



*St Mary's Primary School*

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# **St. Mary's Primary School, Athlone**

## **Extra-Curricular Activities Policy**

**St. Mary's Primary School, Athlone**

**Extra-Curricular Activities Policy January 2025**

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## **Extra-Curricular Activities Policy January 2025**

**Policy Statement** St. Mary's Primary School, Athlone is committed to providing a friendly, inclusive, caring, and secure environment that supports the holistic development of all pupils. As part of this commitment, the school offers a range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the educational experience of its students. Activities may include sports, arts, music, cultural, and social opportunities that enhance personal growth, teamwork, and well-being.

### **Policy Goals**

- Ensure consistent planning and implementation of extra-curricular activities (ECA).
- Foster a balanced and holistic education by complementing the curriculum.
- Promote participation, inclusivity, and respect for diversity in all activities.
- Clearly communicate the significance and role of ECA to the school community.
- Provide students with opportunities to benefit from a well-rounded education that includes extra-curricular experiences.
- Motivate parents to engage with and support their children's development by participating in the school's ECA offerings.
- Offer teachers and staff clear guidelines and support for their voluntary contributions to ECA, ensuring their efforts benefit students and the broader school community.

### **Structure and Schedule**

#### **1. Timing of Activities**

- Activities may take place during lunch breaks or after school, typically from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
- A termly schedule of activities, including days, times, and locations, will be communicated to parents and guardians.

#### **2. Supervision and Safety**

- All activities will be supervised by school staff or qualified external providers.
- Adequate supervision ratios will be maintained to ensure student safety.
- Activity providers must be Garda-vetted and adhere to child safeguarding protocols.
- First Aid kits will be available, and supervisors will be familiar with emergency procedures.

### **Participation and Inclusivity**

At St. Mary's Primary School, Athlone, we are committed to the principles of inclusion, equality, and respect for diversity. All pupils have a right to participate in and benefit from the primary school curriculum, while participation in extracurricular activities remains entirely voluntary. The school values and celebrates the diversity of traditions, beliefs, languages, and ways of life within our community.

When planning the extracurricular programme, teachers will carefully consider which class, age group, or pupil cohort it is most suitable to involve in a given activity. Eligible pupils will be invited to take part, and parental consent will generally be sought before pupils join an extracurricular activity.

Once a group has been formed for an extracurricular activity, participation will depend on the specific nature and purpose of the activity. At St. Mary's, in line with our ethos and commitment to inclusion, extracurricular sports training and activities will typically be open to all eligible members of the group. However, it is important to note that many extracurricular sports and games may have a competitive aspect. Pupils will experience both success and challenges as part of these activities.

St. Mary's Primary School has a proud tradition of involvement in extracurricular activities, including participation in competitive sports leagues. Pupils may be invited to trial for teams representing the school in such competitions. While every effort is made to provide opportunities for all, competitive selection may mean not every pupil in an extracurricular group will participate in every aspect of the activity. Parents and pupils should consider this before committing to such activities.

Pupil safety and wellbeing remain paramount. Decisions regarding team selection and participation in competitions will also take into account the safety and preparedness of pupils. St. Mary's strives to ensure that extracurricular activities are enjoyable, inclusive, and enriching for all participants.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

1. **Board of Management**
  - Approve and review the policy.
  - Support and affirm teachers involved in ECA.
2. **Principal and Staff**
  - Organise and oversee activities.
  - Monitor safety, participation, and the alignment of activities with school values.
3. **Activity Providers**
  - Ensure qualifications, safety measures, and adherence to school policies.
  - Provide parents with schedules and updates regarding activities.
4. **Parents/Guardians**
  - Provide updated contact and medical information for their child.
  - Collect children promptly after activities.
  - Encourage and support their child's participation.
5. **Pupils**
  - Follow instructions from supervisors and behave respectfully.
  - Act safely and responsibly during activities.
6. Here's a revised version tailored to St. Mary's Primary School, Athlone:

### **Proposing and Coordinating Extracurricular Activities (ECAs)**

At the beginning of each term, St. Mary's Primary School, Athlone, will share a list of extracurricular activities with parents. This list will include details such as days, times, and any other organisational information for the term's activities.

Some extracurricular activities may take place concurrently, either on the same days or different days. In such cases, pupils may need to choose between activities. Places for these activities may be allocated using methods such as a first-come, first-served basis, the drawing

of lots, or a combination of these approaches. The allocation process will generally be communicated to pupils and parents before places are assigned.

### **Parental Involvement and Consent**

Permission slips will usually be sent to eligible pupils, requiring parents to give their consent for their child's participation in extracurricular activities. Without this consent, pupils will not be allowed to participate. In some cases, the school may ask parents to confirm in writing that they have read and accepted the terms and conditions of the extracurricular activity policy as a condition of their child's participation.

Occasionally, parents may offer to organise or assist with an extracurricular activity. With the principal's approval and agreement on organisational arrangements, such activities may proceed as usual. Parents who coordinate extracurricular activities will have their names shared with the parents of participating pupils for transparency. Additionally, parents may volunteer to assist teachers or staff in the regular running of extracurricular activities. All parents involved in any capacity are required to adhere to the school's Child Protection Policy.

Parents are kindly reminded that they are not permitted to come onto school grounds solely to observe extracurricular activities, in order to maintain a safe and structured environment for all pupils.

### **Transport and Off-Site Activities**

- For off-site activities, transport arrangements will be communicated in advance.
- Parents may be required to contribute to transport costs or assist with transportation.

### **Health and Safety**

- Parents must inform the school of any medical conditions that may affect their child's participation.
- Activities will comply with the school's health and safety standards, and supervisors will address any incidents promptly.

St. Mary's Primary School, Athlone, is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils and staff involved in extracurricular activities. The school strives to provide or ensure:

- **Availability of First Aid:** Basic First Aid kits will be accessible during appropriate ECAs to address minor injuries.
- **First Aid Training:** Teachers involved in ECAs will be encouraged to undergo First Aid training.
- **Health and Safety Information:** Where applicable, pupils may receive a health and safety leaflet or briefing related to their ECA.
- **Venue Safety:** A thorough assessment of ECA venues will be conducted, considering factors such as equipment safety, the qualifications of external supervisors, proximity to hospitals or doctors, and emergency evacuation procedures for indoor activities.
- **Accommodation Standards:** If students are staying in accommodation as part of an ECA, the premises will be inspected for hygiene and safety compliance.

- **Monitoring High-Risk Pupils:** Students with known health risks, such as asthma or epilepsy, will receive close supervision.
- **Emergency Procedures:** Clear guidelines will be provided to teachers on how to handle medical emergencies during ECAs.
- **Reliable Communication:** Teachers involved in ECAs will have access to reliable telephone support in case of emergencies.
- **Supervision Ratios:** Adequate adult supervision will be maintained, with a minimum of one teacher per 20 pupils.

### **Pupil Behaviour**

The school's **Code of Behaviour** and related policies apply fully to all extracurricular activities. Staff reserve the right to exclude pupils from participating in ECAs if their behaviour poses a risk to themselves or others. Serious misbehaviour that endangers health and safety will result in the pupil being prohibited from participating in ECAs.

### **Child Protection**

The **St. Mary's Primary School Child Protection Policy** and its outlined procedures apply to all extracurricular activities. Staff, volunteers, and external supervisors are required to adhere strictly to these guidelines to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.

### **Costs**

- The extra-curricular activities will be free to the children of St. Mary's Primary School and the supplies/equipment needed will be funded by the Board of Management.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- This policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed to reflect changes in circumstances or regulations.

### **Ratification and Communication**

- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on [insert date] and will be shared with the school community via the website and newsletters.

### **Signatures:**

Chairperson, Board of Management: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_