School Trips Policy

Sacred Heart Primary School
Dundrum

(Updated 2017)

Rationale
Our aim is that all visits from school should be:

• Safe
• Educational
• Enjoyable

Well planned and executed educational visits provide our pupils with valuable experiences which enhance their learning at school. Providing a variety of 'real-life' opportunities for our children enables them to achieve a fuller understanding of the world around them through direct experience.

Purpose

Educational Visits will have a clearly defined educational purpose and can provide stimulus and support to work being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective stimulus at the start of a unit of work; alternatively teachers may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support the curriculum. Wherever or whatever the venue, teachers should ensure that the educational benefits to the children are maximised.

Planning Educational Visits

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous planning, organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils. Whether the visit is to a local park, museum, swimming pool, or includes a residential stay, it is essential that careful planning takes place. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to avoid them.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of Educational Visits organised at Sacred Heart Primary School.

Parents - Information
Parents should be given information about the purpose and details of the visit at least two weeks in advance. Parents need to be aware that the teachers on the visit will be acting in their place – 'in loco parentis' – and will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. For residential trips, parents will be invited to a briefing session.

Parental Consent

Routine visits in the locality of the school are covered by the parental consent on the Admissions Form. Sacred Heart Primary School will seek consent for all other visits. A parental consent form must be returned for each child in the group. If parents wish to withhold consent, they will be invited to meet with the Principal or teacher to discuss their concerns. If consent is withheld, the pupil will not be taken on the visit but the curricular aims of the visit will be delivered to the pupil in some other way,

wherever possible. If the parents give a conditional consent the Principal will need to consider whether the child may be taken on the visit or not.

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment will be carried out at least two weeks in advance of the visit to identify hazards and the steps needed to reduce the risks to an acceptable level. The risk assessment should also think through "Plan B" scenarios. Risk Assessment forms and the Educational Visits Checklist are available from the Principal. The Risk Assessment should be discussed with and authorised by the Principal. It should be signed by the lead teacher attending the trip and a copy should be retained in the School Office.

First Aid

First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of the visit. For most trips, a member of staff with a good working knowledge of first aid will be adequate. A decision based on the risks and children involved should be made for each visit. For adventurous activities and residential trips, there should be at least one trained first-aider in the group. First aid kits should be taken on all visits. If the visit involves splitting into groups, a kit should be taken for each group.

Staffing Ratios

It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils. The following ratio of adults to children is recommended:

- Foundation Stage 1:5
- Key Stage One 1:6/7
- Key Stage Two 1:8

In practice, the ratio should be determined by factors such as type of activity, any SEN or medical needs, experience of the staff, venue, transport and weather conditions. Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The Visit Leader should establish rendezvous points and tell adults and pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Preparing Pupils

Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected and why rules must be followed. Lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and other's safety.

Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues. If there is the possibility that a

pupil may be excluded from the visit due to behaviour issues, a meeting would be arranged with the Principal in advance to discuss concerns and agree what action is to be taken.

The Principal will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits. Every effort will be made to support them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention will be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Types of Visits

Adventurous Activities

If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, we must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity. Pupils should be assessed to ensure that they are capable of undertaking the proposed activities. During the visit, they should not be coerced into activities they fear. Pupils whose behaviour is such that the Visit Leader is concerned for their or others' safety, should be withdrawn from the activity.

Residential Trips

Residential trips will be planned well in advance and arrangements will be overseen by the teacher in charge. Parents will be invited to a briefing session to discuss the details of the trip and to meet the staff attending. The teacher in charge should be an experienced member of staff. Residential trips must be approved by the Board of Governors.

Coastal visits

Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting school children have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming. Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit will not be allowed.

Water Margin Activities

Where pupils might participate in learning activities near or in water, such as a walk along the beach, collecting samples in ponds or streams, then the guidance contained in the EA Water Safety Campaign will be followed.

Farm Visits

Sacred Heart Primary School recognises that farms can be dangerous even for the people who work there. Taking children to a farm will be very carefully planned. The risks to be assessed include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the

hazards associated with E coli food poisoning and other infections. The proposed farm will be checked to ensure that it is well managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare and that it maintains good washing facilities, clean grounds and public areas. An exploratory pre-visit should be carried out.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Board of Governors
The Board of Governors will approve the School Trips Policy and will ensure it is reviewed annually. The Board of Governors will approve residential visits.

Principal
The Principal will ensure suitable teachers in charge are appointed. The Principal will sign off on required Risk Assessments.

Teacher in Charge
There will be a named Teacher in Charge who is responsible overall for the supervision of the visit and will be appointed by the Principal. The Teacher in Charge is responsible for ensuring a pre-visit is carried out and that a Risk Assessment is completed and approved by the Principal at least two weeks in advance of the visit. The Risk Assessment will include the ratio of adult to children supervision and the number of first aiders needed. The Teacher in Charge will brief all staff and helpers involved in the visit.

Risk Assessment.
The Teacher in Charge is responsible for ensuring the first aid kit and pupil medication are taken on the visit. Other teachers and staff involved in a visit on school-led visits act as employees of CCMS and will, therefore, be acting in the course of their normal employment during their normal hours. They will be acting under an agreement with their Principal and Board of Governors if some of their time on the visit falls outside normal hours.

Parent Helpers
Parent helpers are welcome on Educational Visits and will attend a briefing with the teacher in charge before the visit when they will sign the Risk Assessment and be given a written list of the children in their group. All helpers must be Access NI checked.

The policy will be reviewed annually.