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Roll No: 20379Q

Community Outings Policy

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by Dolores Cullinane (Principal) and Caroline Leonard (Director Of Education) and circulated to the Board of Management (BoM) for ratification. Taking into account the age and interests of the children and the curriculum being covered, community outings 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.

Community outings will include trips to the shop, walk, café, work experience, school tour, the Pantomime, swimming, and any occasion in which a number of students leave the school. Staff will include a teacher, Special Needs Assistants (SNA's), Behaviour Analyst (if required),

Community outings are arranged at the beginning of the academic year with each room going out to the community on a specific day/time. This policy should be followed and adhered to during the entire school year.

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 of Policy:

- To ensure all practical possibilities are covered in reducing the exposure of children to risk on outings (using risk assessment form before their initial community outing)
- To provide an enjoyable educational experience for all children.
- To set a standard criteria to give all students an opportunity to access the community.

Covid-19 Accommodations

Due to the current Covid-19 restrictions community outings will take place when local or national restrictions permit such outings.

As our whole school bubble is broken into 3 pods we must ensure staff can stay in their pods except for exceptional emergency situations. Due to behaviours of concern, some of our students require more than 1:1 support in the community

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as per their risk assessment. Additional staff support can only be provided within the student's own pod. These restrictions may, on occasion, result in a shortage in the number of staff required for a community outing. In this case all attempts will be made to make an alternative trip for those students.

Policy Content

It has been the policy of Stepping Stones that students are provided with numerous opportunities in the school year to participate in community outings as well as those in a wider setting where possible.

The community outings are structured in such a way as to provide an educational aspect in addition to an entertainment and recreational value.

It is Stepping Stones policy that:

- For students with high levels of challenging behaviour a risk assessment is carried out prior to the outing. See Appendix A. If the risk assessment states that the risk outweighs the benefit of the student being in the community, their community outings will be suspended. This will be reviewed, if the behaviours have reduced to a degree where a new risk assessment is warranted once a term by the class teacher, behaviour analyst and school principal. The onus is on parents/care givers to inform the school of any known routines/expectations that have been set up in the community with the student, e.g. always gets a mars bar at the cinema.
- During the community outing any staff members who are not responsible for a particular student will position themselves near the group of students to help monitor and supervise all students. They should spread themselves out around the area, being sure to concentrate on monitoring and supervising all students.
- If an excursion involves walking, then staff members who are not responsible for a particular student should spread themselves along the line of students and staff members, ensuring that someone is in the front, someone in the back.
- Due to insurance reasons, during excursions there must be at least 1 supervisory staff member (teacher).
- No other children other than Stepping Stones students are ever allowed to go on school excursions.
- Students and staff must adhere to the Stepping Stones Covid Response Plan while on community outings.

Success Criteria

- Positive experiences for all
- Children having a safe enjoyable experience.
- Student/Staff/Parent Satisfaction

Transport

- The school bus will be used for all community outings. 2 staff members are currently trained and insured to drive the bus and will be the only staff members permitted to drive it.
- The bus will be suitable, have working seat belts, be well-maintained and

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- properly staffed.
- The driver is responsible for the safety of the children while they are travelling but the teacher will be the supervisor of the class group while on the bus.
- The bus driver MUST wear a face covering or mask while transporting students for duration of the Covid-19 pandemic
- As all the classes use the bus, each class group will have access to the bus for the specific amount of time agreed at the beginning of the year.
- The consumption of food (snacking) and drink will be at the discretion of the teacher. It is the responsibility of all staff members to make sure the bus is as clean as they found it and prompt the student to remove any rubbish after their outing is complete.
- Students and staff must adhere to the Stepping stones Covid Response Plan.
- If a student needs to stay on the bus/comes back to school early due to escalated behaviours, a staff member must be on the bus with the student at all times, not just the driver alone. If the student is returning to school, the teacher will call the school asking for another teacher/school Principal to come to the location to supervise the rest of the class. The classroom teacher and another staff member will accompany the student back to school

Note: ALL Staff have a responsibility to the bus driver to ensure the students are seated and not a danger to themselves or others during the bus journey.

Bus Equipment

- First aid box, fire extinguisher, jump leads, seat belt cutter

Staff assigned to a student on a community outing should be familiar with their individual Behaviour Support Plan, materials and visual schedules. If the driver is asked to support students outside of their class then the teacher of that class is responsible for bringing the relevant materials. In the teachers absence the most senior member of staff in the room will take over that responsibility.

Cost

The school introduced a voluntary contribution scheme in September 2018, parents that pay towards the contribution will not pay money towards the running of the bus. Parents that do not contribute will pay a fee of €4 towards diesel, insurance and other maintenance costs every time they child takes part in a community outing.

Spending money

Parents can use their own discretion as to how much their child can bring. If the parents don't send in any money then it is up to the discretion of the teacher whether the student takes part in the community outing.

Venue and Risk Assessment Form

It should be recognized and noted by the parents of our students and by the management of our school that Risk Assessments cannot be carried out for every possible outing that takes place and therefore we cannot set out every possible

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danger and obstacle in the outing environment.

It does not account for behavioural obstacles that our students may encounter. If from time to time a student may pose a risk while off the school premises they may be excluded from the trip in future to avoid any health and safety issues.

A red mat for PCM will not be used in public for crisis management purposes as we will always endeavour to protect the dignity of the child and primarily not introduce the child to an unsafe environment. Protection and safety of pupils and staff is paramount.

Weather Conditions

If the weather is particularly adverse and the roads are too dangerous to drive on, the staff member who drives the bus would make the decision on whether it's appropriate to go on the trip on that particular day. The teacher would inform the parents by phone call.

Conduct on Tours

All staff are expected to maintain extreme vigilance of students when on outings.

- All staff are to run Behaviour Support Plans in so far as possible. All relevant , materials and communication methodologies will be used on all outings.
- **Staff must adhere to the Stepping Stones Covid Response Plan while on community outings.**

Safety and Supervision

There will always be a staff member responsible for each student.

Informing Parents

Teachers will ensure that Parents are given sufficient notice of:

- Cost
- Special clothing necessary.

Relates to :

First Aid Policy

Code Of Behaviour

Health and Safety Policy

Covid 19 Response Plan

Signed: _____

Dolores Cullinane, School Principal

Signed: _____

Alan Doyle, Chairperson of Board of Management

Ratification date:

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Date of next review: