



# **Outings and Excursions Policy 2024-2025**

**1 Introduction**

**The Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSP) for Equinox Education Service Ltd (EES) is Noel Doyle (087-9975625).**

Equinox Education Services Ltd offer tailor made short term and long-term programs for overseas individuals and groups throughout Ireland at various times of the year. Accommodation is for the most part in host families.

Who is covered by this policy

**All** adults who have any contact, in any form, with young persons aged under 18 are covered by this policy. This is a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

- Safeguarding – Generally ‘looking after’ the welfare of young people in our care.
- Child Protection – Protecting children from direct and/or harmful behavior.
- Young learners – Students under the age of 18

Whilst the majority of this policy is applicable to all our programs the above-mentioned staff are responsible for reviewing and updating the policy on an annual basis at a minimum, or more frequently if required:

EES Outings and Excursions Policy:

Updated and reviewed by : October 15, 2023

Signed  :

Policy statement

Equinox Education Services Ltd (herein after referred to as EES) has a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, EES staff provide them with the highest possible standard of care. EES is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone accepts their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children from harm and abuse. This means following procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate staff and authorities.

## **Introduction and aims**

The Abbey Vocational school is committed to incorporating educational visits into its curriculum, providing that they will enhance students' relevant understanding and experience and are seen as a valuable addition to the regular school experience. They should promote the mission statement of the school and form an integral part of a student's journey through school. Such activities may include attendance at sporting events, visits to appropriate exhibitions, conferences, longer-term educational tours either in Ireland or abroad. The aim of school trips is to provide an educational, cultural, social, and personal experience for everyone involved. Educational trips and visits provide an excellent opportunity for the personal growth and development of students. They can have a positive effect on students' self-esteem and can significantly improve many skills including their ability to work with others, using their initiative, powers of investigation and improved understanding of their surroundings. Educational visits provide rich experiences that cannot be created in school and many students will cherish them for a long time to come.

Considering the age and interests of the children and the curriculum being covered, school tours 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.

This draft policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff and circulated to the Board of Management (BoM) and Parents Association for observations and feedback.

School trips assist in:

- broadening cultural and intellectual experiences;
- fostering independence, maturity and team-building;
- enhancing students' social skills ;
- improving language acquisition and skills ;
- promoting greater understanding among different cultures ;
- providing teachers with an opportunity to get to know students in a non-classroom environment.

There should be a balanced programme of outings and trips for the school year that does not prove too costly to parents and does not overburden the school timetable.

## **Aims of the Policy**

The overall aims of the policy are:

- that the health, safety and welfare of the students are safeguarded by ensuring that reasonable care has been taken in the nature of the trip

chosen, the level of supervision provided, the venue, the means of transportation, the careful assessment of any dangers to which the students may be exposed and the demands on the physical resources of the pupils, having regard to their age and capacity;

- that staff are assisted in the planning of trips and outings;
- that trips and outings are managed efficiently and with a level of supervision firmly established within accepted guidelines;
- that expectations of behaviour are clarified for all trips;
- that students meet clear criteria before they are deemed eligible to take part in certain out of school activities and in particular any trips involving an overnight stay.

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

### **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

### **Policy Content**

As always the class teacher is responsible for his/her class. However it is school policy to ensure a number of assistants accompany a teacher on trip and assign individual groups of 10 children approximately to individual teachers or parental supervisors. This number varies on the age and needs within a class. No matter what size a class is, there will always be a minimum of 3 adults on each tour. This allows for an adult to accompany an injured child to hospital while leaving 2 adults with the rest of the class.

### **Tour Kit**

Leaders will take a tour kit on all outings. These will be available from the office. The kit will contain;

- First aid materials, refuse and illness bags, water, kitchen roll
- Own mobile phone, umbrella

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- Any additional medication needed by an individual child (according to our Policy on the Administration of Medicine)

### **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.

### **Venue**

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.

### **Weather Conditions**

Parents 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 sunscreen should be applied by parent before children depart on tour.

### **Equality of Access**

Classes may choose a venue suitable for their own level or lower but not from levels above. 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.

### **Uniforms**

Teachers travelling together will decide whether uniforms or tracksuits should be worn by all. Children should never wear name badges in public under Child Protection guidelines.

### **Reports**

Where problems arise either with venue or transport teachers will report back to 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.

### **School Rules for tours & excursions**

- Children must obey their supervisors & teachers at all times
- Children must remain seated with buckled seatbelt while the bus is in motion

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- Children are not allowed to eat/drink on the bus nor are they allowed to bring electronic devices with them
- Children should not bring money with them
- 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
- Children should never attend a bathroom alone.
- Roll calls/head counts are taken when children return to the bus or centre after each segment of the tour
- Eating chewing gum is not allowed on school tours. While one treat is allowed, this should be at the parent's discretion.

### **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 throughout the tour. Shared supervision will allow for teacher's lunch and toilet breaks.

In cases of accident or emergency, a teacher will accompany an injured child to hospital, while the remaining teachers, SNAs & volunteers shall remain with the rest of the children. In the case where there is only one class teacher with accompanying parent volunteers, a parent will accompany the injured child to hospital while the teacher remains with his/her class in loco parentis. All procedures under our Health & Safety and Critical Incident policies will be adhered to.

### **Informing Parents**

Teachers will ensure that Parents are given sufficient notice of:

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

### **Success Criteria**

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

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **TOURS CHECKLIST**

#### **Before the tour**

- Venue booked
- Transport booked
- Individual parents informed of travelling ban on disruptive pupils
- Timetable organised

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- Parents informed by standard letter
  - itinerary
  - timetable
  - cost
  - lunch arrangements
  - clothing necessary

### **Agreement on**

- Leader
- Acceptable behaviour on bus & in venue
- Departure and return times
- Extra supervisors (minimum 10:1)

### **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 volunteers etc

*\*check tour kits contain*

- *First aid materials, refuse sacks, illness bags, water*
- *Newspaper/kitchen rolls*
- *Umbrella per teacher, directions, correspondence*

### **Accidents Report form**