

# Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa, Urlingford N.S.

## **Sporting Activities Policy**

### **Introduction:**

This Policy was developed by the Board of Management of Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa, Urlingford NS to clarify all aspects of Sporting Activities as they relate to Child Protection in the school. The policy was necessitated by the updating of the Child Protection Policy in Autumn 2013 in line with the new Child Protection Procedures under the revised Children First Guidelines.

The policy deals with the following areas as they relate to sporting activities that the children encounter – sport at break time, sport as part of the PE curriculum, coaching from outside agencies in school time on the school grounds, coaching from outside agencies in school time outside the school grounds, teams representing the school in sporting competitions and travelling to school games and sports events.

### **Break Time:**

Break time is supervised by three teachers. The school's SNAs are also on the yard at break time in a supporting role. To improve the safety of the school children, the yard area is structured at break time.

The Infants play to the front of the school and only use balls to play when they are able to use the grass to the front of the school. They play fun sports only and are supervised by one teacher as in the normal run of events. A small number of children from Fifth Class play with the infants on a rotational basis to help the infants enjoy break. These children have no supervisory role.

First to Sixth Classes play in the back yard and in the other green areas, the main field and the small field. Two teachers supervise at all times.

When the field areas are unavailable to the children, the children play in their class groups in different areas of the yard on a six day rotational basis. This allows the children to access all different areas of the yard on an equal basis. Each day three classes play chase on half the tarmacadam area, two classes play basketball games using one hoop each and one class plays wall ball. The skipping and hopscotch area are communal and the shed area is non-running for those who wish to talk and chat. When all classes are on the yard, the classes using the basketball hoops play drill games only. The junior and senior classes do not play chasing games at the same time. The general aim of this rotational play is to ensure all children get to play different games in a safer environment.

When the field areas are open, the senior children play games on the main field while the junior classes use the small field on a rotational basis. On the main field the girls and boys have separate field areas to play. Hurling and Camogie is played from January to June by girls and boys from third to sixth classes. Football is played from September to December by girls and boys from fourth to sixth classes. (These class groupings are not prescribed, depending on numbers in each class the groups may expand or contract) These games are used as preparation for the school teams. In

# Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa, Urlingford N.S.

June, rounders is also played. Throughout the year, athletics training takes place for a section of break time when the occasion presents itself. When the main field is in use, one teacher supervises this area. The junior classes use the small field when possible. This is rotational to allow boys and girls play football and hurling/camogie. Again, depending on the size of classes using the area the composition of the class groupings changes from year to year.

Children playing Football and Hurling/Camogie may only do so if they use the proper equipment. Children wear mouthguards to play football while helmets and properly maintained hurls are necessary for hurling. Children wear boots in winter months. The field areas and goalposts are maintained under the School Safety Statement.

## **Physical Education:**

The school provides a full Physical Education Curriculum to all classes in line with DES Guidelines. At the present time, the school has not got access to its own hall and the majority of PE takes place in the yard and field areas. Teachers may provide certain activities in their classroom.

In providing the PE Curriculum, teaching staff are aware that the use of all PE equipment must comply with the school Safety Statement.

## **In School Coaching:**

The school uses external coaches for a number of activities related to PE. At the present time, these activities are:

GAA (Hurling and Football) with Brian Ryan (County Coaching and Games Development Officer)

Tag Rugby with Barry Daly (Leinster Rugby Coach – Kilkenny RFC)

Basketball with Joe Byrne (IBA Registered Coach)

GAA Coaching and Rugby Coaching are free to the children, while Basketball costs the children €1 per week per child.

The possibility of adding Association Football (Soccer) to this list is being explored.

Where external coaches come to the school to provide specialised coaching there are a number of important procedures that are to be followed:

The coach in question must be Garda Vetted and cleared to work with children, preferably by his/her Parent Association (GAA/IRFU/IBA/FAI etc.)

If the Coach is providing this service in a private capacity, he/she must have adequate relevant insurance in place.

Where the coach takes a class to the field or yard for a coaching session, the class teacher accompanies the coach to the venue. While the teacher may have to absent him/herself temporarily (e.g. attend to an injured child), the teacher is expected to be present and available for the coaching session.

Where specialist equipment is being used by a coach, the PE equipment and its use must comply with the School Safety Statement.

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# Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa, Urlingford N.S.

Children must use proper equipment where it is required for these coaching sessions.

## **Out of School Coaching:**

The school sometimes travels away from the school for coaching. The main coaching that takes place outside school is Swimming Lessons. There are occasions when the GAA Coaching Session takes place in a local GAA Ground (sometimes with other schools present).

Travel to such coaching lessons is generally by bus. The children are accompanied on the bus by their class teachers and SNAs travel when they are required. At all time, classes travelling by bus are expected to behave in accordance with the rules of the road governing bus travel. Children must remain seated for the journey and wear their seatbelts at all times. Boarding and alighting from buses takes place in an orderly fashion as instructed by the teacher present.

In the event of a GAA Coaching session in the Emeralds GAA field, the classes generally walk to the field (weather permitting). Class Teachers accompany the children to and from the pitch in such cases. Children walk in pairs, in an orderly fashion, crossing the main road at the Pedestrian Crossing and under the guidance of the accompanying teacher.

For swimming lessons, the sessions are conducted by the Watershed Staff and are supervised by the class teachers. Regulations surrounding swimming are circulated to parents before a class begins their swimming sessions. Children are expected to behave properly at all times while in the Watershed Swimming Complex.

## **Competitive Sports:**

The school takes part in a number of Competitive Sporting Events. These include

Primary Schools Hurling (Under 13)

Primary Schools Camogie (Open to all girls in Primary School)

Primary Schools Football (Under 13)

Primary Schools Girls Football (Open to all girls in Primary School)

Primary Schools Country Swimming Gala (Varying age groups)

Primary Schools Athletics (Fourth – Sixth Classes)

Tag Rugby Blitzes (When invited – not an annual event)

Basketball Blitzes (When invited – not an annual event)

The Hurling and Camogie teams are open to all interested children from Third to Sixth Class. The Boys and Girls Football teams are open to all interested children from Fourth to Sixth Class (this may be extended to Third Class if numbers require it).

Panels are unrestricted for these competitions. Swimming Gala entrants must be able to swim at least one length of the Swimming Pool. Up to three girls and three boys can be entered for each age group from Under 8 to Under 13. Swim trials are held at the end of each set of swimming lessons. Athletic Teams are chosen from Fourth to Sixth Class, boys and girls – teams of six are chosen from interested children. Team

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# Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa, Urlingford N.S.

entry in any other event depends on the invitation received. Maximum participation is generally encouraged for blitz events.

Children representing the school in any competition are expected to behave themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. This includes having respect for any facilities they may use, respect for opponents, respect for their team mates and respect for any officiating referees. The schools' GAA competitions are all run under the Respect Initiative.

## **Travelling to GAA Matches**

Travelling to matches depends on whether the event is played in Urlingford (Emeralds GAA Pitch) or at an away venue that requires transport. The vast majority of GAA Games are played after the end of the school day (2.40pm). The procedures for both of these are as follows:

**Home Games:** Matches arranged for home are played in the Emeralds GAA Club Grounds. Children normally go home and are asked to arrive to the field for a set time. Children who travel on the school buses may stay in the school building and complete homework while waiting to go to the game. They are supervised by a teacher who checks on them regularly. They then walk as a group to the field for the appointed time. When a teacher is available, they are accompanied on this walk to the field. If a teacher is not available, the senior pupils lead the way to the field. The teacher attending the game checks their progress on the way to the field and comes back to meet the group on arrival in the field. The children are not permitted to go into any shop along the route and cross the main road at the pedestrian crossing only. The children remain in a group at all times.

This arrangement has been in place for a number of years and the children who stay in school have become accustomed to it and follow the arrangement very well.

**Away Games:** Where a school team is travelling to another venue for a game, the team members travel by bus. (This is a new policy starting in September 2014). Children receive a notice for the game which will detail the time of leaving for the game, the expected time of return to Urlingford after the game and arrangements for them to be picked up on return to Urlingford. The children will be accompanied on the bus at all times by a teacher. Children are expected to behave appropriately on the bus journeys as outlined in the Out of School Coaching Section.

## **Travelling to other events:**

Travelling to the Annual Swimming Gala or Athletics Meet usually takes place during school time. The same applies to Blitz fixtures. Where possible children will travel to these events by bus and the same regulations apply to these events as to travelling to Away GAA Games. However, some events may entail parents arranging for their children to be brought to and from an event. (e.g. The Swim Gala requires children to

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# Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa, Urlingford N.S.

be present very early and has different start times for different events). In such cases, when a child is selected to represent the school, it will be the sole responsibility of the parents to arrange transport to and from the event for their child. A teacher will be present at the event to care for and supervise the child.

As these events are during school time, children return to school for 2.40 pm to go home from school as normal so the arranging of special pick up is not necessary.

***This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on June 5<sup>th</sup> 2014***