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INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR PARENTS OF JUNIOR INFANT CHILDREN

Information Booklet
for Parents of
Junior Infant Pupils

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Information for Parents of Infants Starting School

Parents and teachers are partners in the children's education, with co-operation and communication between home and school being vital ingredients in the educational process. We each share the same aim – the well being of the children in our care. This information booklet for parents of Junior Infant pupils has been prepared with the express purpose of sharing information with you concerning our school rules and routines.

We know from experience that parents are anxious to help in any way possible and so we have put together some ideas as a general guide for you. This booklet deals briefly with the period before your child comes to school and the introductory stage in Junior Infants.

Getting Ready for Learning

Children are natural learners. They have an inbuilt curiosity and an eagerness to know more about everything - about themselves, about others and about the world around them. They learn fast - when they are ready and when their interest is aroused.

The first year in school is mainly about settling in, relating to others, making friends, co-operating within a group and gradually getting used to the routines of school.

On the learning side the emphasis is on getting children ready for learning by –

- Developing their **oral language** and **expression**. **Talking with them** and **reading stories** and **nursery rhymes** to them.
 - Helping your child become familiar with the ideas they will need to understand when they are introduced to **basic maths** e.g. **matching, sorting, counting**.
- **Sharpening their senses**, especially the sense of sight, hearing and touch.
- Developing **physical co-ordination** especially of the hands and fingers.
- Extending their **concentration span** and getting them to **listen attentively**.
- Learning through **play**.
- **Co-operating** with the teacher and other children.
- Performing tasks **independently**.
- **Working with others** and sharing with them.
- Getting each child to **adhere to class rules**, which are necessary for the class to work well.

Before Your Child Starts

Before your child starts school you should ensure that she is as independent as possible – physically, emotionally and socially. If she can look after herself in these areas she will feel secure and confident and settle in more readily.

It would help if your child was able to –

- **Button and unbutton, zip or unzip** her jacket or coat and hang it up properly.
- **Use the toilet without help**
- Flush the toilet and wash hands without having to be reminded. Please **encourage personal hygiene** and cleanliness.
- Use **a hanky or tissue** when necessary.
- **Share** toys and games with others and “take turns”.
- **Tidy up** and put away playthings and activities when asked to do so.
- Remain contentedly for a few hours in the home of a relation, friend or neighbour. If your child has had this experience, then separation from you when starting school will not cause any great anxiety.

Preparing for September

We invite children in for about a half an hour or so in June to see an Infant classroom. On this visit they have an opportunity to see and play with the Infant equipment, draw a picture and talk with a teacher.

- Talk to your child casually about school during the summer - as a happy place where she will meet new friends.
- **Don't use school or teacher as a threat.** –even words used light-heartedly can make some children very anxious.
- It helps to have the **uniform and schoolbag** ready for the first day. Please remember to have a name label on your child's tracksuit top, polo shirt, tracksuit bottoms, pinafore, trousers, cardigan. September can be a warm month and these items of clothing are often taken off early on in the day. All clothing items which are likely to be removed should be clearly labelled with your child's name.
 - Please have your **child's name written inside** the schoolbag as many of these bags are very similar. The only items your child will need in the schoolbag at the beginning of Junior Infants are lunch, a drink, pencil and crayons. Books, Workbooks, Paper and copies will be supplied by the school.
 - Discuss **lunches** with your child. Make sure she can open her lunch box easily as many of the newer containers can be quite stiff. It would help also if your child can peel a banana or a mandarin without too much effort.

September – The Big Day

For the first week of school the Junior Infant classes will be going home at 12 noon. This is to help ease them into the school routines. While they are at school, they will have a Fruit Break so you will need to pack a small piece of fruit for this.

From the second week in September they will stay for the full Infant day – from 8:50 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. During this period they will have a Fruit Break and a Lunch Break

Coming in

Coming in

When you arrive at the school, be as casual as you can. Your child will meet the teacher and will be shown to the classroom where they will be given an activity to do. Assure your child that you will be back shortly, say goodbye and leave without delay.

The food breaks are important times for school-going children. In this school, our first short break at 11.10 a.m. is a **fruit break**. We encourage you to send in a small apple, pear, banana, mandarin or some grapes or raisins. While fruit yoghurts are very healthy, they tend to be messy so we would prefer if you kept them for home.

Lunch Break is at 12:40p.m.. We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start. Surveys have shown that children's lunches are often quite unhealthy and inadequate nutritionally because they tend to be low in fibre and

high in sugar. Please do not give your child sweets, chocolate, fizzy drinks or crisps for lunch. Lunch should provide one third of your child's food requirements for the day. We would ask you to provide a sandwich/roll and milk/water/fruit juice.

CHEWING GUM IS NOT ALLOWED IN THIS SCHOOL.

Parking

Please **do not double-park** outside the school or in the bus lane. There is a very real danger for children alighting from a car which is double-parked or running towards such a car. It is possible to park safely at a good distance from the gate without causing obstruction. Please show consideration for other parents and children at all times and remember the example we show in regard to road safety is seen by our children. We encourage pupils to use the pedestrian walkway as much as possible.

Going Home

- Be sure to collect your child on time. Children can become very upset if they feel they are forgotten.
- Please wait for your child at front of school. The teacher will lead the class from the classroom to their line at the front door. Parents collect children from this line each evening. We encourage the children to say goodbye or "Slán" to the teacher before leaving the class line at the front of the school. This gives the teacher a chance to ensure that children are in the care of an adult.
- Children need plenty of rest after the effort and excitement of a day at school. Try to establish good bedtime routines.
- Once we're into the second week of September the home time is 1:30 p.m. Please make sure to collect your child on time as the teacher needs the next hour (and more) to clear up after the day, to set out materials and activities for the following morning and to have planning meetings with the other Infant teacher.
- If at any time the collection routine has to be changed, please tell your child and the teacher.
- If you are delayed because of traffic, or for any other reason, please phone the school so that we can reassure your child that you are on your way.

Other Points to Note –

For the first day in September you are welcome to bring your child directly to the classroom yourself as they will start at the later time of 9:00a.m. From the second day we would like the Junior Infant children to line up near the front door with the other infant classes. The teacher will collect the class at 8:50a.m. and bring the children into the school building. Please say "goodbye" to your child near their line at the front door or at the top of the pedestrian walkway near the bike shed.

In the event of your child being absent for illness or any other reason, the class teacher should be informed by note on return to school. These notes are retained on file for inspection by the Child and Family Agency(TUSLA) if required.

When it is necessary for your child to leave school early, a note must be sent to the class teacher. Please do not collect him/her early unless it is absolutely necessary. Parents/guardians must call to the school office personally to sign out your child in the sign in/sign out book when you are collecting the child. This is in the interest of the safety and security of your child.

During enrolment you were asked to name any **emergency contacts** who will be collecting your child in the event that you are unable yourself. If it should ever happen that you need another person (who is not on this list) to collect your child, please contact the school office to authorise this.

We generally issue a **School Newsletter** about once a month on our school website. Occasionally, as the need arises, **shorter notices** regarding school matters may be issued on Aladdin connect. Please also check your child's schoolbag or book bag yourself frequently for any messages from the teacher. **Text messages** are also used to deliver urgent messages.

The **school calendar** has been issued to you and we would encourage you to keep it for reference during the year. The **school website** can be accessed to view recent events, policies and updates in the school. You can also follow school news on the school twitter account @sjnskilcock

Uniform

The school uniform and school tracksuit are available from: Books and Gifts, Kilcock and Uniform Warehouse, Maynooth.

The uniform consists of:

- Blue tracksuit top with school crest, navy pinafore/skirt/trousers, blue cardigan with school crest, navy tracksuit bottoms, blue polo shirt and runners(Preferably velcro straps).

In the interest of safety, **jewellery should not be worn in school**, especially bracelets, chains, looped earrings, nose, lip or eyebrow rings. Coloured nail polish and the wearing of transfers are not permitted.

Headlice

Hair should be tied back from the face and eyes or plaited.

If you discover **headlice** in your child's hair, please treat it immediately and inform the school office. We will then send out a note to parents of children in the class so that the problem can be successfully eliminated. Getting headlice is not a reflection on the standard of cleanliness in your home. Headlice are picked up through close head-to-head contact. They do not survive on clothing or furniture but are attracted to clean hair. If untreated, headlice can multiply very rapidly and infect others. If you do receive a note about headlice, you will need to check and treat your child's hair that evening. Please remember to treat 7 days later also.

Smooth transition

Starting school will be a big change in the life of your child, stepping from the safe and secure world of the home and family and facing into the wider world of the classroom and school. Most children manage this transition without any fuss or stress. As a staff we aim to make this transition as smooth as possible for you so that your child's first experience of "big" school is one of happy involvement laying a solid foundation for fruitful school years ahead.

Thank you for reading this. We hope that it will help you as you prepare with your child for "big" school. If we can help you in any further way, please feel free to phone us at the school office or contact us by email.

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