

# School Tour and Excursions Policy

*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 foreseen eventualities*

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## School Details:

Name: Rochestown Educate Together National School  
Address: Rochestown, Co. Cork

Telephone: 021 489 0122 / 085 2428753  
Email: info@rochestownetns.ie  
Roll Number: 20413N  
Principal: Dr. Alan Sheehan

The school gates are located at the school fencing surrounding the classrooms and yard. Please note that the school gates are not the gates accessing Garryduff Sports Centre from the main Moneygourney Road. The school premises consists of the area within the school boundaries/fence at Garryduff Sports Centre. School start/end times are as follows:

	Start Time:	End Time:
Garryduff Sports Centre	8.30 am	1.10 pm/2.10 pm

The school gates open at 8.20am in Garryduff Sports Centre. The school provides supervision of pupils within the school fencing only from 8.20am – 1.20pm for Junior and Senior Infants and from 8.20am – 2.20 pm for First, Second, Third and Fourth Class. Please note that no responsibility is accepted for anyone in the areas outside the school fencing. Please also note that no responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before 8.20am to Garryduff Sports Centre or for supervising pupils after 1.20pm/2.20pm in Garryduff Sports Centre.

## General Information:

Rochestown ETNS is under the patronage of Educate Together. It is based on four key principles: Child-centred, Co-educational, Democratic and Multi-Denominational.

Rochestown ETNS follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

## Aims of Policy:

The aims of the School Tour and Excursions policy of Rochestown ETNS are:

- 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

The management of health and safety on visits is part of a school's overall policy on health and safety (Safety Statement). The guidance therefore sets out principles, rather than trying to cover every eventuality, leaving it to teachers' professional and local judgement how to apply those principles.

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

- Children must obey their supervisors at all times
- Children must remain seated while the bus is in motion
- 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

Approval for school tours/excursions/field trips:

The Principal's agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place.

Responsibilities:

- Board of Management:  
The Board should satisfy itself that:
  - that appropriate safety measures are in place and that training needs have been addressed;
  - the visit has a specific and stated objective.
  
- Principal:  
The Principal should ensure that:
  - adequate child protection procedures are in place;
  - the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered;
  - the group leader of each tour is identified and allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly;
  - non-teacher supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children.
  
- Group Leader:  
The Group Leader should ensure that:
  - obtain the principals prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place;
  - appoint a deputy;
  - be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
  - be aware of child protection issues;
  - ensure that adequate first-aid provision will be available;
  - undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
  - review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise the principal where adjustments may be necessary;
  - ensure that teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves;
  - have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed;
  - ensure the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group;
  - consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality;
  - ensure that teachers have details of the school contact (usually the principal);
  - ensure that teachers and the school contact have a copy of the emergency procedures;

- ensure that the group's teachers and other supervisors have the details of pupils' special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively;
  - observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults.
- Teachers:  
Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the school, whether the visit takes place within normal hours or outside those hours, by agreement with the principal and Board of Management. Teachers must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. They should:
    - follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline;
    - consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the group leader, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.
- Other adults:  
Other adults (Special Needs Assistants, parent volunteers, etc.) on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Non-teacher adults acting as aides must:
    - do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
    - not be left in sole charge of pupils;
    - follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline;
    - speak to the group leader or teacher supervisors if concerned about the health or safety of pupils at any time during the visit.
- Pupils:  
The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:
    - not take unnecessary risks;
    - follow the instructions of the leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit;
    - dress and behave sensibly and responsibly;
    - look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the group leader or supervisor about it.

Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.

- Parents/Guardians:  
The group leader should ensure that parents/guardians are given sufficient information in writing and are invited to any briefing sessions if applicable. Parents/guardians should be informed how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, by reinforcing the visit's code of conduct. Parents/guardians should also be asked to agree the arrangements for sending a pupil home early and who will meet the cost.

Parents/guardians will need to:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s) (contained on the school database – it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that this is kept up to date);

- sign a consent form – no child will attend a school tour/excursion/field trip without signed consent;
- give the group leader information about their child’s emotional, psychological and physical health which might be relevant to the visit (usually by means of the consent form).

The Group Leader will ensure that Parents/Guardians are given sufficient notice of:

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

#### Ratios:

It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of pupils;
- First aid cover.

Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. There should be a minimum of one teachers on every tour/excursion.

Where a high adult: pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents/volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group.

#### Tour Kit:

On any kind of tour the group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first-aid box is taken. The kit will contain:

- First aid materials (see Appendix)
- Refuse and illness bags
- Water
- Kitchen roll
- Own mobile phone
- Any additional medication needed by an individual child (according to our Policy on the Administration of Medicine)
- Completed consent forms for each child
- Correspondence (booking forms, etc.)

#### Pupils with medical needs:

Additional safety measures to those already in place in the school may be necessary to support specified pupils with medical needs during visits. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the correct medication is available and in date. The principal will ensure that a designated adult is willing and competent to meet the medical requirements of these pupils.

#### Venue:

Tours will be booked for a date as early as possible in the 3rd term. Teachers will be conscious of the likely "busier" days at the venue. Not 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 "group leader". The teacher will be "au fait" with venue, with particular reference to educational opportunities afforded, and services available (phone, toilets, emergency facilities). Where no phone facilities exist, the leader will have a pre-arranged plan to deal with emergencies.

Where teacher is not able to obtain satisfactory information from the relevant body, they should ensure that the principal and Board of Management will indemnify them for any professional matters relating to the trip. This indemnification should be secured PRIOR to the trip commencing.

#### Transport:

The group leader 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:
  - 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. Private bus hire should include seatbelts for all passengers.
  - 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 that 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.
  - Buses will be left as they were found.

#### 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.

#### Weather Conditions:

Parents/guardians should be aware of changing weather conditions depending on the time of year. Rain and head gear may be essential for all children and a change of clothes may be necessary, depending on the venue. Likewise sun cream should be applied by parent/guardian before children depart on tour.

### Equality of Access:

Teachers will ensure that venues are suitable for pupils with special needs, physical disabilities or other individual considerations. Teachers should consult with Principal about choice of venue if there are any queries of accessibility for individual children.

If there are issues with ability to participate due to financial or other issues, the family should contact the principal. These issues will be dealt with in confidence at the principal's discretion.

### 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/guardians 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/guardians 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, areas of water etc.). Teachers must accompany their class/assigned group throughout the tour. Shared supervision will allow for teacher's lunch and toilet breaks.

### Reports:

Where problems arise either with venue or transport teachers will report back to the group leader who will in turn discuss it with the Principal.

## **Excursions/Fieldtrips:**

Excursions or 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. Consent from parents/guardians will also be sought in these instances.

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.

## **Success Criteria:**

- Positive experiences for all
- Children having a safe enjoyable learning experience
- Teacher/Parent/Guardian Satisfaction

### **Ratification and Review:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of June 2015. It will be communicated to all staff and will be available to parents.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

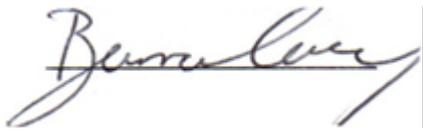
The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018.

### **Communications:**

The school community will be informed by the Board of Management that the policy has been ratified and is available for viewing in the office or on the school's website.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Bunbury', is written over a horizontal line. A vertical line is drawn to the right of the signature, extending from the top of the line to the bottom of the signature.

## **Appendix 1: School Tour and Excursion Checklist**

### **Before the tour**

- Venue booked
- Transport booked
- Individual parents/guardians informed of travelling embargo on disruptive pupils
- Timetable organised
- Parents/Guardians informed by standard letter:
  - itinerary
  - timetable
  - cost
  - lunch arrangements
  - clothing necessary
- Consent for attendance for each pupil received in writing from parent/guardian

### **Agreement on**

- Tour Organiser
- Acceptable behaviour on bus & in venue
- Departure and return times
- Extra supervisors

### **Day of Tour**

- Tour kits are available for each bus\*
- Cheques for venues

### **After Tour**

- Report back to office
- Send thank you cards to parent/guardian volunteers, etc.

### *\*check tour kits contain:*

- *First aid materials*
- *Refuse and illness bags*
- *Water*
- *Kitchen roll*
- *Own mobile phone (check battery level, airtime, etc.)*
- *Any additional medication needed by an individual child (according to our Policy on the Administration of Medicine)*
- *Completed consent forms for each child*
- *Correspondence (booking forms, etc.)*

## Appendix 2: First Aid Kit Contents

Product Description	Quantity
Sterile Medical Wipes 5	5
Waterproof Plasters	20
Fabric Plaster Strip 6cm x 1m	1
Adhesive Wound Dressing 8cm x 6cm	3
Low Adherent Wound Dressing 10cm x 10cm	3
Crepe Bandage 7.5cm x 4.5mm	1
Stretch Bandage 7.5cm x 4.5m	1
Microporous Tape 1.25cm x 5m	1
Safety Pins	6
Triangular Bandage	1
Eye Pad Dressing	1
Eye Wash Phial 20ml	1
Burn Gel Sachets 3.5ml	3
Heat Retaining Foil Blanket	1
Instant Ice Pack	1
Emergency Face Shield	1
Nitrile Power-Free Gloves Large	2 Pairs
Splinter Remover	1
Tough Cut Scissors	1
Essential First Aid Guide	1
Vinegar –Wasp Stings	
Bread Soda – Bee Stings	
Cotton Pads	
Waste bags	2
Ice Pack Cloth	1