

*Welcome to*  
*Junior Infants*  
*in*  
*St Anne's Primary School*  
*Ardclough*  
*2021/22*



## *Introduction*

Starting school will be a big change in the life of your child. We have put together this booklet as a general guide, outlining some ways in which you, as parents, may support your child in coming to our school. We trust you will find it helpful and that your child will be happy, will develop as an individual, and will make many new friends in St Anne's.

Parents and teachers take special care to ensure that the transition from home to school is as smooth as possible. If the child's first experience of school is one of happy involvement, a very good foundation will have been laid for fruitful school years ahead.

At St Anne's many teachers and staff will work with and care for your child.

As Principal I look forward to getting to know each and every child individually, meeting their personal needs and providing a broad and balanced education for them at St Anne's.

Our Deputy Principal, Mrs O Connor, supports the children with their learning and behaviour as do the Special Needs Team

Our secretary, Nora, keeps us all going and organises many events and communications to you, as parents. Tony is our wonderful caretaker who is the man behind the scenes at school events and keeps the building and ground in great shape

The SNAs support children in various classes and are always there to lend a helping hand

There is a wonderful staff of teachers whom you will meet as your child progresses through the school. For now they will get to know their new junior infant teacher for this year

A buddy system with children in 6<sup>th</sup> class will be in place and they will continue to assist the children throughout the year if Covid restrictions allow

As stated in the Primary School Curriculum, we celebrate the

*'uniqueness of the child, as it is expressed in each child's personality, intelligence and potential for development'*

## *Preparing for the 'Big Day'*

A child's first day at school is remembered for the rest of his/her life. As parents we encourage you to:

- Tell him/her about school beforehand as a happy place where there will be a big welcome for him/her and he/she will meet new friends.
- Encourage him/her to content for a few hours away from home so separation from parents when he starts school will not cause great anxiety.
- Involve your child in the preparation for school showing them their bag/uniform etc and create an excitement about 'big school'. Get them to show off to grandparents, friends etc
- Put your child's name on everything - jumpers, track suit tops, jackets, t-shirts, lunch box and drink containers, books and school bags (big enough to hold an A4 folder).
- Write your child's name clearly on the front of books and belongings.

## *Developing Independence*

Ensure your child can be as independent as possible - physically, emotionally and socially. If he/she can look after himself, he/she will feel secure and confident and settle in readily.

- Practise with your child.....
  - Zipping/buttoning coat and hanging it up
  - Putting on jumper/cardigan
  - Opening/closing school bags and lunch boxes
  - Putting folder into school bag
  - Velcro shoes are useful; its best to use laced shoes only when child can tie them him/herself
  - Giving teacher a note from his/her folder

It would help greatly if he/she is able to:

- Use the toilet without help, be able to flush the toilet and wash hands
- Use a hanky when necessary.
- Share toys and activities with others and "take turns".
- Tidy up and put activities away.

Over time, and as soon as possible, it is important that your child can walk into the school building by him/herself and take on easy tasks such as handing notes to teacher. Your child will be delighted with this new independence and will feel grown up.

Contact St Anne's; 01-6273367 [office@stannesardclough.ie](mailto:office@stannesardclough.ie)

# *The First Day*

## **Coming in to school**

When you arrive at the classroom, be as relaxed as you can.

S/he will meet the teacher and the other children and will be shown his/her place. Assure him/her you will be back to collect him, say goodbye and leave as soon as you can.

## **Going Home**

Be sure to collect him/her on time. Children can become very upset if they feel they are forgotten. The children will be brought to the school door at home time and teachers will see that someone is there to collect before letting the child go. Encourage your child to stay in line and wait their turn ie not run over to parent.

Please note:

**Junior Infants must be collected every day by an adult. For reasons of child safety, let the teacher know who will normally collect the child. If you cannot collect the child each day, introduce the collector/minder to the class teacher. If there is any change in collecting your child, we must be informed.**

**Please also clarify any custody arrangements that pertain to your child.**

Should children need to leave early (eg dental appointment) please send a note to the teacher and call for him/her to main office. The secretary will call the classroom and will record the leaving time on Aladdin.

To ease the child into the school routine Junior Infants have a shorter day and we will confirm collection times and location of entry/exits in due course (subject to COvid)

# *An Upset Child*

In spite of the best efforts of both teacher and parents a small number of children will still become upset. If your child happens to be one of them don't panic.

- **Trust the teacher.** She/he is experienced and resourceful and is used to coping with all kinds of problems.
- **Try not to show any outward signs of your own distress.** Sometimes the parents are more upset than the child.
- **Say "goodbye, see you soon" and leave.** The teacher will distract him/her with activities more easily when you are not around. Even if a child is upset you should insist that he/she stay and see how much fun it can be.
- **Chat with the teacher/principal** if you have concerns. We will contact parents if the child continues to be upset or if we have any concerns

## *As Time Goes On*

### **Break Times/Yard Play**

Children in Junior Infants will take a break separately from the other classes initially.

Over time they will have break with the full school. We are all there to help them and ensure that all have someone to play with. They will have a 'buddy' from 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class to help them. We also have 'Yard Angels' to help.

Please chat with the teacher if you have concerns around your child in the yard.

### **Supporting Children:**

Children need plenty of rest after the effort and excitement of a day at school. Ensure that s/he gets to bed early and has a good night's sleep.

Listen to your child if s/he wants to tell you things and continue to show interest in his daily adventures.

If his/her progress is different do not compare him with other children. Working with the teacher in support of your child will ease his/her learning.

S/he may not be a model of perfection all the time. Have patience with shortcomings and praise for achievements.

## *Lunches*

We are currently reviewing our Healthy Eating policy. We would be grateful if you only give your child something you feel he/she can open themselves and easily manage to eat. Please peel and cut fruit and vegetables.

Do not give your child sugary/chocolate biscuits, cake, chocolate or fizzy drinks. If your child has dietary requirements inform the teacher.

**SNACK** – fruit, or vegetable- what your child can eat in about 5 minutes.

**LUNCH** - sandwich/ fruit for lunch - ... eat in about 10 mins.

Check that water bottles are tightened and are not leaking over time. 'Frubes' prove difficult for many children and therefore should not be brought in.

Pick a lunch box that they can easily open- please practise opening boxes and drinks with them. Waste and wrappers are taken home for disposal.

Please ensure that children remember to bring lunch/other items.



## *Home-School Contact*

(refer to the Communication Policy on the school website)

It is very important to give your contact numbers as well as alternative contacts to the school (registration form). If a child becomes ill or has an accident at school we need to contact parents. **Inform the school if your phone number or your address changes.**

We use the Aladdin system to contact parents (generally by text). You will be invited to set this App up on your phone. The App feature include contacts/messages, annual reports, permissions and payment for school events as well as booklists. Many notes are sent in hard copy-check the schoolbag/folder everyday as there may be notes and homework sheets in it.

We expect you to have full participation in your child's learning. You can do this by ensuring you help your child with after school work (sounds, reading, colouring, etc.) as well as participating in classroom activities when requested. There will also be meetings during the school year that you will be expected to attend.

We would love parents to share their skills with the class- please do let us know if you are interested in coming in to do work with the class/give a talk etc. You would be most welcome!

Children's safety and protection is of utmost importance. Please see our Child Protection Policy on the school website. Parents, and all personnel working with children, are asked to have vetting clearance, before commencing work /support in the school

## *Homework*

When your child starts homework they will be given a homework sheet on a Monday containing your child's homework for the week. Homework could consist of sounds work, word work, maths activities, letter formation and reading. It is important to do all homework, both oral and written as it consolidates what your child has been learning at school. Please see the school Homework Policy for more information.

## *Illnesses and Accidents*

Let the school know if your child has dietary requirements or a health issue we need to be aware of (registration form). Also if there are any changes happening at home that might affect your child settling into school please inform the class teacher or Principal (all is treated confidentially).

If your child has an infectious illness, keep him/her at home until the doctor says he/she can return (general guide- 24hrs symptom free). See School Medical Policy.

There can be toilet accidents from time to time. We usually change wet clothes but on other occasions we call for parents, as the child may be upset and uncomfortable. It may be helpful to pack a spare pair of socks and underwear in your child's bag in case of emergencies. These could be kept in a labelled zip-locked bag for convenience.

Head lice happen unfortunately in all schools. Check for head lice. Inform the school if your child has head lice and we will send out notes for all parents in the class.

## *Meeting the Teacher*

If you wish to speak with the class teacher either write a note stating your concern or make an appointment. Try not to worry, if your child is having difficulty in any area of school life the teacher will contact you and work with you to support your child and solve the issue/offer suggestions etc.

It is difficult for a teacher to leave a class, even for a 'quick chat' so we request that appointments are made in order to give adequate time for meeting/discussion.

Tell the teacher if something is upsetting your child. It can easily be sorted out when caught early. Sometimes it is only children playing and learning to get on but we all need to be aware.

All visitors to the school must report to and sign in at the school office. We request that you not go to the classroom before signing in at the school office.

## *Getting On with Each Other*

Social skills are very important. We encourage good manners at all times, with everyone being courteous to fellow students and teachers. It is important to ask your child whom he played with at school and ensure he isn't alone at play times. Encourage your child to play and mix with other children.

**Rough behaviour is totally discouraged in the playground.** On an occasion when someone is upsetting them, we encourage the children to get away and tell the teacher on duty.

**For more information see our Behaviour Policy on the school website**

## *Getting Ready for Learning*

Teachers and parents are partners in a child's education. We have included some ideas for the home, which should stimulate the child's interest and nurture his desire to know more.

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

The first year in school is mainly about settling in, making friends, feeling happy, learning how to learn and getting used to the school routine.

Rates of progress of children can vary greatly, children move at their own pace.

Children are helped get ready for learning by:

- Developing their oral language and expression (*eg ask them questions; encourage them to explain answers etc*)
- Sharpening their senses (*Encourage observing world around them*)
- Developing physical co-ordination (*games etc*)
- Develop finger mobility and strength (*play with marla, clothes pegs etc*)
- Extending their concentration span and encouraging them to listen attentively.
- Learning through play.
- Co-operating with other children; Working and sharing with others.
- Performing tasks by themselves (*opening and closing zips, lunch boxes etc*)



## *Important Areas of Early Learning*

### **Aistear/Learning through Play:**

Aistear is a curriculum framework that heavily advocates learning through play. Play is now regarded as the main forum through which young children learn. The children will engage in play activities during the day including:

- Small world
- Sand/water play
- Construction
- Creative work
- Socio-dramatic play



## Oral Language

It is important that the child's ability to talk is as advanced as possible. It is through speech that he communicates his thoughts and feelings, his needs and desires, curiosity and wonder. If he cannot express these in words he will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from the learning activity of the class. Much attention is given to language development in the first years of school.

### You can help

- Talk to your child naturally and casually about things of interest that you or he may be doing-at home, in the shop, in the car, etc. Remember that all the time he is absorbing the language they hear about them. It takes him a while to make it his own and to use it for his own needs.
- Try to make time to listen when he wants to tell you something that is important to him. But don't always make him the centre of attention.
- Answer his genuine questions with patience and in an adequate way. Always nurture his sense of curiosity and wonder.
- Introduce him gently to the ideas of Why? How? When? Where? If? etc. These demand more advanced language structures.
- He will have his own particular favourite stories and rhymes that he never tires of hearing. Repeat them over and over again and gradually get him to tell them to you.



## First Steps in Reading

Ability to read is the foundation for all future progress. Learning to read is a gradual process and a lot of preparatory work must be done before a child becomes a more independent reader. Children get ready for reading over an extended period. Reading is something to be enjoyed.

### You Can Help

- Have attractive colourful books in the home.
- Read him a variety of stories from time to time. He will get to associate these wonderful tales with books and reading.
- Convey to him that books are precious things to be minded and handled carefully.
- Look at the pictures with him and talk to him about what they say.
- Read him nursery rhymes. He will learn them naturally, no need to push him.
- Above all, don't push with early reading. You may turn him against it for evermore.
- Sing the alphabet song with your child, so that he knows about letters and perhaps what each one looks like.
- Tell your child stories.

## Getting Ready For Writing

Children will learn to hold the pencil properly and make regular shape; their hand and finger muscles are developing at this stage.

### You Can Help

He must develop the ability to get the hand and eye working together. This is very important. Get him manipulating toys like:

- Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc
- Plasticene (Márla) to make his own shapes
- A colouring book and thick crayons
- Sheets of paper that he can cut up with a safe scissors
- Try and ensure he holds a pencil correctly from the start. It will be difficult to change later.
- He may be making block letters at home even before he comes to school which is fine. When he starts making lower case letters, encourage him to practise the new way whenever he feels like it.
- Left-handedness, if that is his natural inclination, will be encouraged and supported.

## Maths

Maths is part of the language he uses in understanding and talking about certain things in his daily experience. He associates certain numbers with particular things e.g. two hands, four wheels, five fingers, how many cakes. The child gets to understand Maths best by handling and investigating as well as using real objects.

Understanding of these concepts comes very quickly for some children. For others it takes a longer time.



### You Can Help

In the course of your ordinary daily routine in the home, in the shop, in the neighbourhood you can use suitable opportunities to casually introduce the maths vocabulary referred to above.

- Day-to-day activities such as sorting and pairing socks, baking etc
- Counting – one, two, three, four, etc.
- Colours – black, white, red, green, etc.

- Positions and opposites: over/under, before/after, inside/outside, we turn left at the lights.
- Matching/Sorting – objects of the same size/colour/texture/shape etc.
- Odd One Out – difference in size/colour etc.
- Cooking/baking

## Gaeilge

All children enjoy learning another language besides their own language. They have no difficulty in picking it up because it fascinates them as another code of communication.

Encourage a positive attitude towards Gaeilge with your child. If he/she learns new words in school encourage their use at home. Use little Irish phrases or words now and again. Children are delighted to find out that their parents can use the new language as well. Let them enjoy it and master it to the best of their ability. Most work in Irish at this level is done orally rather than reading and writing.

## Other Areas of the Curriculum

**Drama, Music and Visual Arts** give the child an imaginative and creative vocabulary that allows him to express himself in new and interesting ways. They help the child to understand his emotions and feelings.

The **SESE** curriculum covers **Science, History and Geography**. These subjects open up the wider world to the children.

In **P.E.** the child develops skills for movement and sport as well as learning to have a healthy body.

The **SPHE** curriculum deals with the child's social, personal and health education. Moral and social aspects are also covered through the school day e.g. kindness to others, sharing with them, saying we are sorry. As part of SPHE, children learn about their bodies and parts of the body. A central part of this Curriculum is the Stay Safe Programme (see [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)) which is a personal safety programme which aims to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying. Parents are advised when this programme is running in the child's class.

The children become aware of God and bible stories as well as learn prayers during **Religion**. A new RE programme, Grow in Love is now in place for the younger classes.

Teachers will liaise with parents throughout the year regarding learning approaches

## *Useful Websites*

The following websites may be of interest to you as you support your child in junior infants and beyond:

- ▶ **Settling into Junior Infants:**  
[www.into.ie/ROI/Publications/TipsforParents/](http://www.into.ie/ROI/Publications/TipsforParents/)
- ▶ **Literacy:**  
[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)    [www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Games/educational/onlinestory.htm](http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Games/educational/onlinestory.htm)
- ▶ **Numeracy:**  
[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) (Infant Classes: Maths Resources)
- ▶ **Aistear:**  
[www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) (Early Childhood Education/Aistear/Parents)
- ▶ **General:**  
[www.schooldays.ie](http://www schooldays.ie) (Primary Academic Support Websites)

## *Enjoy the Experience*

There are lots of ideas and suggestions in this booklet for you to help your child begin school and learning. We hope your child has a happy learning experience in St Anne's.

We will work together to help your child reach his/her full potential and to reach for the stars!



**Fáilte romhat agus roimh do pháiste chuig**

**Scoil Áine Naofa.**