



**Bandonbridge N.S.**

## **School Tours/Excursions/Field Trips Policy**

**Date ratified by BoM:**

**Date of review:**

## **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, field trips or other excursions 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, in consultation with the Principal.**

## **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 of good practice in place to cover all eventualities.

Educational school trips benefit primary school pupils in many ways, and can be inspiring, positive experiences that not only enhance learning and understanding, but also pupils' social and personal development.

School trips provide the opportunity for pupils to immerse themselves in new, different and exciting environments where learning is less formal – but sometimes more powerful – and a recreational element threads through their day.

Educational visits also benefit pupils who have a more kinaesthetic, sensory or visual way of learning, as well as SEN pupils who might struggle in a traditional classroom environment.

## **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
- To reinforce classroom learning, acting as a practical supplement and extension to the theory that pupils already know
- To spark excitement and curiosity, imagination and creativity to increase motivation and engagement
- To develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communication which are vital skills to have in our social, academic and professional lives.

## **Policy Content**

School tours and field trips are an important facet of school life in Bandonbridge N.S. The school grounds themselves provide a wealth of teaching and learning experiences. The local library welcomes visits from the various classes and regularly hosts children's authors, storytellers and book illustrators which our school has taken advantage of. In addition the town has several historic buildings and monuments and the Bandon Walled Town blog is a valued resource. The surrounding area provides opportunities to explore the seashore, woodlands, riverbanks and townscapes. Class teachers are encouraged to use the local area when planning their lessons.

It has been the policy of the school over the years to organise separate summer tour dates and destinations for classes or groups of classes in Bandonbridge N.S. The tours are structured in such a way as to provide an educational aspect in addition to an entertainment and recreational value. School tours should enhance teaching and learning in the school as well as providing opportunities for aspects of the curriculum which cannot be facilitated within the school grounds.

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 EAL teachers accompany mainstream classes on school outings. Additionally, SNAs will support children who need additional guidance on school trips.

Appendix A contains some questions a teacher might think about prior to or during the planning of a school tour or field trip.

- Children must obey their supervisors at all times
- Children must remain seated while the bus is in motion and wear a seat belt
- 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
- Children may not bring a mobile phone on school outings; smart watches must have Internet and camera disabled.

### **Transport**

The transport organiser of the tour will ensure that:

- Tenders are sought for all tours
- 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 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 should contain:

- First aid materials, refuse and illness bags, kitchen roll
- Mobile phone and a contact list
- School camera or iPad may be used to take photos on the day

### **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. The Parents Association may fundraise to contribute to the cost of school tours. No pupil will be denied going on the tour due to financial disadvantage; the school will cover the cost, where necessary.

### **Spending money**

Pupils should not bring spending money on the tour (except in exceptional circumstances).

### **Venue**

Teachers, in conjunction with the school secretary, will book tours as early as possible for a date in June. Teachers will be conscious of the likely "busier" days. No more than two classes will travel together, unless venue and transport arrangements warrant otherwise. Where more than one class travels, one teacher will accept the role of "leader". The teacher will be "au fait" with venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (toilets, emergency facilities). Teachers should be cognisant of individual pupils needs or abilities when choosing a venue.

### **Weather Conditions**

Rain and head gear will be essential for all children and a change of clothes/shoes may be necessary, depending on the venue. Sunscreen should be brought on warm days. Towels, swimming costumes and goggles may be required for water-based activities.

### **Reports**

Where problems arise either with venue or transport, teachers will report back to the transport/tour organiser who 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.

### **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, water-based activities etc.).

Information about Arachas Pupil Cover (24-hour insurance) is shared with parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year and is available from the office, if needed.

If parents/guardians are accompanying pupils on school tours, they must be vetted by the school. Vetting invitations, guidelines and forms are available from the Principal.

### **Informing Parents/Guardians**

Information about the school tour/excursion and permission will be via Aladdin Connect.

Parents/guardians will be informed of the venue, the date and times of the tour, the cost and any special/ change of clothing necessary for the day.

If a pupil becomes unwell or injured on a school tour, parents may be contacted to collect them from the venue, where necessary. Additionally, this information will be conveyed to the office/Principal.

### **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.

### **Success Criteria**

- Positive experiences for all
- Enthusiastic engagement with the activity
- Children having a safe enjoyable experience
- Teacher/Parent Satisfaction

### **Review**

Further reviews of this policy will be conducted in the light of experience.

## Appendix A Planning a Education Tour, Fieldtrip, Outing for My Classroom (Optional)

Proposed date \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed departure and return time \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed itinerary \_\_\_\_\_

### Content

1. What are the Aims/Objectives of the outing?
2. What are the long/short term activities planned to achieve these aims/objectives?
3. What activities are planned for the centre(s) visited?
4. What is the length of time required for the outing? Will it exceed the usual school day? If so, what arrangements are needed for early arrival at school/late pick-up from school?
5. What follow-up activities are planned?

### Cost

1. What is the cost involved:
  - (a) Transport € \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) Visits € \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) Spending (to be discouraged) € \_\_\_\_\_
  - (d) Is the cost subsidised by PA/fundraising? € \_\_\_\_\_
  - (e) Total cost € \_\_\_\_\_
2. Has a Special Saving Scheme been started in class or are all children involved in existing scheme?
3. What provision has been made for those who can't afford the cost?

### Supervision

1. What ratio of supervision is necessary (take note of the venues requirements too)?:
2. Have additional supervisors been approached? Who? Vetted?
3. What arrangements have been made for children with special physical needs, sensory needs etc.?
4. What alternative arrangements been made in the event of inclement weather?

Organiser \_\_\_\_\_