

# Information Booklet for Parents of St. Joseph's National School



## Contact Details

Mulhussey

Kilcock

Co. Meath

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## **ETHOS OF SCHOOL**

To assist each child develop the skills to reach his/her own full potential.

To provide a school environment where each child is happy and content.

To make them aware and proud of Christian values and of their Irish heritage.

To develop their social and communication skills

To develop their civic spirit and their understanding of and respect for the environment.

## **ENROLMENT**

St. Joseph's National School is a Catholic parish-based school that has been established with the Minister of Education and Science having as its Patron the Most Reverend Michael Smith, the Bishop of Meath. It aims at promoting the full harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil — intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. The school promotes the formation of pupils in the Catholic faith.

The school follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Section 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The school enrolls boys and girls.

St. Joseph's National School (Mulhussey) supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation in the school, of parental choice in relation to enrolment and respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society. Nonetheless, the enrolment procedures have regard to the resources and funding available as the school depends upon the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education and Science, and it operates within the regulations laid down by the same Department and with respect to the rights of the Patron as set out in the Education Act 1998.

## **STAFF**

There are three mainstream class teachers in St Joseph's National School (Mulhussey), including the Principal, and one full time resource teacher for pupils with special needs.

Principal: Ms. Molloy

Deputy Principal: Ms Beirne

Infants: Ms. Beirne

1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> classes: Ms. Hehir

4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> classes: Ms. Gallagher

Learning Support/Resource Teacher: Ms. Molloy

Special Needs Assistant: Ms. O'Brien

## **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

The Board of Management provides opportunities for a partnership of parents, teachers, Patrons' representatives and community representatives in the task of school management.

### Patron Nominees

Chairperson: Rev. Fr. Stan Deegan/Hugh Costello

### Board Nominees

Brian Fitzgerald/Breda Fahy

### Parents Nominees

Sandra O'Sullivan /Alan Brannick

### Staff Nominees

Violet Molloy/Mary Hehir

Parents' Nominees on the Board of Management are not on the Board to represent parents but are there as representatives of parents. These parents are full members of the Board and their role is to bring the parental perspective on all issues. As a parent, if you have a query or issue, this should be brought to the attention of the Principal and not to Parents' Nominees. Many thanks.

## **PARENTS ASSOCIATION**

The Parents Association is a group of parents from the school who give up their time to help improve our school and fundraise on behalf of the school. The Parents Association meet on a monthly basis.

## **STUDENTS COUNCIL**

Annually we elect a new students' council. One representative from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class is selected. These children are good role models for the school and assist the Principal with organising school events and various other items.

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

The Board of Management of St Joseph's National School (Mulhussey) have adopted their Child Protection Policy, based on Children First Guidelines. In all cases, the most important consideration of the Board of Management is the safety and wellbeing of children. The school will:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations.
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters.
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

Tusla Family and Child Agency has a primary responsibility to promote the safety and well-being of children. An Garda Síochána also have statutory responsibilities for the safety and welfare of children. The guiding principles in regard to reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. the safety and well-being of the child must take priority;
2. reports should be made without delay to the Agency.

## **CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE**

A positive behaviour management approach will be used to promote positive behaviour and reduce inappropriate behaviour by rewarding the positive rather than the focus being on punishing the negative. This approach is based on the premise that behaviour that is rewarded is behaviour that will be repeated. This policy aims to:

- creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good behaviour
- creating a positive and safe environment for teaching and learning
- encouraging students to take personal responsibility for their learning and their behaviour
- helping young people to mature into responsible participating citizens
- building positive relationships of mutual respect and mutual support among students, staff and parents

- ensuring that the school's high expectations for the behaviour of all the members of the school community are widely known and understood

## **ANTI BULLYING CODE**

Every pupil has the right to enjoy his/her time in St. Joseph's N.S. free from bullying, both in school and on their journey to and from school.

Our school will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks, even if these were not meant to hurt.

Pupils should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.

Bullying is regarded as a very serious matter; no child has a right to strike another, even in "self-defence".

It is made clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly. It is important to counteract a culture which may associate "telling" with "informing".

## **PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE**

Pupils are expected to be punctual and to attend school every day. Good school attendance is crucial to your child's progress.

Doors open: 9.10am

School start time: 9:30am

Finishing time for infants: 2:00pm

Finishing time for 1st-6th: 3:00pm

Morning break: 11:00am

Lunch break: 12:30pm

Schools are required to submit Student Absence Reports four times each year on those students with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e. students falling within the following criteria:

- a student has been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more
- a student's name is to be removed from the school register for any reason
- a student has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days
- the school has expelled a student
- a principal is concerned about a student's attendance

The Principal has no discretion in this. Parents/Guardians are now obliged by law to provide a written explanation on their child's absence to the school. Staff should remain vigilant so that risk students are identified early.

If a pupil misses 10 days and 15 days a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian informing them of the missed days. Another letter will follow once twenty days are missed. A meeting between parents and Principal may be set up if deemed necessary.

**Going home early:** A signed written consent is necessary if a child has to leave the school during the day. Children must be collected by an adult if they are leaving school early and they must be signed out. Children will not be released into the care of another juvenile. We do this solely in the interest of each child's safety. Parents dropping in lunches or collecting children early from school need to check in at the office. Ann will bring the lunch down to the classroom and collect children leaving early. Parents should sign the sign out books in the office. Parents collecting children after 1pm need to call to the old entrance as the door at the office will be locked.

**Collecting Children:** Please write in the school diary the name of the person/s who will collect your child from school. If there are occasions when you wish another person to collect your child, please notify us in writing on or before the day in question.

## **PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS**

Meetings will take place in November. I would ask that parents make appointments through the diary or office to meet with class teachers or the Principal. Unfortunately, teachers do not have time to have a "quick word" outside the classroom in the mornings or during class time. Also, teachers like to come to meetings prepared so please indicate in advance what the meeting will be about. Quick messages about early collections, children being unwell the previous night etc can also be relayed through the diary. I would really appreciate all parents' cooperation with this matter.

## **OFFICE HOURS**

Ann, our secretary works from 9.30 to 1pm daily. I would ask parents not to call on the phone between 1pm and 3pm unless it is an emergency as all staff will be in the classrooms teaching. General queries can be emailed to the school on [maolhosae@gmail.com](mailto:maolhosae@gmail.com). Emails sent after 4.30pm will be replied to the following day. If you are running late, please call the school at 3pm.

## **BOOKLIST BILLS**

There is no need for parents to come into the school to pay outstanding bills. Please send a cheque in an envelope with your child's name on the front and hand to a member of staff at the door in the morning. Please avoid sending in coins as they are difficult to lodge. Many thanks.

## **HEAD LICE**

Head Lice is unfortunately common in all primary schools. Where possible tie your child's hair back. Check your child's hair weekly. If infected, inform the school and treat your child's hair.

## **CHILDREN UNWELL IN SCHOOL**

Please do not send children to school unwell. If your child is too sick to go out to yard he/she is too sick to be in school. Exceptions are made in the case of ongoing or chronic illness and limb injuries. Otherwise all children are expected to go out to yard. When the Class Teacher or Principal feels that a child is not well enough for school either as a result of becoming sick or following an accident the Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately. In the event of a serious illness/accident an ambulance will be called and the child will be brought to hospital. This highlights the importance of having up to date contact information. If your address or phone number changes please notify the school so we can amend our records.

## **CONTACT NUMBERS/MOBILE PHONES**

It is very important that you keep us up to date with contact numbers in case of an emergency. Remember to let us know, if you change your mobile or landline number or address. If your child has a phone in school, it must be put on the teacher's desk and turned off until your child leaves the school building. We take no responsibility for lost phones. We also discourage children bringing in toys or games from home unless the teacher asks them to do so. They can be the cause of conflict in the class.

## **SCHOOL UNIFORM:**

**Uniform:** Grey jumper with crest/Grey trousers or grey pinafore, blue polo shirt, black shoes

**Tracksuit:** Navy tracksuit with crest on jumper, blue polo shirt, runners

Children are permitted to wear plain navy shorts and the blue polo shirt in June.

**Label everything:** Young children frequently misplace their belongings. To help us ensure these belongings are returned to their rightful owners please ensure your child's name is written on everything they own.

**Jewellery:** For safety reasons the only items of jewellery allowed are a watch and/or stud earring.

**Purchase:** Uniform World, Maynooth, near Tesco, 01 628 9758

## **HEALTHY EATING**

We operate a healthy eating policy in this school as the children find it easier to concentrate when their diet contains less sugar and E numbers. There are no longer treats on Friday.

**We have a child in the school with an egg allergy so we ask that you do not send egg sandwiches in to the school.**

Choose a lunch box and beaker/bottle that can be easily opened. Please label both. For safety reasons glass bottles are not allowed and food can not be reheated in microwave. **Note:** each child brings home any food leftovers so parents know what has been eaten.

### **Foods not allowed:**

Cereal bars/Fizzy drinks/Coloured drinks/Sweets/Chocolate/Cakes/Biscuits/Crisps/Chewing gum/Cakes/Popcorn/Chocolate spread

## **ACTIVE SCHOOL FLAG**

The school are applying for our active school flag. The staff are implementing various initiatives throughout the year to encourage the children to be more active.

## **BIRTHDAY INVITATIONS**

Teachers do not take responsibility for distributing invitations to birthday parties. It is the parent's responsibility regarding this. Please do not come into the class and distribute invitations as it can upset other children if they are not invited and cause conflict and hurt in the class. The same applies to giving out presents after being on holiday.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

The safety of the children is of primary importance at all times. Should an emergency closing be appropriate (e.g. in the event of no heat, snow etc.) the decision to close the school will be taken by the Principal at the earliest possible time so as to maximise notice to parents/guardians.



## **CURRICULAR SUBJECTS:**

In 1999 a new revised curriculum was introduced into Irish Primary Schools. The Primary School Curriculum consists of 6 curricular areas and these are further divided into 11 subjects.

Your child will be learning in the following areas and subjects:

1. Language: Gaeilge & English.
2. Mathematics: Mathematics.
3. Social, Environmental & Scientific Education (S.E.S.E): History, Geography & Science.
4. Arts Education: Music, Visual Arts and Drama.
5. Physical Education (P.E.): Physical Education.
6. Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E)
7. Religious Education is taught every day.

The curriculum aims to foster the development of key skills in communication, problem solving, critical thinking, investigation and interaction. It is also the aim of the curriculum to ensure that children's experience of school will lead them to value and enjoy learning as a lifelong process.

## **EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

An Educational Psychologist is available annually to carry out one Educational Assessments on children over 6 years of age who we believe are not making reasonable progress. Parents are consulted and permission is always sought before this is done.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

We welcome all children into our school. Early identification of learning difficulties is crucial in their remediation. All children will be regularly screened through the administration of standardised and observational tests. Parental consultation and support is a vital aspect of our learning support programme.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework is generally based on class related work or work already covered in class. It should contain a balance between reading, learning and writing. Time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work.

Homework is given from Mondays to Thursdays and generally is not given at weekends unless it has been neglected during the week, or unless exceptional circumstances such as projects.

***There will be no written homework for the month of June, therefore we expect a high standard of homework from September to May.***

The Learning Support Teachers will occasionally give homework to their allocated pupils but only as a reinforcement of class work. Reading is routinely given as homework and should be accorded priority consideration.

If homework causes stress or worry to the child, parents are encouraged to convey these anxieties to the class teacher. If homework cannot be completed on a particular night, parents are asked to forward a written note. Some homework may be self-correcting. Children who do not complete homework satisfactorily may be required to re do this work during lunch break. Parents are advised to supervise and check homework nightly.

All children have a homework diary which parents are required to sign. The homework diary acts as a means of communication between class teacher and parent. "Homework off" may be given at a teacher's discretion. In general, all school homework will encompass a wide spectrum of learning experiences such as reading, writing, tables, spelling, learning 'by heart', drawing, collecting information, colouring and finishing class work.

Junior infants 0 – 15 minutes

Senior infants 0 – 20 minutes

1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> 0 - 40 minutes

3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> 0 – 50 minutes

5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> 0 – 60 minutes

## **HOMEWORK CLUB**

The homework club operates from Monday to Thursday for a small fee. Parents are still expected to check all homework once the children return home.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVMENT**

- Parent/Teacher meetings are held in the first term.
- Meetings are arranged throughout the year with parents/guardians whose children have special educational needs.
- Monthly newsletters keep parents up to date with school events.
- Our school website provides information on policies, enrolment forms, school calendar and current events. [www.mulhusseyns.ie](http://www.mulhusseyns.ie)
- A homework diary is used as a communication link between parents/guardians and teachers. Parents/guardians are asked to sign this diary each night to certify that homework has been completed.
- Text messages are sent to parents to keep them updated.