



Knocknacarra Educate Together
National School

Afterschool Activities Policy

This policy has been formulated by Knocknacarra ETNS to provide guidance for school management and afterschool, extracurricular leaders and organisers.

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Introduction:

This school policy on after-school clubs and activities was drafted in consultation with staff and after-school leaders and approved by the Board of Management of Knocknacarra ETNS.

Background:

Knocknacarra Educate Together NS supports a variety of afterschool activities for its pupils. Firstly, the Afterschool @ KETNS (which operates from 13.30-18.00 daily) is open from Monday to Friday and occasionally during holiday periods. In addition, a number of clubs and activities, taking place for one hour after the end of the ordinary school day, are offered and organised by outside teachers and staff members.

Rationale:

This policy on afterschool activities is required for the following reasons:

- To inform potential leaders of their rights and responsibilities.
- To inform parents about the role of the school as well as activity organisers.
- To ensure that principles of child protection, safety and inclusiveness guide all afterschool programmes.
- To demarcate the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Management and school leaders.

Relationship to School Ethos:

Knocknacarra ETNS strives to provide a child friendly, secure environment catering for all the needs of all students as far as is practicable. In support of our child-centred and holistic orientation, the school offers its facilities as a venue for enrichment activities that contribute to a well-rounded educational experience for the children of the school. Likewise, the practice of having after-school activities in the school facilitates links with the community.

Aims and Objectives:

- To establish the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Management, school leadership and afterschool activity leaders/organisers.
- To ensure procedures are in place regarding child protection for all extra-curricular activities in the school.
- To provide information for current and future activity organisers/leaders.

Policies and Procedures:

Participation in Afterschool Activities:

All afterschool activities are only offered to children who are currently enrolled in the school. Any other children may not participate in these activities without the written approval of principal who will consult with the Board of Management.

In keeping with the co-educational nature of the school, all activities must be open to both boys and girls on an equal basis. Activity leaders may choose to restrict the age of potential participants if they determine that a minimum age or class level is required in order for meaningful participation.

Procedure for Establishing an Afterschool Activity:

Anyone interested in offering an after-school activity may contact the principal. The leader will need to identify the proposed size of the club, the target age-group, the general aims and activities and the duration and frequency of the events/meetings/lessons.

If approved by the principal who acts on behalf of the Board of Management, a proposed time and space within the school for the activity will be negotiated. Existing activities will retain their timetable slot unless they request a change as long as the club/activity remains active.

If an agreed schedule is reached, the school will advertise the activity through the weekly newsletter, the school website and/or the posting of notices on the parents' notice board.

Prior to the commencement of the first meeting, Garda Vetting as well as reference checks will be completed. This is required for staff members, parents and community members who wish to lead an after-school activity. (See further information below.)

Use of School Facilities:

Currently, Afterschool @ KETNS uses the Aistear room as its base. If another classroom or the yard is not being used by another class or activity, these spaces may be used as well. The room has been fitted out to fulfil all requirements to operate an afterschool childcare programme, including all requirements related to food preparation.

Afterschool @ KETNS gathers in the corridor at dismissal time. Sports-based activities will take place either in the spare room or in the yard. The specific permission to use any school-owned sports equipment must be secured in advance, and it must be stored properly and securely after use.

Other afterschool activities (currently music, visual arts, capoeira and basketball) will use designated classrooms. On occasion, other spaces in the school may be allocated but only should be used with the permission of the Principal (or designate). Any space used must be returned to the condition it was found in, with the furniture returned to its previous position and the area cleaned and tidied. In keeping with our Green School principles, we request club leaders to follow the recycling policies established in the school.

Afterschool clubs for infants will finish at 14.30 and for children in other classes at 15.30.

It is the responsibility of Afterschool @ KETNS to clean the toilets as well as the Aistear room at the end of each day. The leaders must also ensure that the school is properly locked and secured before leaving. This means that all lights must be switched off, all outside doors locked, all windows closed and bolted and the alarm properly set.

Child Protection:

While all leaders must have Garda Vetting, the extensive process associated with recruiting members of staff is not completed for after-school leaders. As they are not employed by the Board of Management, parents must acquaint themselves with the afterschool activity leader and the class content as one would with other activities outside of school.

All leaders are provided with a copy of the following school policies: Child Protection and Garda Vetting and Health and Safety (including fire and evacuation procedures). All leaders must adhere to these policies. All leaders are informed that the Principal and Deputy Principal act as Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person regarding any child protection matters. All leaders must familiarise themselves with the Children First Guidelines. The Principal will make reference checks as well to provide a more robust vetting process.

Leaders are expected to supervise children until they are collected by a parent or other designated adult. Leaders must not leave the school premises until they are assured that all children are collected. Therefore, it is necessary that all leaders have contact information for the participants and their parents. In the event that a leader cannot attend a session, they should contact the school as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements may be arranged.

The Board of Management reserves the right to suspend and cancel any after-school activities following the same protocol attached to any child-protection allegations made against staff members.

Managing Challenging Behaviour:

On rare occasions, there may be difficult or challenging behaviours that arise. Afterschool Activities leaders are requested to address these matters directly with parents. The Code of Behaviour would be a good guide for leaders in supporting their work with children and will be distributed to all leaders as a point of reference.

Insurance and Liability:

If the requirements as laid out in this policy are fulfilled, particularly that only students enrolled in the school participate, the school insurance will cover afterschool activities. Some leaders/groups may wish to take out their own personal liability insurance but this is not a requirement. (This does not apply to any groups renting classrooms for activities that involve people other than children enrolled in the school. In such cases liability insurance would be required.)

Participation Fees:

Leaders may set a participation fee. Leaders are expected to collect the fees and issue receipts independently.

Employment Status of Leaders:

All after-school group leaders are self-employed or employed by the sponsoring organization or structure of their own activities. They are not employees of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS nor are they deemed contract workers.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities:

Board of Management

- To facilitate opportunities for enrichment activities for pupils of the school by allowing leaders to use the school facilities as specified in this policy.
- To ensure that school insurance is current and adequate to cover these activities.
- To review and ratify policies that may have relevance for afterschool activity leaders.

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Principal

- To ensure that afterschool activity leaders have current Garda Vetting.
- To approve the establishment of an afterschool activity after receiving a description of its aims.
- To ensure all leaders receive the required policies as stated.
- To act as the Designated Liaison Person regarding any child-protection concerns.
- To negotiate the use of facilities and resources.
- To maintain the timetable of after-school activities.
- To advertise the activities/clubs as requested by leaders.
- To keep a record of contact details for all leaders.

Activity Leaders

- To ensure that they follow inclusive practices.
- To undergo Garda Vetting and reference checks prior to beginning work with children.
- To follow best practice regarding work with children as laid out in the schools Child Protection and Garda Vetting policy.
- To arrive to sessions on time.
- To ensure that if they are unable to attend that they inform the school as soon as possible.
- To take responsible care of the school facilities and resources in their care including replacement if damage is caused by negligence.
- To report any concerns regarding child-protection matters to the Principal (who acts as Designated Liaison Person).
- To follow good practice when working with children.
- To communicate with parents, as required.
- To abide by the specific procedures in this policy statement.

Parents

- To ensure they are familiar with the qualifications and background of the leaders of afterschool activities.
- To arrange for collection of children in a timely manner at the end of sessions.
- To ensure that fees are paid, as required.
- To communicate directly with the leader if difficulties arise.

Children

- To show respect and kindness to afterschool activities leaders and their fellow participants.
- To share any concerns with a member of staff or parent, as required.

Implementation and Review:

The policy has immediate effect and will be reviewed no later than 2019.

Ratification and Communication:

The policy was ratified by the BoM on the date below. It will be posted on the school website in due course.

Louise Shields, chairperson

Date of ratification