



**St. Thomas' J. N. S.
Esker
Lucan**



Parents' Guide

Phone: 016282691

info@stthomasjns.com

www.stthomasjns.com



History and Ethos of School



Our school was founded in 1976 and is a mixed junior national school. The school has a Catholic ethos. A spirit of mutual respect for those of different affiliations is acknowledged. We commit ourselves to making our school a safe and enjoyable learning environment, through an integrated and challenging curriculum. Each pupil will be respected and encouraged to develop his/her full potential and to grow in love and respect for God, for self, for others and for our environment. We are open to the challenge of the future, encouraging effective co-operation between pupils, parents, staff, management and the local community.

School Mission

To create a school environment where we all learn and grow to our full potential.





School Crest

The school crest reminds us of our locality and Christian roots depicting St. Finian's Church in the parish of Esker. The motto "Mol an Óige." comes from the Irish proverb "Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh siad" and means: "Encourage the young and they will respond". The book and palette represent the broad range of learning opportunities we hope all children attending our school will receive.



School Rules

Be on time and be prepared.

Work hard and do your best.

Respect yourself and respect others.

Walk when moving.

Think first, then tell the truth.

Take care of all property



Members of Board of Management

(Nov. 2023 – Nov. 2027)

Mr. Gordan Hill	Chairperson
Mr. Teresa Moynihan	Principal
Mr. David Mullins	Fathers' Rep.
Ms. Olivia Burke	Mothers' Rep.
Ms. Liz Whelan	Community Rep.
Mrs. Karen Duffy	Patron's Rep. (Treasurer)
Mr. Colm Hickey	Community Rep.
Ms. Aisling Mason	Teachers' Rep. & Recording Secretary

Please keep this notice for future reference

The following is the list of closures for School year 2026-2027

- August: School Opens Thursday 27th August 2026
October: Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October (incl.) (Mid-Term Break)
November: School reopens Monday 2nd November
December: Christmas Holidays Begin on Friday Tuesday 22nd December 2026.
School closes at 12 o'clock
Jan. 2027 School reopens on Wednesday 6th January 2027
Feb. Monday 1st Bank Holiday
Feb. Thursday 18th and Friday 19th February (Mid-Term Break)
March: Wednesday 17th (St. Patrick's Day)
April: Easter Holidays School closes Friday 19th March at 12 o'clock
School reopens on Monday 5th April 2027
May: Mon. 3rd (Bank Holiday) to May 7th School Holidays
June: Monday 7th June (Bank Holiday)

Summer Holidays: Begin on Friday 25th June 2027 at 12 o'clock

1) Parents are asked to have arrangements made in case the children should have to be sent home in the event of a health and safety issue arising.

Emergency contact numbers should be provided to cover this eventuality.

2) Parents will be contacted by text/school website re closures (**weather**).
Extensive/prolonged closures may have to be made up at Easter or with discretionary school holiday in June

3) Parents are asked to note the opening and closing times of the school.

Junior & Senior Infants: 9.00am – 1.40pm

Classes 1st and 2nd 9.00am - 2.40pm

The Schools cannot accept responsibility for pupils outside these hours and teachers may not assume responsibility for pupils outside these hours.

There may be additional closures as a result of staff professional development training.

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School Policies and Procedures

Admissions

All children are admitted to the school subject to the enrolment policy as outlined, a copy of which can be inspected at the school office and on the school website.



Uniform

Girls: Black Watch Tartan tunic or skirt, and navy cardigan or jumper, with a light blue blouse, navy tie and suitable flat shoes. Navy tights and socks.

Boys: Navy jumper and tie with a light blue shirt, grey pants and black shoes. Uniforms and Tracksuits can be purchased from *Bernard Owens Menswear*, Main Street, Leixlip

P.E. On days when the class are doing P.E., the children should wear the school tracksuit, school polo shirt and runners. Individual items of clothing should be clearly **labelled** with your child's name.

Replacement tracksuit bottoms are also available from *Bernard Owens*.

Generic jumpers, cardigans, shirts, blouses, trousers and ties can also be purchased in Dunnes Stores, M+ S etc.

Attendance

- School begins for all pupils at **9.00am**. Be in line for 8.55am
School finishes for infant classes at **1.40pm** and for
First & Second classes at **2.40pm**.
- All absences from school are to be communicated via Aladdin,
to the class teacher, also early collection and late drop offs.
The effect of any absences can have a negative effect on a
child's progress.
- Where a child is absent due to a **contagious infection** please
inform the school so that the parents in the relevant class and
school personal can be informed.
- When your child is absent the **class teacher should be
informed via Aladdin** as to **why** your child is absent, and the
reason for the absence is recorded in the school attendance
records.
- If you have any medical evidence to support your child's
absence (Dr. cert, hospital letter) or otherwise
(e.g. passport stamp, airline ticket for child who has
travelled overseas) please keep these in a safe place
in your home (Do not send them into the school)
- Under the **Education Welfare Act** the school is legally
bound to report to Tulsa, children who
are absent from school for twenty days or more.



Staff Listing: 2026



Principal : Ms. Moynihan

Deputy Principal: Mr. R.Coleman

Mainstream Teachers

Ms. Tully Ms. Cronin Ms. Flathery Ms. Nolan
Ms. Koek Mr. Finnerty Ms. Hughes Ms. Mason
Ms. Dolan Ms. O'Callaghan Ms. Naughton Ms. Power
Ms. A. Cox Ms. O'Mahoney Ms. Fogherty Ms. N. Cox
Ms. O'Mahony Ms. Fogerty Ms. Freeney
Mr. Carpenter Mr. J. Coleman Ms. Broderick
Ms. O'Brien Mr. Shanahan Ms. Dillon Ms. Brennan

Resource/Learning Support Teachers

Ms. Carragher Ms. O'Loughlin Ms. Madigan Ms. Daly
Ms. Ryan Ms. Doherty Ms. Christain Ms. Lawlor Ms. O'Sullivan
Ms. Monahan Ms. Thompson Ms. Kililea Ms. Finnegan
Ms. Brady Ms. Rafferty Morris Ms. Feeney Ms. Roche
Ms. Nolan

Special Needs Assistants

Eileen Kerins Ailish Foy Margaret Boland
Yvonne Rogan Bernie Keating Trisha Murphy
Aine O'Shaughnessy Sonia Lynch Michelle Whelan
Eimear Corry Michelle McGrath Kara Wright

Secretary: Maureen Finnegan /Emma O'Farrell

Caretaker: Philip Doyle

Housekeeper: Amanda Sherry

Parental Involvement

Parents are involved in a variety of activities in the school e.g.

- Shared Reading/ Maths Activities
- School Garden/Grounds
- School Tours
- Sports Day
- Field Trips (park /library)
- Green Schools Programme
- School plays /drama/ concerts
- Class Visits (History)
- Intercultural Week

A simple word of thanks to at the end of the year to any staff member who assists your child during the year suffices as acknowledgement and thanks.



Parking

There are a number of safe locations to park close to the school. We also encourage our pupils to walk to school with their parents/minders/guardians as this is healthy for all and eases traffic congestion. The front car park can be accessed by permit holders only and is monitored by a clamping company. If a vehicle is clamped the individual must deal directly with the clamping company and a clamping fee applies before the vehicle can be released.

Disability Spaces are for those holding a P permit.
See procedures on website.

Punctuality

- Children should arrive on time and line up on/before 8.55am with their class on the schoolyard, and be collected on time, either 1.40 or 2.40. If a pupil needs to be collected early from school the parent should communicate this via Aladdin or present at reception and sign an early collection slip.
- Where a pupil arrives after the class lines have gone in, the parent should bring the child directly to reception.
- No provision can be made for supervision and insurance of children outside of school hours. Children should not be brought to school early. Until your child is handed over to the teacher you are responsible for their supervision.
- When the school bell rings at 9am parents move to the back of the line and teachers walk their class in line into the school building.
- There is no access to the school yards during **P.E.** times (9.10-1.30 and 1.50-2.30) Please vacate the yard promptly after drop off and pick up.
- Access to the school is via reception only outside of drop off and pick up times.

Wet Mornings

Children should not be brought to school early on wet mornings and should not enter the hall or prefab before wet day supervision commences. (8.45am)



School Bags

Please use an easy open, plain zipped bag, no wheels and of good size to fit an A4 size sheet/workbook. Wheelie bags are a health & safety concern for pupils with physical disability attending school. Check bag daily for letters etc. keep bag empty, no toys from home. Return any items/toys to school that may be taken home accidentally.

Hot School Meals

Each pupil in the school receives a free hot meal each day. The school food company (cashless@schoolfoodcompany.ie) is the company who administer the hot meals programme in our school. You will be given a card with instructions on how to download the app and log in to order your child's lunch. The School Food Company recommends that all parents log in on a weekly basis. All choices need to be edited before Friday 12 midnight for the following week. Should you have any questions about the programme please contact the School Food Company by email at cashless@schoolfoodcompany.ie

Healthy Lunches

While a hot lunch is provided, the children do need to bring a drink and snack to school for small break. We encourage nutritious food, the consumption of fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. Children should not bring in crisps or other snack packets, chewing gum, sweets or fizzy drinks. Small set yoghurts are allowed in first & second class only. As we have children with severe nut allergies we encourage all parents not to include foods with nut products/additives in their child's lunch. If a parent wishes to give his/her child a small treat on a Friday please ensure your child's lunch does not contain more than one treat.

As part of our Green Schools programme encouraging pupils to reduce re-use and recycle, we encourage parents to use lunch boxes. Please support our Green Schools programme by using sustainable materials in your child's lunchbox. (kitchen role instead of plastic or tinfoil) re-usable plastic bottles for drinks. No tetra pak cartons.

The Parents Association

The Parents Association is affiliated to the National Parents Council (NPC), which represents the views of parents to the Minister for Education & Skills. The 1998 Education Act has enhanced the involvement of parents in the education of their children. We have a direct input into the Board of Management through our elected parent's representatives on the Board of Management. For new parents this is a good way to meet other parents and to get to know the school environment and have an input into the general school activities. The Parents Association organise talks on relevant topics for parents throughout the year.

Some events organised by the Parents Association include:

Santa Claus' visit

Table Quiz

Cake Sale

Sponsored Walk

Book Rental

Talks for Parents

Car Boot Sale

Communion Party

Grounds Clean Up

Book Fair

Family Fun Run

Céilí

Coffee Mornings



All parents are expected to support the school and its policies as outlined in the booklet, many of which are available on the school website.

Payments: We ask parents to make payments via Aladdin

The objective of the Association shall be to provide opportunities for parents and teachers to meet exchange ideas and become informed on the education of their children in school, at home and in the broader community.

Parents wishing to volunteer/assist in the school should sign an “Acceptance of the Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment Form” and return to the relevant class teacher who copies to the Designated Liaison Person. (School Principal)

The essential aim of the Association is to promote a spirit of co-operation and goodwill between school management, staff and parents where the education and welfare of school children is concerned, and contribute to policy formation. All parents of children attending the school are free to join the Association. An A.G.M. is held every year in Term 1 to which you are invited to attend. The Association meets approx. five times a year, but it is not obligatory to attend all meetings. However, we are constantly looking for help throughout the year with the different events we organise. A link button to these activities is available on the school website or via parents’ Facebook page.



Medical

If your child has a specific medical condition or is on any medication inform the class teacher via Aladdin. If parents are absent from home at any time during the school day arrangements must be made with another person to look after their child should they need to leave school unexpectedly, due to illness, heating failure etc. **Please ensure the school has an updated name/emergency contact number for your child on the information form.**

If you have any information regarding your child that might be helpful to the school (e.g. Speech/language/hearing/sight/psychological assessments/separation/bereavement) please provide copies or inform the principal as soon as possible. The school has access to psychological support through N.E.P.S. (National Educational Psychological Services).

If there is a care order in place for your child please inform the school



Administration of Medicine

If a parent wishes for their child to receive medication during the school day they may call to the school (or appoint a designated person) and administer the required medicine in the course of the day. Teachers are not authorised to administer medicine except in life threatening situations and where that teacher has been sanctioned to do so by the Board. In these situations, a **Consent Form for Administration of Medication** must also be signed by the parents of the child. If a child is on medication for any reason the class teacher should be informed accordingly (including inhalers).

Health & Hygiene

Children should come to school neat and clean with particular attention to fingernails and hair. Girl's hair should be tied up. Parents are expected to be vigilant and thoroughly check their child's hair on a weekly basis. If your child has head lice or any other infectious condition e.g. ringworm, impetigo, conjunctivitis, please inform class teacher and seek medical advice from your doctor/ pharmacy. Where a problem persists pupils should not return to school until it is cleared. Good toilet habits and ability to use tissues is essential.



Every child should bring their own hand towel (facecloth) in their school bag and be familiar with using it. This towel should be kept in a plastic bag and washed at home regularly. Parents should ensure that their child gets adequate sleep particularly from Sunday to Thursday night. (Suggestion: 8.30pm) Children are encouraged to use the yard at break time and cannot stay in unless their safety is compromised e.g. limb in cast. We believe that if children are well enough to attend school they are well enough to be on the yard. When children are sick on a school morning they should not be sent to school. (e.g. vomiting, temperatures) as this helps prevent the spread of illness in school.

Supporting Individual Needs

The school endeavours to support each pupil's particular needs through a differentiated programme in class, with support teaching also from additional staff members, and all done in consultation with the parents. Parental consent is required by the school where a pupil is identified as requiring additional support both within and outside the classroom. Support is provided across a variety of areas-academic, social, behavioural, motor development, speech & language etc.

Assessment:

Assessment of children occurs across all class levels in order to inform teaching and learning. Observation & assessment procedures are in place at all class levels to identify the individual needs of each pupil. If particular assistance is required from a support teacher, parents will be notified.

Informal Assessment: All children's learning is monitored informally through teacher observation, teacher designed checklists and regular evaluation of children's work across all curricular areas.

Formal assessment: The Drumcondra test of early Literacy and Early Numeracy take place during senior infants.

Standardised Testing: (English and Maths) takes place for all children in 1st & 2nd class during the school year. Results are communicated to parents of children in 2nd class through the end of year school reports, and assistance with interpreting these results can be accessed at www.ncca.ie Results (school average) are communicated to the School Board and Dept. of Education.

E.A.L: (English as an additional language)

All children of international background for whom English is not their first language (or of either parent) will be assessed annually in line with Dept. of Education guidelines, in order to access language support for those pupils in need.

Lines of Communication

Teacher and parent/guardian may communicate by:

- Aladdin
- Personal contact at home-time.
- Phone message through school office. (01 6282691)
- Via email info@stthomasjns.com
- Parent/teacher meeting.
- Meeting with school Principal /Deputy Principal
- If agreement cannot be reached through any of the above means the Parent/Guardian may contact the Board of Management in the form of a written submission. (as outlined under agreed procedures (CPSMA/NPC/INTO).

Formal Parent Teacher Meetings are held in the month of November. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the class teacher and not aired on social media. Solutions can then be found through engaging with the school directly through the appropriate channels.

On-going Communication: A newsletter is issued termly. Messages are communicated via Aladdin on a regular basis. Parents are also invited to the school informally for a range of activities in which their child is involved e.g. Class Plays, Carol Service and Sports Day etc.

Annual Pupil Reports are issued to parents in mid-June via Aladdin. This allows adequate time to discuss any queries/concerns you may have re your child's progress.

Contact Details

If your phone no/address changes in the course of the year or if there is a change in family circumstances (e.g. illness, hospitalisation of family member etc. please inform the school secretary.)

Homework

It is the policy of the school to **assign homework** on a regular basis in 1st & 2nd class. The time taken will vary from child to child but in most cases should take between **15 & 30 minutes**. Homework will be given informally in Junior & Senior Infants and should not exceed **15 minutes**. Ensure that the work area is quiet and clear from clutter and distraction. Parents should sign the homework journal (1st & 2nd) to confirm that the work has been fully attempted. Reading and oral language homework should be signed when given in the infant classes. Please encourage your child to read aloud. Homework is not given at weekends. **Homework** is generally **revision of and follow-up** to work your child has done in class. If your child has difficulty with their homework please inform the class teacher. When children receive additional learning support in literacy the support teacher will assign the individual homework to the relevant pupil.

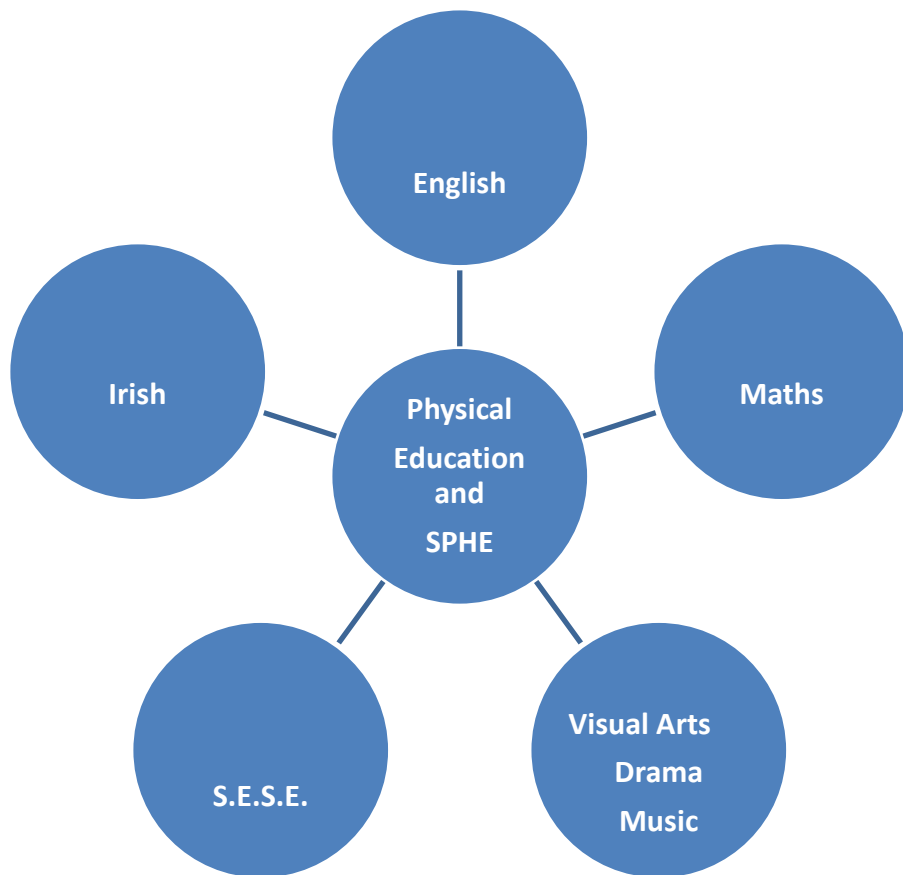
Homework



Cards / Invitations etc.

Children should not bring in party invitations/birthday/Christmas cards etc. to school. Parents should not send in birthday cakes/party bags to school. Parents are asked to distribute above items **outside** school grounds.

School Curriculum



Child Safeguarding

- **Children First:** The school has adopted local procedures to help implement the National Guidelines for the Protection & Welfare of children, including a Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment as outlined in mandated procedure for schools. (Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children Act 2017) which is available on the website and is subject to annual review. The school also has a Critical Incident Management Policy in place. All personnel who work in the school require vetting pre-clearance by the National Vetting Office. Parents who wish to assist with school activities/trips should read the child safeguarding statement and sign the associated acceptance form which is available via class teacher.
- **Internet Safety:** Parents are requested to refrain from posting photographs or videos of school activities to **all social media, unless permission has been sought.** School internet access is strictly monitored through our Acceptable Use Policy. (AUP)
- **Data Protection:** Under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) the school is committed to full compliance with all mandated guidelines as outlined in GDPR (May '18) for schools contained therein.
- **Phones and Smart Watches: No phones/smart watches are allowed in school. Please keep at home.**



Religious Education

The Grow in Love Programme is taught in all classes from Junior Infants to Second Class. Parents who do not wish for their child to participate in the program must inform the school. Sacramental Preparation for Catholic Children takes place in First and Second Classes with children receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion in Second Class.

Active Schools

St. Thomas' JNS participates in Active Schools. The Active School Programme promotes and increases the level of physical activity and exercise in the whole school community.



Broad and Balanced Curriculum

The school endeavours to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The school has invested and continues to invest in multiple resources and does not rely on one textbook or workbook in any curricular area. This may result in your child not completing every page in every text or workbook that they use. All classes utilise interactive boards. Technology is used throughout the school to support teaching and learning. Guidance and tips for parents are available on the school website and on www.ncca.ie.

A coaching officer from Lucan Sarsfields works with all classes in the development of skills in Gaelic Games. Field trips to the school garden and grounds, as well as Lucan Library and Griffeen Park, all help to form a rich learning environment for our pupils.

School Tours: Parents who volunteer to help are randomly selected to assist on different trips throughout the year on a rotational basis. Pupils remain under the duty of care of the school on all trips that take place during the school day. Please do not accompany school trips unless you have been nominated by a class teacher to assist, as it may distract your child when they are under the care of another adult on the day. Parents must sign an "Acceptance of Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment Form" before assisting with any activity in the school.



Social, Personal and Health Education incorporating personal safety and relationships and sexuality education.

The subject also includes the Stay Safe Programme which is a mandatory child abuse prevention programme that teaches the children personal safety skills. This is available to view on line at www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSA) is taught as part of the SPHE programme. www.pdst.ie/node/811 As part of the RSE programme, children learn to name the parts of the male and female body, using the appropriate anatomical terms. RSE provides structural opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of human sexuality and relationships through processes which will enable them to form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework.

Walk Tall is another programme used as part of SPHE. This is a substance misuse prevention programme and it aims to give children the confidence, skills, attitudes and knowledge to make healthy choices in their lives. Children also practise mindfulness as part of SPHE.

Green Schools

The school has participated in the Green Schools Programme since the year 2000. This programme is an environmental awareness and education programme.

Restorative Practice: As part of our code of behaviour we are focusing on the principles of Restorative Practice. Restorative practice is a whole school teaching and learning approach that encourages behaviour that is supportive and respectful. It puts the onus on individuals to be truly accountable for their behaviour and to repair any harm caused to others as a result of their actions. Through appropriate questioning and listening we allow children to identify what has happened and the impact on the other person. To make this more accessible to the children we have introduced Gabby the Giraffe. Gabby has a huge heart and her message is to be a PAL!

P -Play Gently **A** -Always be kind **L** -Love each other

In addition to Gabby and as part of the Restorative Practice code we will use key questions. In PR there are six key questions. However as this is a junior school we are focusing on just three questions when addressing behaviour both in our classroom and on the yard.

These are: What happened? Who was hurt? What can we do differently next time?