

Some general information about our school

The school dates back to 1951 and was extended in 2010. Our building now comprises of 3 large, bright classrooms with en-suite toilets, a well-stocked reading / sensory room, an arts / library room, a staff room and secretary's office. The large foyer inside the main entrance has a comfortable seating area which accommodates parents and guardians as they await their children. We have a large tarmac yard area, football pitch, pond and garden. We are very lucky to have geo-thermal underfloor heating which keeps us nice and warm in cold weather!

Our school day

Classes commence at 9:15am for everyone. We offer supervision from 9:05am. While staff members are present before this time, we use this time to meet, plan and prepare for the day ahead. You will know we are ready to receive children when a member of staff comes out to open the gate. We respectfully ask you not to send your child(ren) in until someone is there to greet them.

Our first break of the day is from 10:50-11am and our second break is from 12:45-1:05pm. Children go to the yard at these times (weather permitting) and eat in their classroom before or after yard time. We are part of the hot meals for schools scheme so every pupil is offered a hot lunch after their second yard break. The food is supplied by Carambola.

We have 2 mainstream classrooms. The Junior room comprises of Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd classes while 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th classes make up the Senior room. Multigrade teaching is common in rural communities all over the world and has many advantages – it promotes independence among pupils and offers incidental opportunities for revision as well giving pupils the chance to hear what learning lies ahead for them. It also allows pupils to collaborate and learn from each other. At present, Eimear O'Donovan (Principal) teaches the younger pupils and the older children are taught by Colm O'Mahony (Deputy Principal). Eimear has one Principal Release day each week in order to attend to some administrative matters.

Junior and Senior Infants finish their day at 1:55pm. Prompt collection is appreciated at this time as the class teacher needs to return to 1st and 2nd class as quickly as possible. 1st – 6th finish at 2:55pm. We follow the same routine at the end of every day – we always wait until the school bus has pulled away safely before allowing the remaining children to leave. We ask you to make your way to the gate once the bus has left to avoid children crossing in front of or walking behind moving vehicles.

School work in the Infant classes

Infant teaching involves a considerable amount of pre-reading, pre-number and oral language work. Before we teach our pupils to read or write, we do a lot of preparatory work. In order to prepare pupils to learn about mathematical concepts and in line with the new Primary Maths Curriculum, we promote activities involving concrete objects, opportunities for playful experiences, exposure to mathematical language and a link with real-life mathematical situations as often as possible. We endeavour to promote a love of reading by reading to our pupils regularly and encourage you to do the same at home. In addition, we provide opportunities for children to learn through play and meaningful experiences as they would have been accustomed to in pre-school. This is a vitally important part of their development in these crucial early years of primary school and we ensure children are given opportunities to engage in play every day – this is where they learn to develop essential social skills in a safe environment. A lot of work at this level is based around different themes – things like role play, imaginative play and construction are encouraged and promoted!

Homework in Infant classes

In order to foster good habits for the years ahead, homework is introduced during the first term of Junior Infants. Homework is a consolidation of work covered in class – it gives you an invaluable opportunity to see your child's progress and to glance through their schoolbooks and copies, reading any comments from the teacher along the way.

It should take between 10 and 15 minutes at this stage – we would urge you to chat to the teacher if you ever have any concerns about your child's progress.

Homework from 1st to 6th classes

Continuing on from the Infant classes, it is the policy of the school to give homework each day from Monday to Thursday to children from 1st to 6th classes. There is no homework at weekends unless it has been neglected during the week. The type of homework assigned by the class teacher will vary according to different topics being covered at different stages – it is often written and contains learning but from time to time might take the form of project or presentation work, online work, physical activity or a simple instruction to get out and enjoy the fine weather!

Special Education Teacher (SET):

We know that many pupils benefit from extra help from time to time. One of the key roles of our SET is to work with children with additional needs. Niamh also gives support to other pupils as required by assisting in the classroom or withdrawing small groups for closer attention.

Child Protection:

We are fully compliant with the Department of Education Child Protection Guidelines. The Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P.) is Eimear O'Donovan and the deputy D.L.P. is Colm O'Mahony. If you have any concerns about a child in our school, please arrange to speak to the D.L.P. immediately.

Handy hints and tips to prepare your child for school:

- **School bag:** It's a good idea to buy a bag big enough to carry all the books, copies, pencil case, lunch and drinks your child will need every day. Remember some of the workbooks are quite big so please keep this in mind! School books will be supplied free of charge to all pupils and we will advise what stationary will be needed before the new school year begins. Please keep an eye on your child's pencil case and ensure it is well stocked – it gets depleted rather quickly!
- **Belongings:** Please label absolutely all of your child's belongings (jumpers, coats, shirts, stationary, lunchboxes etc.) – it saves us a lot of time!
- **Communication:** We use email as our primary method of communication to save on printing and photocopying costs, although it is necessary to send the odd letter in hard-copy format. Please add our email addresses (which you can find on our website) to your contact list so our messages don't go to your spam / trash folder. We also use what's app on our school mobile as we don't have mobile reception at school. We use an online platform called 'Seesaw' which has a number of key benefits – it is another way for us to stay in touch with you but it also acts as an e-portfolio where pupils can save pictures of work they are proud of. They can look back on their work as they move through the classes and see their own progress for themselves! Parents receive a unique code for their child's profile only and can keep up to date with work being covered. Teachers may occasionally assign homework through Seesaw or share an interesting video or activity with pupils in this way.
- **Contact details:** The school may need to contact you by text from time to time. Please make sure we have your most up to date details, including a non-parent emergency contact. If you move house or change phone number, please let us know straight away. Please note we use a web-based programme called 'Text-a-Parent' to text you and cannot receive replies. If you need to get in touch, it is best to phone or email us.
- **Fostering a sense of responsibility:** Please encourage your child to check his or her own bag every morning to ensure they have the books, stationary, lunch etc. they need for the day ahead. Before starting Junior Infants, it would be a good idea to work on helping your child to put on and take off their jacket and zipping it up as well as opening yoghurts, drinks or anything else they will have for lunch on a regular basis.
- **Lunch:** We have a very strict healthy eating policy in this school. Treats are not allowed except on special occasions which will be communicated to you. We would ask that everyone adheres to this policy. Carambola supplies hot lunches to pupils and you can use their app to make menu choices and get in touch with them as needed. We send home packaging and leftovers so you can see how much your child has eaten, what's popular, what should be avoided etc. Leftovers should never be reheated or consumed after school.
- **Meeting the teachers:** We firmly believe in early intervention in every sense – in terms of academic progress, social development and behaviour. We are always happy to meet with you to discuss any issues that may be of concern to you and likewise, we will share any concerns we have with you sooner rather than later. Given that we are all busy in our classrooms, I am sure you can appreciate that we cannot accommodate spontaneous

meetings unless it is an emergency. We would ask that you make an appointment by phoning the secretary, sending an email or writing a note in your child's homework journal. Please give the teacher a general idea what the concern is so they can adequately prepare for meeting with you – for example we may need to monitor a specific situation before we can adequately comment on it.

- **Policies:** We have a range of policies relating to the running of our school available for viewing on our website. These are updated regularly and are ratified by the Board of Management. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with these documents. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to get in touch.

School uniform

Boys and girls from 1st – 6th classes wear a navy jumper, grey pants or pinafore and a sky blue shirt or polo shirt on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. These can be purchased in any large department store. On Thursdays and Fridays pupils wear plain navy tracksuit bottoms, a pale blue polo shirt and a plain navy jumper or hoodie, again all available in department stores. Junior and Senior Infants wear the tracksuit option every day. We deliberately have an un-crested, generic uniform to keep the cost manageable for families so ask that clothing that is branded with logos not be worn. We know many children would happily wear their own choice if they were allowed so when everyone follows the same guidelines it makes for a sense of fairness across the board.

Collection of pupils from school

In the interest of Child Protection please inform the school, in advance, (with a note or by phone or email at short notice) if your child is being collected by someone other than those specified on the enrolment form.