

# Educational Visits Policy

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair of Board of Governors)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Rationale**

Young people derive great enjoyment and educational benefit from taking part in educational visits and excursions. Trips of this sort provide valuable, contextualised learning experiences and enable the children to make links in their learning with real-life scenarios. Such visits also enable pupils to develop important personal and social skills and in many cases, enable children to interact with pupils of other schools. In Naiscoil & Gaelscoil Éadain Mhóir, we aim to utilise opportunities for learning beyond the classroom and to broaden the pupils' knowledge of places of educational interest on their doorstep and further afield.

## **Aims of the policy**

- To clarify policies and procedures surrounding educational visits
- To ensure safety of all children whilst taking part in activities outside the school premises
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities during educational visits

## **Guidance**

In devising this policy, advice and guidance was sought from the EA publication '**Educational Visits**'.

## **Types of Educational Visit**

There are 5 main types of educational visits:

### **Category One**

Visits which take place on a regular basis and occur largely within school hours, eg. sporting fixtures, swimming lessons etc.

### **Category Two**

One-off day / evening excursions (non-hazardous)

### **Category Three**

Residential / overnight visits to residential centres, field centres and school exchanges.

### **Category Four**

Residential visits abroad (beyond)

### **Category Five**

Hazardous activities such as rock climbing, abseiling, skiing, windsurfing, surfing etc.

This year in our school we only participate in educational visits as described by **categories 1&2**.

If, in the future, we decide to arrange an educational visit from categories 3&4, this policy will be reviewed, to agree the necessary procedures and protocols and presented to the Board of Governors for ratification.

## **Category One Activities**

We sometimes use the facilities of other local community venues for a range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

For example:

- Gasyard Centre
- Longtower Youth Club
- Central Library
- Abercorn Park
- William Street Swimming Pool

## **Parental Permission**

Parents sign a general permission form at the beginning of the school year to grant permission for their child to travel to any of the above 'local' venues, ie. within the town boundary.

Parents are always informed in advance via note or text that a visit to any of these venues will be taking place and a specific permission slip is requested in advance of the first swimming lesson in a set of six, to cover the full block of lessons.

## **Insurance & Child Protection**

All of the above venues have their own Public Liability Insurance and Child Protection policies in place.

## **Code of Conduct**

Staff and pupils are reminded that they are ambassadors for our school when using public premises and they should behave in a courteous mannerly fashion.

## **Category Two Activities**

In our school, we believe that children learn best when they can make links between their learning in the classroom and real-life everyday contexts. Therefore, we encourage teachers to maximise the use of educational trips to make links with the curriculum and to offer the children the opportunity to learn beyond the classroom.

To date we have visited places such as, W5, Lurgybrack Farm, Tropical World, Bunrana park and beach.

## **Planning an Educational Visit**

When planning a category two visit to a venue such as those mentioned above, the following guidelines and procedures should be followed:

- Class teacher identifies a potential excursion which would support a specific area of the curriculum / topic which is relevant to the current programme of study for their class.
- Class teacher will research the venue, the services they offer, any costs involved and ask for a draft plan of the activities involved during the visit.
- Class teacher to approach Principal and to provide the above information in a bid to seek permission to organise the trip.
- If the school has not visited the premises in question before, a preliminary visit should be carried out in order to assist in the risk assessment procedure.

- A full risk assessment of the excursion should be carried out, including provision for any children with medical, behavioural or special educational needs.

### **Procedures and Protocols**

If permission for the excursion is granted, the following procedures and protocols should be considered:

### **Parental Permission**

Parents should be issued with a letter containing information on the planned excursion, including itinerary, transport arrangements, catering arrangements, clothing / equipment required, costs, estimated return time etc. Parents will be asked to sign a 'permission slip' and to return to the class teacher before the day of the trip.

### **Supervision**

In granting permission for the visit, the Principal will ensure that sufficient staff are available to accompany the class-teacher on the trip.

Staff to pupil ratios are as follows:

Naíscóil – 1: 6

Foundation Stage – 1:10

KS1&2 (Rang 3-7) –1:15

Where possible, an extra member of staff should be made available to supervise any children identified in the Risk Assessment due to medical, behavioural or special educational needs and their specific role explained to them.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The class teacher will usually take the lead role on an educational visit and should brief all staff on their roles and responsibilities during the excursion. For example, if the class is to be divided in groups, each staff member should be given a list of the children's names for who they will be responsible. It is advisable to carry out regular head-counts throughout the day and to agree a meeting place for any child who gets separated from the group. The safety of the pupils is paramount and staff members should be briefed on any potentially hazardous activities / areas of the venue.

### **Transport**

When arranging transport, the Principal should ensure that the company has a valid operator's licence, valid insurance and that the driver has a valid driving licence. On mounting the bus, the class teacher should ensure that ALL children are wearing seat-belts and that the seat-belts are working and are properly adjusted to suit the size of the pupils.

When mounting / exiting the bus, one member of staff should position themselves on the bus to guide the children in / out of the bus. The remaining staff should position themselves outside the bus, to ensure the safety of children as they enter / exit the bus – the main hazards will present outside the vehicle. Children should be encouraged to form a line and to enter / exit the bus in an orderly fashion, one by one.

### **First Aid / Medical Supplies / Accidents**

The class teacher should always ensure that a First Aid box is brought on all excursions. He / she should also ensure that inhalers / epipens etc for children with specific health conditions are brought along and are easily accessible throughout the visit. An accident report form for the venue and for the school should be completed in the event of any accident, injury or critical incident.

### **Communication**

All staff members going on an excursion should bring their mobile phones and exchange numbers before departure, in case of an emergency. In the case of an accident, injury or critical incident, the class teacher should phone the school and report the incident to the Principal, who will in turn make any further necessary communication with parents. In the case of an unexpected delay in return time, the class teacher should contact the Principal. Who will in turn send a block text to parents to inform them of the delay and revised estimated return time.

### **Toilets**

Children should be encouraged to use the toilet before leaving the school, especially in the case of long journeys.

If a child needs to use the toilet during the excursion, a member of staff should accompany the child / children to the toilets and wait until the child emerges before returning to the group. If members of the general public are also using the toilet facilities, a staff member should remain in the communal / sink area of the toilets to ensure the safety of the children. If in doubt, or if adequate supervision cannot be provided, staff are advised to encourage the children to use the disabled toilet.

### **Catering Arrangements**

It is advisable that snacks / lunches are consumed at approximately the same time of day on an education visit as the time that they would usually be consumed on a school day. Parents should be advised on what foods / drinks are permitted on the trip and normal guidance regarding allergies / choking hazards should apply.

### **Mobile Phones**

Pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones on educational visits. Class teachers may permit the use of school i-pads for the purposes of taking photographs during the trip.

Staff, although advised to bring mobile phones for communication purposes, should not use phones for personal use during an educational visit and should not, under any circumstance use personal phones to take photographs of pupils on a trip.

### **Code of Conduct**

An agreed Code of Conduct for behaviour should be discussed with the children before leaving the school and clear expectations given regarding the standards of behaviour and good manners which will be expected of them as ambassadors of the school in a public venue. This code may include guidelines regarding the wearing of school uniform / own clothes etc.

**Policy Review**

The vast majority of educational visits are successful and take place without incident, due to the careful planning and supervision before and during the trip. We will review this policy in light of any new guidance or indeed in light of any issues / considerations which may arise on any future excursions which have not already been included in this policy to date.