour.

Volunteers are also asked not to take photographs/video footage of children and school staff while in a volunteering capacity with the school (Appendix 1).

The School very much appreciates your assistance in enabling important events like this to be part of the children's education in St. Attracta's Junior NS.

Yours Faithfully,

Paddy Gough,

Chairperson, BOM.