

# VICTORIAN SCHOOL LESSON OUTLINE

## for KS1 students (Led by your own staff)

**Location:** Ballyveridagh National School or Ballydown National School in the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum.

**Please ensure you contact the Learning Centre in advance to book your visit and venue.**

**Equipment in school house may include:** Slates and chalk for younger students; smocks for girls; a range of games for the playground area such as stilts, skipping ropes and hoops. (There may also be access to a cane and a school bell).

Teachers and children may wish to dress in costume before arrival. See 'Ideas for Victorian costume' in the resources section of the website.

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If your group arrives early for school, you could start the session by having the children play in their own playgrounds, boys in one area and girls in another. Children could play traditional games if possible should as 'Tig', ball games, hop scotch, nursery rhyme singing games, clapping games or use the equipment available in the playground.

When the teacher (own staff member) comes out and rings the bell, the children must line up – boys and girls separately. As they enter the school house, they must present the teacher with a piece of turf and they will be seated near to the fire or further away, according to the size of the piece they bring. Boys and girls are seated separately in the classroom.

### **Discipline**

Inform the pupils that any talking, bad manners or misbehaviour was not tolerated. Offenders would have been caned, strapped or made to stand in the corner or in the turf shed (you may explain this but modify for today's children). Pupils must quietly raise hands if they wish to answer a question. Other suggested rules are available at the bottom of this document.

**Roll call -** Teacher begins by marking the roll (bring your own class list for this)

**Arithmetic -** Two times tables, or suitable alternative, to be recited by children while seated at desk

**Writing -** (1) On slates for junior pupils (name, date and teacher's name)  
(2) On Vere Foster copy sheets for older children.

**Geography -** Pupils must stand up straight with toes against tacked line or stand in a semi-circle to read from wall chart as teacher points to it.

**Poetry -** Children could read 'There was a little girl' or 'Land of Counterpane' from sheet or blackboard (see below).

**Drill -** (or physical exercise - thought to help children follow instructions, improve co-ordination and health and prepare them for work).

Drill can take place in the playground, or if wet, in the classroom. Children must begin with correct posture – hips firm and feet together.

1. Bring hands to touch shoulders – then hands stretch to the ceiling – repeat counting to eight
2. Turn head to the left, then roll head backwards. Turn head to the right and roll head forwards all with slow, careful movements (making a full circle) - repeat
3. Heels raise , then lowered - repeat
4. Knees bent, then straightened arms outstretched in front of body – repeat
5. Hands on waist, twist to the right, then to the front and then to the left - repeat
6. Stand at ease

**Spellings -** Pupils to be tested aurally with words such as: Good, School, Boy, Girl etc

Class Dismissed.

There may follow a relaxed discussion about the experience.

#### **Additional rules**

Pupils must stand up to answer questions and wait for permission to speak

Pupils must call teachers "Sir" or "Ma'am"

Pupils must stand when an adult enters the room

Talking and fidgeting will be punished

#### **Discussion points**

- Discipline, punishment, strict teachers
- Wall displays (or lack of)
- Blackboards
- Seating
- Heating
- Children's location in relation to the fire
- School equipment
- Windows and lack of view
- Lessons
- Comparing life today and then
- Types of clothing and shoes (or no shoes) children wore
- Comfort of school
- Lunchtimes, food
- Journey to school
- Playground games

### **Poetry for use during lesson**

#### **There was a little girl**

There was a little girl  
And she had a little curl

Right in the middle of her forehead  
When she was good  
She was very, very good  
But when she was bad, she was horrid.

One day she went upstairs,  
When her parents, unawares,  
In the kitchen were occupied with meals,  
And she stood upon her head  
In her little trundle-bed,  
And then began hooraying with her heels.

Her mother heard the noise,  
And she thought it was the boys  
A-playing at a combat in the attic;  
But when she climbed the stair,  
And found Jemima there,  
She took and she did spank her most emphatic.

**By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow**

### **Land of Counterpane**

When I was sick and lay a-bed  
I had two pillows at my head  
And all my toys beside me lay  
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so  
I watched my leaden soldiers go,  
With different uniforms and drills,  
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets  
All up and down among the sheets;  
Or brought my trees and houses out,  
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still  
That sits upon the pillow-hill,  
And sees before him, dale and plain,  
The pleasant land of counterpane.

**By Robert Louis Stephenson**