



# Ballygawley Early Years Playgroup

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## Outings Policy

Off-site visits are activities arranged by or on behalf of the Playgroup, and which take place outside the Playgroup grounds. The Staff and Management Committee believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the experiences of the Children attending the setting.

In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits, and to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to a minimum, for the safety and health of all children at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all the children within our care, and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities.

### **Aims**

The aims of our outings are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our children;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our children than could be provided on the Playgroup site alone;
- Promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

We aim to organise a formal outing at least once a year. Charges for these outings, if applicable, will be notified to parents/guardians in advance of the outing and will be payable before the outing. It is hoped that these outings will enhance, their experience and enjoyment of Playgroup.

A risk assessment will be carried out by the Playgroup Leader prior to the visit and first aid equipment and the Playgroup mobile phone will be taken on the day, with all parents/guardians contact information. We will ask parents/guardians to sign a consent form in advance of such outings and will request that a parent/guardian accompany their child on the outing.

The Playgroup Leader and Management Committee are involved in the planning and management of all outings.

The Playgroup Leader will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car/coach drivers, have had satisfactory police checks,
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- Keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example the park).



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- All needed resources are taken on visits e.g. emergency contact list, change of clothes, nappy changing equipment, water and snacks.

It is our policy that all children should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a disability is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with disabilities. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

## **Risk Assessment**

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the Playgroup before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group Leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

The Playgroup Leader planning an off-site activity will make a preliminary visit to the venue or discuss in detail key concerns with the activity manager, in order to carry out an accurate risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the Playgroup Leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the Playgroup Leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if they lack the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the visit plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The Leader leading the visit must complete a visit risk assessment check list and keep in the risk assessment file. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the Playgroup, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.



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A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach/ bus service must provide us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts;
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- Breakdown procedures.

## **Transport**

The costing of the outing should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers if necessary;
- Any refreshments the playgroup has opted to pay for.

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

## **Communication with parents/carers**

The parents of children taking part in an outing should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any outing.

Funding for the outing is provided mainly by parental contributions and fundraising from Management Committee. The cost must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

## **Further health and safety considerations**

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the Leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the Playgroup mobile number. All adult helpers will be accompanied by a member of Playgroup staff and never left unattended with a group of children.

Before a party leaves the Playgroup the Leader will ensure a list of all names is collected (children and adults), and provide a timetable for the off site visit.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the Playgroup Leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical



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registration forms, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

## **Visit Plan**

The visit plan for intended educational visits must include the following:

- risk assessment;
- report on preliminary visit;
- approval of visit from Management Committee;
- general information;
- names, ages, contact details, permission forms, medical records and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
- travel schedule;
- full plan of activities;
- fire precautions and evacuation procedures;
- intended arrangements for supervision;
- insurance arrangements for all members of the group;
- emergency contacts and procedures;
- general communications information e.g. Playgroup mobile phone number;
- guidance for staff
- guidance for the emergency contact
- medical questionnaire returns if additional information is needed;
- First-aid boxes, inhalers, Epi-pens if needed, and individual prescribed medicines.

## **Operational procedures for outings**

The same standard of care and interaction with the children is expected of staff, volunteers and students on outings. The worker's prime responsibility on outings is to ensure the safety of the children. However, they will be expected to balance this responsibility with ensuring that children have the maximum opportunity to experience and explore new environments, to socialise and to have fun.

## **Types of outings**

Different types of outings take place and each will require slightly different preparations and staffing levels.

These include:

- Trips on foot, e.g. visits to the park and the post office.
- Trips on public transport to places like museums, farms, etc.



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## **Procedures where a child is lost on an outing**

If the Playgroup's policies and procedures are being observed the likelihood of a child being lost is small. Very occasionally a child may become separated from the group on an outing or become lost.

With careful planning and co-operative working amongst staff, children should not be out of sight of an adult during an outing. If it is realised that a child is no longer with the group, staff should look carefully all around without leaving the group. The key worker's children should be re-allocated to other members of staff, to allow the staff member to search for the child. The Playgroup Leader will contact the parents/ carers immediately. The police will be informed and all the children will be returned to the Playgroup. At the end of the day the Playgroup Leader will complete an incident report and report immediately to the Management Committee.



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This policy was adapted at a meeting of our playgroup held on the 30th May 2023

## Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually by the management team to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

This policy was reviewed by the Ballygawley Early Years Management Committee on:

Date: 10/06/2023

Signed: .....  
(on behalf of the Management Committee)

Name and Position: Caroline Buchanan, Chairperson

Reviewed on:

Date: ..... Signed:..... Position:.....

Date: ..... Signed:..... Position:.....

Date: ..... Signed:..... Position:.....

This policy links with the following policies;

- Additional and Special Needs policy
- Emergency Plan policy
- Fire Drill and Fire Safety policy
- First Aid policy
- Food and Drink policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Infection Prevention and Control policy
- Management of Risks Associated with the Care of Individual Service Users policy
- Reporting and Recording of Accidents and Untoward / Adverse Incidents policy
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy
- Sun Care policy
- Transportation policy
- Whistleblowing policy