

Killoughteen National School

*Scoil Cill Lachtaoin*

 *‘All children are gifted; some just open their packages earlier than others’*

Welcome all children and parents to a new and exciting stage in your child’s life. This is probably the first big change in the life of your child. Up to this (s)he has felt safe and secure with you in the home but now (s)he is facing the wider world of the classroom and school. This may seem like a big step for someone so small but most kids manage it without fuss or stress and in fact take to it like ducks to water. During this year your child will make new friends, enjoy new experiences and will begin to learn the vital skills of reading and writing. We now, teacher and parents, have the chance to work as partners to ensure that at the end of this school year your child will have a positive attitude towards education based on social and academic confidence. We know from experience that parents are anxious to help in any way possible so we have included some ideas and guidelines to make the transition a smooth one. Also included is some general information about the school for your own knowledge.

**First Day - A Happy One!**

Please be positive with your child in preparing her/him for school and explain to her/him what will happen re. teacher, other children, breaks, sitting down, tidy-up time and 2 o’clock. On arrival it is very helpful if you can show your child where to hang their coat and leave their lunch. After meeting the teacher and some other children and finding a place to sit please leave promptly because your child will pick up your anxiety. Most children, even if initially upset soon become distracted by their surroundings and settle down. Do expect your child to be tired for the first few weeks. Building a routine in late August might help this.

**School Opening and Closing Times**



School begins at 9.20 in the morning Monday to Friday. A list of school closure dates is enclosed in your pack. All Junior Infants go home at 2 o’clock. Please come promptly as your child may fret if s/he thinks s/he is forgotten. The children will be ready to go and will be collected at the classroom door. If there is any special collection arrangements please let us know verbally or by note.

**Please Note the children will go home at 12.00 from Tuesday 29thAugust until Friday September 1st inclusive.** This will gently ease the children into the routine of the school day. **Please Note children are not supervised before 9a.m. and should not be on school grounds before this time.**



**Clothes:**



The children wear the standard uniform at all times. Please ensure that all clothes likely to be removed (i.e. coats, hats, scarves, gloves, jumpers etc.) are clearly labelled with your child’s name as many children will possess similar items. We have some spare clothes and underwear for use if needed. Please clean and return these as soon as possible after any use. We do not recommend trousers with clasps or belts as they may be difficult to open. Show your child how to put on and off their jumpers, coats etc. Please do not let your child wear laced shoes if they cannot tie them themselves. It would be helpful to get your child used to recognizing and minding their own items.



**Stationery:**



All stationery is provided and kept at school. If the children want to bring in their own stationery please ensure they are labelled. **No markers** should be brought into school or used on their books and copies.



**School Bag**

Please ensure that your child’s schoolbag is large enough to hold a folder and their lunchbox.



**Gaeilge**



Don’t be surprised if you hear you child using some Irish Words during the year. Please encourage this and use some words with your child if possible.





**Seating:**

The tables are colour coded and the children move places regularly once per fortnight.



**Food:**

We have a ‘Healthy Eating Policy’ in the school. Please do not give children crisps, sweets or chewing gum and other unhealthy foods. No minerals are allowed. Please do not use any glass bottles. On starting school many children are too keyed up and distracted to eat a large lunch so we recommend a small nutritious snack, for example two sandwiches, a drink , a piece of cheese, yoghurt or fruit etc.





We try to ensure that the children eat a good portion of their lunch, particularly their sandwiches. We do not encourage swopping of lunch items. Please ensure that your child’s lunch box is clearly labelled with your child’s name. At the beginning of the year it would be a good idea if you told your child what he/she is to eat on every break as they will often eat all their lunch for small break and not spare any for the big break.

**Savings Scheme:**

The school takes part in a voluntary savings stamp scheme with the Desmond Credit Union. If you wish your child to save a little each week, please send in some money with him/her on Monday morning (each stamp costs 25c.) On starting to save each child will receive a little savings book.





**Health and Safety:**



As part of our school’s health programme we encourage regular washing of hands, particularly around eating time and after toilet use. We are not however always able to oversee this so please remind your child of its importance. Unfortunately germs and viruses spread very quickly in a classroom environment so it is vital that the children are encouraged to use a tissue when blowing their nose and to cover their mouth and turn away when coughing etc.

If your child develops any contagious illness such as chickenpox please keep him/her away from school until the period of contagion is over and inform his/her teacher immediately. We recommend that you check your child regularly for lice which are highly contagious, treat immediately if they occur and inform the teacher so that notification of possible risk may be sent out to other parents. All information regarding your child’s health is treated in the strictest confidence.

Occasionally your permission will be required for dental, eye or other health examinations.

**Sun Protection**

As your child is outside during hot times of the day please put on lotion on your child in the mornings for any day you think your child could get burnt. Please put in extra drinks on these days too as the children will be extra thirsty.

**Assessment;**

Informal assessment will be continually made by your child’s teacher. Results are kept and passed on through the classes. From First Class on children do standardised reading and maths assessments.



**Toys:**

There is no need for children to bring in toys into school and we do not encourage this practice because of breakages, competition and peer pressure.



**Reading:**

To foster a love of reading we advise if possible to read to your child often. Talk to your child about the books you read together. In school we use a combination of two approaches, look-and-say and phonetic. Children will begin their formal reading in January. The younger classes also partake in Shared Reading. Information will be sent out about this at a later date.



**Oral Language**

Children absorb language easily. To develop their oral language talk to your child naturally and casually about things they are doing at home, school etc. Say some nursery rhymes with them.

**Writing:**

Your child will be learning to write lower case letters initially so it would be very helpful if you could stick up your child’s name written in this way perhaps on his/her bedroom door so that (s)he can be familiar with it. If it can be practiced in writing it is even better!

**Breaks:**

There are two breaks during the day, a short break from 11.00 to 11.15 and a longer break from 1.00 to 1.25. We try to ensure that no child feels lonely or left out, and, to this end we recommend that older brothers, sisters and friends do not monopolise the younger children’s playtime which may restrict them in forming peer attachments.

**Medical Conditions**

Please alert the teacher to any condition your child might have. Also if your child has any allergies please let us know. This will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

**Absences**

If your child is absent please send in a note explaining your child’s absence. This is necessary to maintain the roll book.

**Money** At various times of the year the children will need to bring in money for different things. Please place any money in an envelope with your child’s name on the front of it.

**PE** Children partake in PE throughout the school week. To help your child it would be good if they practiced some ball games to develop their hand eye co-ordination which is necessary to improve writing skills.

**Information Bulletins:**



Please keep an eye in your child’s folder and school-bag as they may contain notes for parents. Usually whole school notes are given to heads of family. Also the notice board outside the Junior Infant room will be kept up to date.

**Book List:**

Please find enclosed your child’s booklist. All the books are available in the bookshop in Newcastlewest and in school bookshops in Limerick.

The following are a few ideas you could do to prepare your child for September



**Developing co-ordination**

To strengthen and develop co-ordination which your child needs when reading and writing you could try the following:

* Large sheets of paper and chubby crayons for scribbling, colouring, drawing etc.
* Encourage your child to build using blocks, Lego
* Make simple jigsaw



* Thread beads on a piece of string
* Sheets of paper to cut with using safety scissors
* Dolls/teddies that clothes can be taken off, buttoned, laced etc.
* Playing ball games
* **Developing Maths Skills**
* Help your child to identify colours
* Allow your child to help you sorting e.g. socks, clothes etc.
* Activities which involve pouring, stirring, mixing, rolling etc. are of great benefit
* Allow your child to play with money

Children learn to understand math’s best by handling investigating and using real objects. This at times can be a nuisance but if it allows him/her to do the learning for themselves the final results are worth it.

**Parent Teacher Meetings**

Every year in the first term parent- teacher meetings take place. These meetings provide an opportunity for discussing your child’s progress. Please do not hesitate to approach the Junior Infant teacher at any time if there is a point upon which you feel anxious, however if you wish a more detailed discussion please arrange a convenient time in advance. Formal written reports are sent out at the end of the year.

I hope these guidelines will be of some assistance to you in preparing your child for August.

We look forward to teaching your child in August and hope we can provide a nice happy atmosphere where the children will settle in and learn many new skills.

***WE’LL SEE YOU IN AUGUST!***

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal



