



Welcome To Our School

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WELCOME TO ST. MICHAEL'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

We are looking forward to welcoming our Junior Infants to our school. We have put together some information and advice which will help prepare you and your child for the first day of school and for the year ahead.

Our School: This year we have 163 pupils in our school and six mainstream teachers alongside two ASD class teachers. We have five Special Education teachers (Two of whom are part-time) who provide extra help for children with English, maths or any special educational needs. We have eight Special Needs Assistants. Our school secretary is Ann, provides invaluable support and help in the school office, and our caretaker Albert keeps our extensive grounds in tip-top condition.

I am very proud of our staff and their commitment to making your child's educational experience a very positive and successful one. There will be ample opportunities for them to develop their talents with plenty of extra- curricular activities such as dance, GAA, well-being workshops, drama to name but a few.

Starting primary school is a very exciting and special time for you and your child and over the coming school year, we will work with you to make it the most wonderful experience. I look forward to meeting you and your child in late August.

Mr. Seán Beirne, Principal

WHAT IS DEIS?

A **DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools)** school is part of an Irish government program that supports schools in disadvantaged areas. These schools receive **extra funding, resources, and specialized programs** to help students succeed. Overall, DEIS schools aim to **reduce educational disadvantage** and give students **better opportunities for success** in education and life. In our school, we strongly promote programs and activities that we feel will benefit our pupils and their wellbeing.

INTEGRATION

Our school integrates students in **mainstream** and **special classes** using a **blended and inclusive approach**, ensuring all students receive the support they need while promoting social interaction. Students in special classes join mainstream lessons where possible (e.g., for subjects like art, PE, or social activities). We encourage peer interaction through buddy systems, group activities, and extracurriculars and some students may move from special classes to mainstream over time, based on progress. These approaches **maximize learning opportunities** while fostering inclusion, independence, and social development.

ATTENDANCE

High levels of school attendance are **essential** for the academic and social development of your child. Children should only be kept at home for genuine reasons such as illness, appointments or family emergencies. Holidays and days away should be scheduled during times where pupils are off school. The school has a legal responsibility to report pupils to TUSLA who miss twenty or more days from school or who display irregular attendance patterns. **All absences must be provided through Aladdin.** The school regularly communicates the importance of high attendance levels and engages with families where the number of days missed is more than expected. It is important that a culture exists in the home and at school where the norm is to come to school each day.

MESSAGE FROM THE JUNIOR INFANT TEACHER

Hi everyone,

My name is Ms. Dermody. I am going to be your teacher. Welcome to your very first year in school! I am really looking forward to meeting you all in the classroom very soon. I heard from your pre-school teachers that you are all fantastic! We are going to have great fun at school. We will listen to wonderful stories, sing songs, dance, play and learn to read!

You are going to grow so much, and I can't wait to see the amazing things you will do. Don't worry if you feel a little nervous - that's okay! We will help each other and take everything one step at a time.

Have a wonderful summer and I will see you all soon.

Ms. Dermody 😊

This is our classroom.



PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR JUNIOR INFANTS

Creating a positive, progressive attitude towards school and lifelong education is important. Real engagement will assist your child in becoming involved in learning. Suggestions as to what we may do to help our children prepare for school:

- Read books and stories about starting school.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and express her ideas and feelings about starting school.
- Play school at home – have fun trying on the uniform and packing a school bag and lunchbox.
- Talk about how your child will get to and from school – take a drive or walk past the school to help your child familiarise themselves with the building.
- Encourage and practise independent toileting. Remind your child to flush the toilet and to wash and dry his/her hands properly.
- Encourage and practise independent dressing. Let your child dress themselves and put on their shoes and coat.
- Encourage and practise opening and closing her new lunchbox, drinks bottle and school bag.
- Please ensure the school bag can accommodate an A4 folder.

Please label your child's coat, uniform top, lunchbox, bottle, pencil case and all belongings with their name – it will help if he/she can identify their belongings.

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

The first day at school is a special milestone for both parents and children. Whilst you may be going through a mixture of emotions, please try not to pass on any anxieties. Most children settle into school quickly but do not be concerned if it takes a little longer - we are here to help with that.

- Please have everything ready the night before. Keep everything calm and happy that morning and arrive on time – but not too early.
- Your child will be welcomed into the classroom via the infant playground (to the right of the building)
- When it is time for you to leave, assure your child that you will be back later, say goodbye and leave – don't worry if your child becomes upset – all will be fine. We will be there to help with the transition.
- Each child will be given a name badge to wear and there will be toys and activities on the tables to play with; they will be busy straight away!
- Ms. Dermody will show each child the location of the toilet and where to hang their coats.
- We will spend some time playing and getting to know their new classmates, reading stories and singing songs.
- Our small break is at 11.00 am. We eat our lunch in the class before we go out. If it is raining, we will sit in the classroom and play. There will always be teachers in the yard/playground to supervise.
- Collection at home time is outside the school building. Our typical school day is from 9.00 to 13:40 for infants. However, for the first two weeks, there will be a reduced day. Details will be provided to you.

HELPING YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR LITERACY AND NUMERACY

Some suggested activities you may wish to try:

- Phonological awareness (an understanding of sounds) is an important skill we explore before starting formal letter sounds. You can help your child by identifying rhyming words in books – mat/bat/cat etc.
- Play games like ‘I Spy’.
- Sing and read nursery rhymes at home.
- Reading to your child cultivates an interest in reading and, hopefully, life-long learning.
- Talk to your child and listen to their answers – talk about the weather, days of the week, visits to the park, favourite food etc. All these actions will help develop language.
- Play board games.
- You can help your child become familiar with simple mathematical concepts at home - by encouraging her to sort items – socks, cutlery, crayons etc.
- Talk and explore different shapes and colours.
- Explore the size of objects.
- Match objects that are the same size.
- Language is critical to all learning – oral language skills are vital. Talk and read to your child about a wide variety of topics.
- Look at our website which has a list of useful websites that will help you and your child as they commence their primary education.

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL CHECKLIST

This checklist will give you some tips to help prepare for school – don't worry if your child can't do all the skills – it's just a guide.

Getting Ready for School Checklist

I can...	I can...	I can...
recognise my name	☐ hold my pencil carefully	☐ put on my socks
write the first letter	☐ draw a face	☐ find my shoes
	☐ colour in carefully	☐ put on my shoes
	☐ name the colours I use	☐ fasten my shoes




I can...	I can...	I can...
recognise some numbers	☐ sing simple rhymes	☐ find my coat
	☐ sing and clap to a song	☐ put my arms into my coat
	☐ tap a beat	☐ zip up my coat
	☐ move to music	☐ fasten buttons on my clothes




I can...	I can...	I can...
	☐ tidy away my toys	☐ say please when I ask
taste different foods	☐ clear away things I've used	☐ say thank you when I get
☐ wash my hands before and after meals	☐ put my clothes away	☐ ask to go to the toilet
	☐ help at home	☐ take turns talking in a group




I can...	I can...	I can...
wash my hands	☐ walk up and down stairs using the handrail	☐
dry my hands	☐ hold hands on the street	☐ cut 'snips' into paper
go to the toilet when I need to	☐ take turns when playing	
wipe/clean myself when I've been to the toilet	☐ share toys with a friend	





THE SCHOOL DAY

Infants: 09:00 – 13:40

1st – 6th Class: 09:00 – 14:40

The school gate is open from 8.50am, 10 minutes before the start of the school day. Pupils are allowed to enter the grounds from that time and walk to their class area. On wet mornings, children go straight to their classrooms and are supervised until formal class commences. Parents are asked not to enter the school grounds in the morning. Pupils walk to their yard and may play there until classes start. Infant parents may initially bring their child to the side gate, however, we strongly encourage parents to develop independence from an early stage. This will make it easier for pupils to settle in school. The children have two breaks each day. One small break at 11.00 for 10 minutes and a thirty-minute break from 12:30 to 13:00. In general, children eat their snack in the classroom before they go out.

Punctuality

The children must develop the habit of being punctual for school. Teachers will record lateness, and it is unsettling for everyone when pupils come in to class late on a regular basis. Children who arrive after 10a.m will be marked as absent (unless otherwise informed) as the Aladdin system requires attendance in all schools to be taken by 10am.

Pupil Collection

The school needs to be notified through the Aladdin app if a child needs to leave school early or will arrive late. No child may leave school without a parent or guardian during school times. If someone other than a parent is collecting a child, please notify the school using the Aladdin app. All parents who collect their child early from school will have to sign them out in the Office.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Our school uniform consists of:

- Navy trousers or tracksuit bottoms
- Navy School jumper
- Navy sweatshirt jumper
- Light Blue Shirt/Polo Shirt
- Navy Skirt/Pinafore
- Navy Cardigan
- Navy shorts are permitted during warmer weather

6th class are permitted to wear they “Class of...” jumper as part of their uniform.



Care of Hair

Parents are asked to check their child’s hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice. If there is an outbreak of head lice in a class, all parents of pupils in that class are informed by note and asked to take immediate action to treat the infestation. Girls with long hair should have it tied back.

SCHOOL RULES



1 School Rules

1. Bullying is never allowed.
2. We will show respect for staff and visitors – standing back to let them pass.
3. Bad language is unacceptable.
4. A written note from parents is required if a child needs to (a) stay in at break or lunch times for a particular reason (b) leave school for any reason (c) is absent from school.
5. Children leaving school during the day must be collected from the classroom by a parent.
6. We encourage children to bring healthy lunches.
7. Chewing gum, glass bottles, correction fluids and matches are not allowed.
8. Cycling in school grounds is not allowed.

4 Playground rules

1. We will include everyone in our games.
2. We will not play roughly. We will not climb.
3. We will keep the playground tidy.
4. We will not enter boundary hedge / bushes or approach front gate / wall.
5. We will enter the school building only if we get permission from teacher/SNA.
6. We will walk around corners.
7. In the interests of Health and Safety hurling is only allowed on the playing pitch and helmets must be worn.
8. When the bell rings, we will go directly to our line.

2 Corridor Rules

1. We will walk quietly in the corridors.
2. We will show respect for the property of others.
3. We will eat lunch before we go outside.
4. We will throw litter, recyclables etc. into the correct bins.

3 Wet Days

1. Children remain seated
2. Class teacher appoints children to distributed drawing sheets / games etc.
3. Senior pupils are appointed to help in junior classes.
4. Scissors, compasses and rulers are only used when teacher is in the classroom.

WHAT IS ALADDIN?

Aladdin Connect is a fantastic way to enhance a school's communication. It enables parents to stay connected and informed about their child's education through:

- Ensuring contact information is up to date
- Keeping parents informed of their child's attendance
- Enabling parents to view their child's report card
- Communications of reasons for absence and to send attendance if their child will be arriving late / leaving early
- Sending e-Payment links for any school activities
- Allow parents to give permission for events such as school tours

Aladdin aids in strengthening our home-school partnership, efficiently and effectively.



SCHOOL LUNCHES



Glanmore Foods are our school meals provider. They will send you an email with the school's information and a link to download an app where you can choose your child's food for their lunches. Using this app, you can change the options as often as you like. ***Please ensure that your child likes the meal that is picked to prevent food wastage.***

If you are experiencing any difficulties with the app, you can contact Ann in the office who will be able to help.

HEALTHLY EATING

Every child in St. Michael's N.S. has access to a free school lunch under the Department of Employment Affairs & Social Protection's School Meals Programme. This lunch is provided by an external Lunch Provider. Parents/guardians and children can choose their lunch menu online. Lunch menus are set up to encourage variety. If pupils are availing of this lunch scheme, they will not need to bring any other lunch to school.

Packed Lunches

- Parents are encouraged to provide balanced packed lunches, including fruits, vegetables, protein sources, and whole grains.
- Fizzy drinks, chocolates, and crisps are not permitted.
- Water or diluted juice is recommended as the preferred drinks.

Friday Treat Day

Friday is Treat Day in St. Michael's N.S. The pupils are encouraged to eat the treat after they have eaten their lunch. On this day, pupils can bring one of the following:

- **Treat or fun** sized bar, **Treat or fun** sized bag of sweets, Small biscuit/bun/muffin, Small home bakes

Other treat days may include: End of term parties, Halloween, School trips and events, Class rewards. On these occasions, teachers may provide treats for the class or pupils may be invited to bring in items to share. Teachers will be aware of pupils with allergies and will ensure safety and inclusivity.

Teachers will continue to give children a sweet treat on occasions in recognition of work done, improvements in work or behaviour and in an effort to promote positive behaviour. Sweet treats used prudently by teachers will not interfere with the health of the child.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Lots of other useful information, including the:

- School Calendar
- Homework & Book Rental Information
- Curricular Useful website links
- School's Code of Behaviour
- Child safeguarding statement
- Anti-bullying and Enrolment Policies
- Health & Safety Information
- Home – School Communication Protocols
- Links to educational websites

Can be found on the school website -

www.stmichaelsnscastlepollard.ie

Useful websites for starting school include:

- www.ncca.ie/en/primary/resources-for-parents
- www.scoilnet.com
- www.helpmykidlearn.ie

Parent's Association

The parents association in any school is the structure where the Parents can work together for the best possible education of their children. The parents association works with the Principal, staff and the Board of Management to build effective partnerships between the home and school. We have a very strong P.A. who provide great support to the school through their involvement in activities such as our Witch Walk, Grandparent's Day and celebration of the sacraments.



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