



School Development Planning Support (Primary)

Arrival and Dismissal of Pupils

January 2008

Arrival and Dismissal of Pupils

Notice: This resource is intended to assist schools in devising their own procedures for arrival and dismissal of pupils. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, schools are advised to consult up to date circulars, recent legislation or guidelines from relevant agencies if they have specific queries regarding this topic.

Background:

Department of Education and Science position:

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1998, and the regulations of the Department of Education and Science, the Board of Management is the body charged with the direct governance of a school.

The overall responsibility for the day to day management of school supervision rests with the Principal teacher. The terms of Circular 16/73, which issued to all primary schools, provide that the Principal Teacher of primary schools should organise supervision for the order and general behaviour of the pupils during school hours. In particular, s/he should organise and participate in the effective supervision of the pupils during breaks, lunch breaks, assembly and dismissal.

Circular 18/03: “Rules 121(4) and 124(1) of the Rules for National Schools and Section 23(2) of the Education Act 1998 oblige teachers to take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of pupils and to participate in supervising pupils when the pupils are on school premises, during school time and/or on school activities. Accordingly, the responsibility of all teachers individually and collectively to provide a duty of care at all times towards the children in the school in which they teach, including periods of supervision, is not changed.”

Schools should also refer to Circulars 11/51, 11/68, 24/71 and 11/95

The duty of care to pupils applies not only in school but also, for example, on school tours and on other occasions when the children are in the care of a teacher. On the issue of supervision before and after school, advice was given some years ago by Eoghan Fitzsimons, SC. The essence of that advice was that it was unreasonable to restrict supervision of children to the classroom hours; that children required a reasonable amount of time before school and after school to come and go into the school building, and that the school could reasonably be expected to supervise children for that reasonable period before and after school. A period of 30 minutes at either end was discussed. He also felt that it was prudent to advise parents as to when children would be supervised and when they would not be supervised, and that, outside of supervision times, children would be on the school premises at their own risk. The practice of parents leaving children at a school at, say, 8.00 am, might be seen as being unreasonable.

Rules for National Schools - School Day

<i>Latest time for opening</i>	9.30	Rule 55
<i>Latest time for commencement of formal instruction</i>	9.50	Rule 55
<i>Staff attendance</i>	<i>20 minutes before formal instruction or 9.30 a.m. whichever is earlier</i>	Rule 124
<i>Length of school day/secular instruction</i>	<i>4 hours 10 minutes – may be reduced by one hour for infants to first class</i>	
<i>Religious instruction</i>	<i>30 minutes</i>	
<i>Lunch break</i>	<i>30 minutes</i>	Rule 56
<i>Roll call</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>	Rule 55
<i>Short break</i>	<i>2x5 mins. deducted from secular instruction</i>	Rule 56
Total	<i>5 hours 40 minutes</i>	

Duty of care:

All schools must take reasonable care for the safety of pupils when the pupils are under their charge. This applies not only to periods during break or playtime but also to the periods between the pupils' arrival at school and the start of the school day and from dismissal in the afternoon until, for example, the school bus leaves where the pupils remain on school property. (*Primary Education Management Manual – Round Hall - 3:2.7*)

See also Leadership+, May 2007 and Solas, Summer 2007

Greene v Mundow (Circuit Court - January 20th 2000)

The duty to supervise primary school pupils began once they arrived on the school premises and was not confined to the “official day” but spilled over for a short period before and a short period afterwards

School Transport

In general, where the operation of a school transport service according to time-table involves children being brought to school in the morning before normal time of commencement of school business, or children waiting at school in the afternoon after conclusion of school business, the Manager may be held liable in the event of accident to pupils during the period of intervening.

A Manager may also be held liable if an accident occurs as a result of his undertaking supervision of children while they are walking from the vehicle to the school or vice versa.

A Guide to Insurance Safety and Security in the School Church and General, 2001, (page 39) - a sample circular to send to parents

“The school will open to receive pupils at the hour of X a.m. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time. Classes will commence each day at X a.m. No pupils should arrive later than X a.m.

Classes will end each day at X . Parents who wish to have their children escorted home should make their own arrangements to have them met at the school gate and the person to escort them should be at the school gate not later than X p.m., as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after that time”

NOTE: When issuing such a circular you should insert the actual times which are in operation for your school.

Questions the school may need to address:

Start of School Day:

- What is the official starting time?
- Are the school grounds accessible to pupils before this time?
- What pupils are on the premises before official starting time?
- Why are pupils there e.g. transport issues / other reasons
- What arrangements are in place for supervision before the official starting time?
- What happens in inclement weather?
- Are pupils escorted to their classrooms at the beginning of the school day? By whom?
- Have parents been notified by the Board of Management of the times at which the school will accept responsibility?

End of School Day:

- What time does school end for infants/other pupils?
- What arrangements are in place for orderly dismissal of all classes from their classrooms? Are they accompanied off the premises? By whom?
- Are pupils escorted to buses? Are they supervised as they get on the bus? What issues emerge in relation to this practice?
- What issues need to be considered re infants who are not collected at the end of the infant day?
- What arrangements are in place to deal with infant pupils whose parents have requested that they remain until the end of school day for older siblings or to avail of school transport home?
- What issues need to be clarified re older pupils who are not collected at the end of the school day?
- What arrangements are in place for the supervision of pupils who must wait on the school premises for a bus service that is scheduled some time after the school officially closes?
- What arrangements are in place to provide supervision when buses are delayed?
- Where do parents / guardians collect pupils?

Other issues:

- Could the Board of Management/Parent Association investigate a personal accident insurance cover (24 hours/other) for all pupils?
- If pupils are required to be on the school premises before official starting time e.g. for school tours / choral work etc., what notifications and arrangements are in place?
- If pupils are required to be on the school premises after official closing time e.g. for school tours/ choral work, sports events, training etc., what notifications and arrangements are in place?
- Other...