

St. Finlough's Primary School, Sistrakeel

Annual Prospectus 2021-22

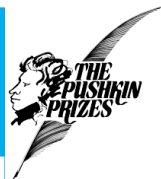


St. Finlough's Primary School (Sistrakeel)
138 Tartnakelly Road
Glack
Limavady
County Derry
BT49 9JL

Tel/Fax: 028 77763848

Principal: Mrs. L. Lagan *B.Ed, PQHNI*

email: info@stfinloughsps.sistrakeel.ni.sch.uk





Dear Parents,

On behalf of the whole school community, I wish to warmly welcome you and your child to St. Finlough's PS, Sistrakeel. St. Finlough's PS opened its doors in April 1975 under the name: Sistrakeel PS. The school is set in a picturesque rural location in Glack, approximately two and a half miles from the village of Ballykelly in Limavady.

Our whole school community takes pride in the fact that St. Finlough's PS, Sistrakeel is a happy, family and community based school where the pupils themselves, staff, parents and governors all have vital roles to play in helping all pupils reach their potential spiritually, physically, emotionally, academically and morally.

An atmosphere of concern, tolerance and respect for others is evident amongst all staff, pupils, parents and governors. Our school ethos is firmly based on Catholic Christian values and this ethos is reflected in our partnership between home, school and the parish. **As a Catholic school, we welcome children from all denominations, cultures and traditions. Inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.**

As a school we focus on ensuring that our pupils are happy, safe and secure. This provides the bedrock so that they can progress in the core curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy, ICT and WAU within the context of a faith-based environment. We firmly believe that strong relationships and routines support the holistic development of our pupils and accordingly, we place great emphasis on developing and maintaining these throughout the school.

A child attending St. Finlough's Primary School can be assured of the highest quality of care, a broad and balanced curriculum with specific emphasis on literacy and numeracy as well as very high expectations. As a self - evaluating school, we consistently endeavour to improve and extend our practice. Accordingly, the school has a well-deserved reputation as being an innovative place of learning that works very effectively with all partner organisations.

The purpose of this prospectus is to help you have a better understanding of our school, how it operates and what we offer our pupils. However, no prospectus can convey the real ethos or atmosphere of a school. We invite you to check out our website:

www.stfinloughssistrakeel.co.uk

More importantly, come and visit us and see the school for yourself.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Louise Lagan (Principal)



Vision

Our Vision at St. Finlough's Primary School is for the outstanding provision for each and every child in order for them to reach their full potential. This is delivered through a child-centred Catholic ethos. Our provision focuses on the learning of all our pupils, staff, parents and wider community and, as a Catholic school, we promote faith, high academic achievement and learning for life.

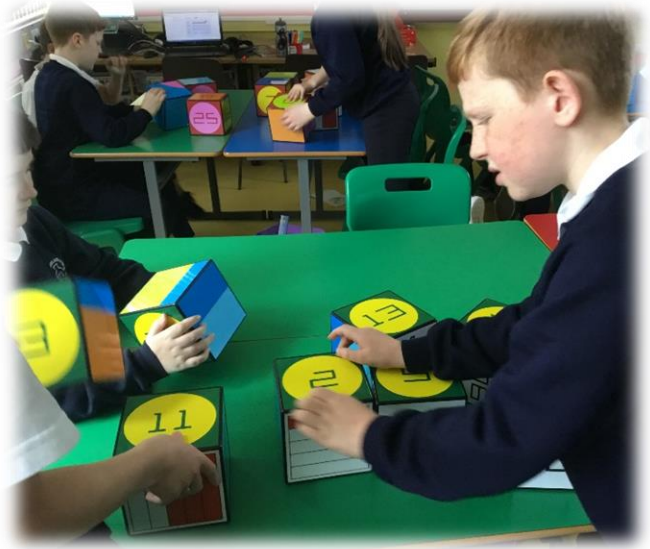


School Ethos, Values and Aims.

As a Catholic School, we endeavour to promote a living faith and to create a secure environment which enriches and complements the love and care experienced at home. Staff work individually and collectively to support each other and to create conditions which foster learning, self-discipline and respect for others.

We welcome children from all denominations and those from none as well as pupils from all cultures and traditions. We treat all members of our school community fairly and equally. Our school is characterised by a spirit of compassion and understanding and we aim to promote the dignity and well-being of all. The whole school community has been involved in the development of our school logo 'Teagasc agus Curam' which translates as 'Educate and Care.'





Mission Statement and Aims (Ethos)

Our mission is to provide an exciting and stimulating experience for all our children. Their journey through our school will be happy and filled with genuine, deep learning. We are and will always be committed to improvement and it's incumbent upon all of us to be life-long learners, to keep abreast of new ideas, innovations in education, continually challenging expectation and to develop personally as a result.

This mission will be pursued in a culture of mutual openness and trust, high emotional intelligence and a deep spiritual commitment to our principles, values and to all of the children and community which we serve. In doing so, we accept the need to challenge and be challenged, to initiate change and to move ourselves culturally towards visionary excellence. We ask that all who use our school enjoy the experience, assist in our mission, learn and improve as a consequence.

In St Finlough's P.S., we are aware of the role that the school has in promoting the life of each child in our care and this involves more than academic considerations. As a Catholic school, we seek to reflect the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith and local community. We welcome children from all denominations and are inclusive of all. This involves everyone connected with life in our school, (pupils, teachers, supervisors, learning support assistants, our parents, our governors, our church community and clergy as well as other groups and organisations within our locality).





School Aims

St. Finlough's P.S., Sistrakeel, promotes high achievement and learning for life by working with children to:

- To provide a caring, sharing environment based on Christian values.
- To become an extension of the Catholic home
- To develop the academic, physical, social, moral and emotional abilities of each child so that each child can reach his/her potential
- To provide each child with a broad, balanced curriculum in keeping with the aims of the common curriculum and encourage each child to achieve his/her potential in all curriculum areas
- To promote equality of educational opportunity for all
- To be inclusive of all pupils
- To promote each child's awareness of his/her identity and heritage and have respect for other traditions
- To develop a sense of fairness, tolerance, respect and responsibility towards others
- To develop enquiring minds and a sense of curiosity
- To celebrate their self-worth and realise their abilities, achievements, strengths, and personal preferences in order to have a high level of self-esteem
- To instill in pupil's life-long learning by motivating pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
- To promote an awareness of the need for rules and regulations within the school environment and to encourage respect for them
- To take ownership of their environment both locally and globally
- To always strive for better

We ensure that each child will achieve success through experiencing:

- A broad, balanced and challenging curriculum
- A stimulating learning environment
- A varied programme of extra-curricular activities and school visits
- An ethos that is supportive, encouraging and friendly
- An effective partnership between school, home and the wider community
- A variety of teaching approaches and strategies to meet the needs and learning styles of pupils
- Access to a range of varied and up-to-date resources

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:

- Ongoing self-evaluation to ensure our vision is achieved
- Working collaboratively with all our stakeholders

Our stated ethos is clearly evidenced in the daily operation of the school with a clear sense of purpose and identity present among both pupils and staff. This is supported by the maintenance and development of a high quality learning environment. Although the school has been opened since April 1975, over 40 years ago, the learning environment has been consistently updated, enhanced and enriched so that the pupils truly do have a learning environment that is fit for purpose.



Home to School Transport

Transport is available to and from St. Finlough's Primary School each day and is provided by North Coast Community Transport.

We currently have pick up points in New Line Rd, Barnault Rd, Foyle Drive, Spallen Rd, River-view, Glasvey Drive and Camen Pk. More pick up points can be made available upon request.

For more details, contact Sharon at the school office or check out the link below to find out whether your child may be entitled to transport assistance funding:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/help-available/home-to-school-transport>

Meet the staff

Mrs F. Patton - P1/P2 Teacher.

Mrs L. Lagan - P3 Teacher (Principal)

Mrs N. Morrison - P4/P5 Teacher

Miss G. Herron & Miss C. Mulholland - P6/P7 Teacher

Ms M.Canning - Learning Support Assistant

Miss A.Carmichael - Learning Support Assistant

Mrs S. Duffy - Learning Support Assistant

Mrs S. Colhoun - Secretary

Mrs S. O'Connor - Cleaner

Mrs M. Moore - Catering Assistant

Mrs L. Cooper - Catering Assistant

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of St. Finlough's Primary School is made up of enthusiastic and committed people from various parts of our parish who work in close partnership with the staff of the school, to ensure that each child reaches his/her fullest potential. Those on the Board of Governors come from various walks of



life and each is dedicated to enhancing the educational experience and outcomes for all those in our care. All are rooted in supporting the role of Catholic education within our parish.

The governors play an important role within school - they provide strategic management, critical challenge and accountability. They appoint the principal and staff, and delegate the daily management of the school to them. They also oversee all recruitment and finance matters, monitor all aspects of the curriculum including educational outcomes, and pay special attention to the handing on of the faith within the school. The Board of Governors also play a central role in our Safeguarding team.

Meet the Governors:

Fr. Chris Mc Dermott	Trustee
Mr Barry Kerr	Trustee
Mrs Cathy Mc Devitt	Trustee
Mr Gareth Peoples	Trustee
Mr Sam McGregor	(Dept of Education)
Mrs Elaine Kealey	(EA)
Mr Shaun Roddy	(EA) & Chair of the Board of Governors
Mrs Christine Doherty	Parent Representative
Mrs Fiona Patton	Teacher Representative
Mrs Louise Lagan	Secretary & Principal

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA – YEAR 1

During the admissions procedure when applying the criteria punctual applications will be considered before late applications are considered. The application procedure opens on 10 January 2022 at 12noon (GMT) and an application submitted by the closing date of 28th January 2022 at 12noon (GMT) will be treated as a punctual application. An application received after 12noon (GMT) on 28th January 2022 will be treated as a late application.

Year 1 pupils entering the school shall be:

1. Children of compulsory school age who normally reside in the following areas of the Parish of Limavady:-
The area served by St Finlough's Church, Barnault Road above Highlands Road crossing Ballykelly Road as far as and including Spallen Road.

In the event of over-subscription in the criterion above (1), the following Sub-Criteria will be applied in the order set down.



- a) who have a brother/sister (half-brother/sister; foster brother/sister) currently enrolled at the school;
- b) eldest child in the family
- c) whose parents/guardians is currently a permanent member of the school teaching/ ancillary/auxiliary
- d) staff;
- e) whose after school carer resides in the area of Limavady Parish as defined in 1 above.
- f) whose parents/guardians, brother/sister (half-brother/sister) are past pupils of the school;

In the event of over-subscription in the last sub-criterion which can be applied, then selection for all remaining places in this category will be on the basis of the initial letter of the surname, in the order set out below:

H B A O Y G V L M A C N R T W C J M F P D I X Z S M c U E K Q

In the event of surnames beginning with the same letter, the subsequent letters of the surname will be used in alphabetical order. In the event of two identical surnames, the alphabetical order of the initials of the forenames will be used.

1. Children of compulsory school age from other areas.

In the event of over-subscription in the criteria above (2), the same Sub-Criteria specified in the previous section for Year One will be applied in the order set down.

YEAR 1 ADMISSIONS – AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

If, after the beginning of the school year, the number of late applicants is greater than the number of places available, the same Admissions Criteria for entry to Year 1 will be applied.

DUTY TO VERIFY

The Board of Governors reserves the right to require such supplementary evidence as it may determine to support or verify information on any application form.

The provision of false or incorrect information or the failure to provide information within the deadlines set by the school can result in the withdrawal of a place and the inability to offer a place on the part of any school nominated on the applicant's application form.

WAITING LISTS

The school's policy on the consideration of applications after the Open Enrolment Admissions procedures concludes on 27 April 2022 is available directly from the school. Should a vacancy arise, the above criteria will be applied to select pupils from our waiting list.



Admissions Criteria September 2022

RESPECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND PRINCIPAL IN RELATION TO ADMISSIONS

When considering which children should be selected for admission, the Board of Governors will only take into account information which is detailed on or attached to the application form. Parents/guardians should therefore ensure that all information pertaining to their child and relevant to the school's admissions criteria is stated on the application form or attached to it.

The Board of Governors of St Finlough's Primary School, Sistrakeel has determined that the following criteria shall be applied in the event of pupils applying for places in Year 1 in September being greater than the admissions number, in the order set down below. Priority shall be given to children normally resident in Northern Ireland at the time of admission and then to those pupils regarded by the Board of Governors on the basis of supporting written evidence provided by the parents/guardians and/or statutory agencies as having special circumstances e.g. medical, or social security factors.





Our school day is organised as follows:



Our breakfast club runs daily from 8.00am

9.00am: Lessons start

10.30am-10.45am: Break Time P1, 2 & P3

10.45am-11.00am: Break Time P4 - P7

12pm-12.45pm: Lunch Time Primary 1-3

12.30pm-1.15pm: Lunch Time Primary 4-7

2.00pm: School Finishes for Primary 1&2

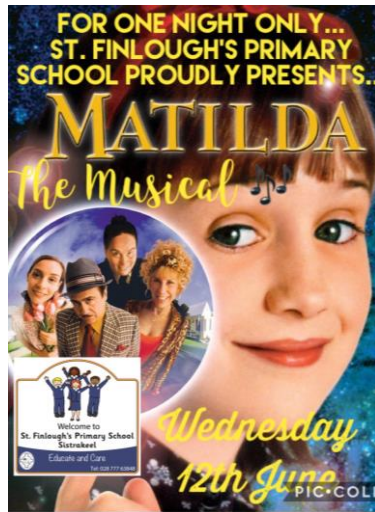
3.00pm: School Finishes for Primary 3-7

2.00pm - 4.00pm: After school Clubs (P1-7)



Throughout the school year, our extra-curricular activities/after school clubs include:

- Irish Language
- Stay and Play
- Numeracy
- Literacy
- Kick Start Soccer
- Art, Design & Craft
- ICT
- Musical Pathways
- Film Club
- Gardening
- Gaelic Sports
- Cookery
- Choir
- School shows/drama
- Swimming P6 & P7
- Transfer examination support



We are very proud of our annual school productions which include nativity shows, plays, concerts and musicals. We endeavour to provide opportunities for each and every child to explore and nurture their talents and interests.

Attendance

Good attendance is paramount to success in school and we would urge parents to make every effort to ensure that children have high attendance rates. The old fashioned hand-written Roll Book is now long gone; school attendance systems are now computerised, enabling us to keep very detailed records regarding whole-school, class and individual attendance patterns.

In addition to stating if a child is 'present' or 'absent', teachers are now required to also state if the child arrives late, leaves early or is absent for a part of the day. As good attendance is so important, any concerns will be raised with parents at an early stage.

Please note: the school cannot give permission for children to be taken out of school for family holidays. We liaise closely with our Education Welfare Officer to review school attendance.





MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT

WHY ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IS SO IMPORTANT

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.

Key Point

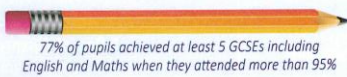
Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

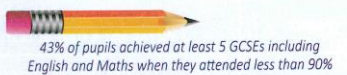
- To learn.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things in life.
- To gain qualifications.
- To develop new skills.
- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To have the best possible start in life.

CAN ATTENDANCE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO EXAM RESULTS?

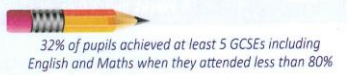
Greater than
95% Attendance



Less than
90% Attendance



Less than
80% Attendance



Source: School Leavers 2014/15

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time - not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness - this should be followed up with a written note when your child returns to school.
- If your child is not attending school as you expect they may be putting themselves at risk - Who are they with? What are they doing?
- Do not take family holidays during term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homeworks).
- Attend parents evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Always support school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour.

Key Point

Parents of children aged 4-16 who are enrolled in school are legally required to make sure they attend.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed



School Uniform.

To order school uniforms at any time of the year (no minimum order) please log on to www.schooltrendsonline.com type in St. Finlough's primary school and follow the instructions. All uniform ordered online will be delivered direct to your home address. Uniform can also be purchased from JohnPaul fashions in Limavady.

Girls

Navy pleated skirt/pinafore/trousers
School jumper
White Polo shirt with crest
Navy socks or tights
Black shoes

Boys

Navy jogging bottoms (P1&2)
Navy trousers (P3-7)
School jumper
White Polo shirt with crest
Navy socks
Black shoes

PE uniform

Navy bottoms
White t-shirt
Trainers



If you think your child is entitled to meals or uniform clothing assistance, please contact the Education Authority on tel: 028 82 411411 or on the following link:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-school-uniform-allowance>

Home-School Communication.

It is important that we keep our parents/guardians up to date and informed of their child's learning experiences and progress. We communicate with our parents, guardians and extended school community in a variety of ways.

We use SEESAW as our main home / school communication forum. We also use a text messaging service to contact parents and guardians of any upcoming events. School newsletters are sent home monthly and are accessible on our website: www.stfinloughssistrakeel.co.uk. Our school secretary works in the school part time, and we make every effort possible to reach the telephone when she is not in the school building.

We conduct parent meetings twice a year, and at any other time by request. Each child receives an end of year school report in June.

Mrs. Lagan teaches each day until 12 noon. She is available to meet at any time before 9am or after her designated teaching time. We are a busy school so please check your child's school bag each night for any letters or notes. Please ensure your contact numbers and address is correct with our secretary Sharon.



Health Promoting School.

An important part of our practice is the promotion of healthy eating and to this end, we ask children to have a piece of fruit for their mid-morning snack. We would appreciate your support in this, so that together we can encourage children to eat healthily throughout the day. Milk and fruit are available to buy in School.

We encourage the children to drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated, and to be best prepared for learning.

Our canteen follows all healthy eating policies and the menus available are both wide and varied, offering the healthiest of choices. Our canteen menu is sent home and is available on the school website. School dinners cost £2.60 each. If you think your child is entitled to free school meals, please contact the Education Authority on tel: 028 82 411411 or click on the following link:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-school-uniform-allowance>



The Daily Mile

Our school has decided to start a brand new challenge to help us all become more fit and healthy. The Daily Mile is a challenge which was started in Scotland by a headteacher who was concerned about the increase of childhood obesity. This challenge means all children will walk 1 mile every day. It is inclusive of all abilities and aims to increase the fitness of each child within 4 weeks. There are more than 2500 schools taking part in the UK and Ireland. More information can be found on www.thedailymile.co.uk

Every child will participate at some point during the school day so please ensure that your child has a bottle of water with them to school and a coat.

Pastoral Care and Child Protection.

We are very proud of our Pastoral Care provision here at St. Finlough's Primary School, and this was recognised as a major strength in our most recent inspection report. We want each child to feel safe and secure; we want to influence their opinions, values and attitudes in a positive manner and we want to create an environment that is characterised by healthy relationships and mutual respect.

However, we also need to have systems in place should there be any cause for concern, and each year we send out our Child Protection Policy detailing our approaches to such concerns. This policy is also available on our website.



The Northern Ireland Curriculum

The Northern Ireland Curriculum is organized in the following learning areas:

- Language & literacy
- Numeracy & Mathematics
- World Around Us (Geography, History & Science)
- Information, Communication & Technology (I.C.T.)
- Physical Education (P.E.)
- Religious Education
- The Arts (Music, Art & Drama)

At the heart of the curriculum lies an explicit emphasis on the development of skills and capabilities for life-long learning and for operating effectively in society. Children progressively develop the range of cross-curricular skills and thinking skills/personal capabilities listed below:

Cross Curricular Skills:

- Communication
- Using Mathematics
- Using ICT

Thinking Skills & Personal Capabilities:

- Managing information
- Working with others
- Thinking, problem-solving and decision making
- Self-management
- Being creative

Using ICT across the curriculum:

We recognise the importance of ICT in all areas of the curriculum and the outside world. ICT is used as a resource in many areas of the curriculum and for all age ranges and abilities.

Across the curriculum, pupils are given opportunities to develop skills in the five ICT strands:

1. Explore
2. Express



3. Exchange
4. Evaluate
5. Exhibit

All classrooms are equipped with c2k PC's and we have 29 iPads. Pupils are encouraged to use the internet safely in line with our 'Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.' Further information on the Northern Ireland Curriculum can be accessed at: www.nicurriculum.org.uk

In order to ensure that our children are best equipped for their future, and the future job market, we integrate 'STEAM' based activities within topic learning. These include elements of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math's. This year our Primary 7 children were the regional finalists of the Sentinus STEM K'Nex challenge.

We teach Phonics at St. Finlough's Primary School

Phonics is a way of teaching children to read quickly and skilfully. They are taught how to:

- recognise the sounds that each individual letter makes;
- identify the sounds that different combinations of letters make - such as 'sh' or 'oo'; and
- blend these sounds together from left to right to make a word.

Children can then use this knowledge to 'de-code' new words that they hear or see. This is the first important step in learning to read.

Research shows that when phonics is taught in a structured way – starting with the easiest sounds and progressing through to the most complex – it is the most effective way of teaching young children to read. It is particularly helpful for children aged 5 to 7.

Almost all children who receive good teaching of phonics will learn the skills they need to tackle new words. They can then go on to read any kind of text fluently and confidently, and to read for enjoyment.

Children who have been taught phonics also tend to read more accurately than those taught using other methods, such as 'look and say'. This includes children who find learning to read difficult, for example those who have dyslexia.

Learning through Play based activities in the foundation stage.

Play provides opportunities for children to experience learning in a meaningful and purposeful way. It is a means by which children can develop the skills and capabilities to be effective learners. Play provides a context for children to access the content of the curriculum.

Opportunities should be given to children to build on previous experiences and make connections in their learning in an enjoyable way. The environment should encourage children to develop positive dispositions and share ownership of their learning. The teacher should provide opportunities for the children to engage in effective learning within a safe and secure environment. This reflects how children learn.



Play:

- Develops the fundamental skills of literacy, numeracy and oral communication
- Provides rich and varied contexts for developing skills such as observing, organising, recording, interpreting and predicting
- Promotes positive attitudes to school and to learning
- Provides opportunities to learn in a practical way
- Provides opportunities for developing movement and manipulative skills
- Develops natural curiosity and stimulates imagination
- Provides opportunities for exploration, investigation, problem solving and decision-making
- Provides opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and skills through a range of contexts spanning all subjects in the curriculum

Play is Important

- Play promotes children's development, learning, creativity and independence
- Play keeps children healthy and active – active children become active adults
- Play fosters social inclusion. It helps children understand the people and places in their lives, learn about their environment and develop a sense of community
- Play allows children to find out about themselves, their abilities and their interests
- Play is therapeutic. It helps children to deal with difficult or painful circumstances, such as emotional stress or medical treatments
- Play gives children the chance to let off steam and have fun



10 COMMON PRINCIPLES OF EARLY YEARS EDUCATION

1. The best way to prepare children for their adult life is to give them what they need as children
2. Children are whole people who have feelings, ideas and relationships with others, and who need to be physically, mentally, morally and spiritually healthy.
3. Subjects such as mathematics and art cannot be separated; young children learn in an integrated way and not in neat, tidy compartments.
4. Children learn best when they are given appropriate responsibility, allowed to make errors, decisions and choices, and respected as autonomous learners.
5. Self-discipline is emphasised. Indeed, this is the only kind of discipline worth having. Reward systems are very short-term and do not work in the long-term. Children need their efforts to be valued.
6. There are times when children are especially able to learn particular things.
7. What children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point of a child's education.
8. Imagination, creativity and all kinds of symbolic behaviour (reading, writing, drawing, dancing, music, mathematical numbers, algebra, role play and talking) develop and emerge when conditions are favourable.
9. Relationships with other people (both adults and children) are of central importance in a child's life.
10. Quality education is about three things: the child, the context in which learning takes place, and the knowledge and understanding which the child develops and learns.

Tina Bruce

These principles underpin our Early Years curriculum and guide our planning. Well-planned and well-resourced play activities which allow for progression in a child's thinking and understanding can provide the context in which these principles become the reality for all our children



Musical Pathways & the Arts

Here at St. Finlough's PS, we aim to nurture talents and ensure that our children experience a mixed, broad and balanced curriculum. Our children are provided with a wide range of learning experiences and opportunities within art, music and drama. Primary 1-5 children receive specialist music tuition from the Education Authority's 'Musical Pathways' programme each week.

"Musical Pathways to Learning (MPL) is a scheme which enables children to develop through music. It can be offered to children from nursery level through to the end of KS2. This is done using progressive programmes and stimulating activities, including rhymes, songs and games. There is considerable research evidence which demonstrates that the skills learned are transferable across all subjects in the primary curriculum. MPL is a whole class programme, which involves every child; the sessions are 30 minutes long and typically run for 30 weeks over the academic year."

More information outlining the benefit of this programme can be found at our school website:

<http://www.stfinloughssistrakeel.co.uk/parent-area/musical-pathways-to-learning-information/>



Our children are also given the opportunity to perform as part of a choir and in class/whole school musical productions.

We are a Green Flag Award Winning School



Our School is proud to celebrate its achievement of being awarded the prestigious Green Flag in June 2018. This was a wonderful achievement where the children learnt to recognise the role in which they play in ensuring sustainability for our future and healthy lifestyle choices. The children participated in various initiatives including community litter picking, growing their own fruit and vegetables, using recycled water, creating a bug-hotel and using eco-friendly methods of travel in our 'walk to school fortnight.'

StFinlough's Primary-School
4 hrs · 🧑🏫

We had a special visitor to our school on Friday - Mick Conway (Our local nature expert). P1, P2 and P3 had a great day outdoors. We listened to the birds and carried out a bird survey. We studied some local birds and drew detailed drawings for our display. We went on a tree hunt around our school grounds and drew different types of leaves. To finish off our day we had a minibeast hunt! 🌿 🍄 🐛 🐌 🐜 🐝



Parents Association



At St. Finlough's Primary School, we have a dedicated and motivated parent-teacher association who actively engage in fundraising throughout the school year. This funding is used to enrich the children's learning experiences and assist in the purchase of additional resources. The PTA have recently raised enough funds to purchase 29 iPads which has been a welcome addition to our ICT provision. New members are always welcome. Dates and times of meetings are circulated termly.

In June 2017, the PTA raised enough funds for the purchase of 29 iPads. The staff of St. Finlough's P.S., have always recognised and cherished the important role of parents in children's education, and we actively support this via our website, social media platforms, parent meetings and regular curriculum newsletters. As a school, we value and are extremely thankful for the support that we receive from our parents and guardians. In liaising closely with parents and guardians, we aim to provide the best for the children in our care.

Special Educational Needs and Inclusion

In line with the Code of Practice (1998) and the Special Educational Needs Disability Order NI (SENDO, 2005), this school promotes an 'inclusive ethos'. We aim to educate all of our pupils by ensuring access to a broad and balanced curriculum, suitably differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils so that children can achieve their potential.

All children with Special Educational Needs are assessed and identified as early as possible. The school operates a five-staged approach when making provision for pupils with S.E.N. Provision in most cases will be within the year class group where the class teacher will meet the needs of pupils with SEN. Additionally, a number of children who require additional help are supported by the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator on a 1:1 basis or in small groups.

Where provision for a child's special educational needs is beyond the school's resources, parents are informed and consulted and with their agreement, the child's teacher and school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will recommend that the pupil concerned be assessed by the school's Educational Psychologist. Recommendations made by the Educational Psychologist will be put into practice by the child's class teacher, the SENCO and where appropriate, any external agencies that may be supporting the child.

If the school is still concerned about a child's progress, the school will again inform and consult with parents and may recommend that a more formal assessment of the child's special educational needs is carried out by



the Educational Psychologist and other external agencies supporting the child. The specialist services of the Western Education and Library Board Section will make recommendations based on the outcome of the formal assessment.

We involve both the child and his/her parents in setting and reviewing targets. We encourage parents to work closely with us in supporting children with learning difficulties and involve them at each stage of the process.

If a parent has a concern regarding Special Educational Needs provision, they are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to try to resolve the issue. Where no solution has been reached, the Education Authority offers –

- Advice and Information Service
- Dispute Avoidance and Resolution Service (DARS)

(Telephone 028 82 411411 for further information on either of the above services.)



Child protection and Safeguarding

Our School was inspected in November 2018 in the area of child protection and safeguarding by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETINI). The report will be published soon on their website which can be accessed at: www.etini.gov.uk

The principles and philosophy which underpin our child protection procedures are those set out in the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child' (UK agreement in 1991) and enshrined in the Children (NI) Order 1995 (effective from November 1996). In particular the principle we support is that every child has the fundamental right to be safe from harm and with proper care being given to their physical, emotional, spiritual well being by those looking after them.

In accordance with recent legislation, we have a 'Child Protection Policy' in operation. Staff, parents and governors are made aware of their own and the school's responsibility in reporting cases of suspected child abuse. Everyone has a duty to protect children from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and from neglect. Staff are very alert to procedures relating to Child Protection.

The school has developed and provides a 'child protection ethos' and a preventative approach. We aim to involve the whole school in creating a 'listening school'. The school offers protection on two levels:



- Immediate protection – creating a listening environment that makes it easier for children to share their concerns through the taught programme, good supervision and two way communication between pupils, staff, parents and the community. Children are informed who they can talk to if they have any concerns. Additionally, pupils are provided with opportunities for disclosure through ‘Bubble-Time and Listening Ear-Time’.
- Long term protection, enhancing self esteem and encouraging pro-social skills, breaking the cycle of abusive behaviour as an intrinsic part of the whole curriculum.

The school curriculum includes a programme for pupils on personal protection. As part of our child protection policy, all staff adhere to the agreed code of conduct for employees and volunteers. This code of conduct covers all activities organised in and by the school, whether on school premises or elsewhere. Our pupils also agree a code of conduct to ensure their own safety and the safety and welfare of others.

The Board of Governors also adheres to safe recruitment practices in relation to employment at St. Finlough’s PS. All persons beyond the school staff who are invited to be involved as helpers/leaders on trips, residential visits, or other out of school activities are subject to vetting procedures.

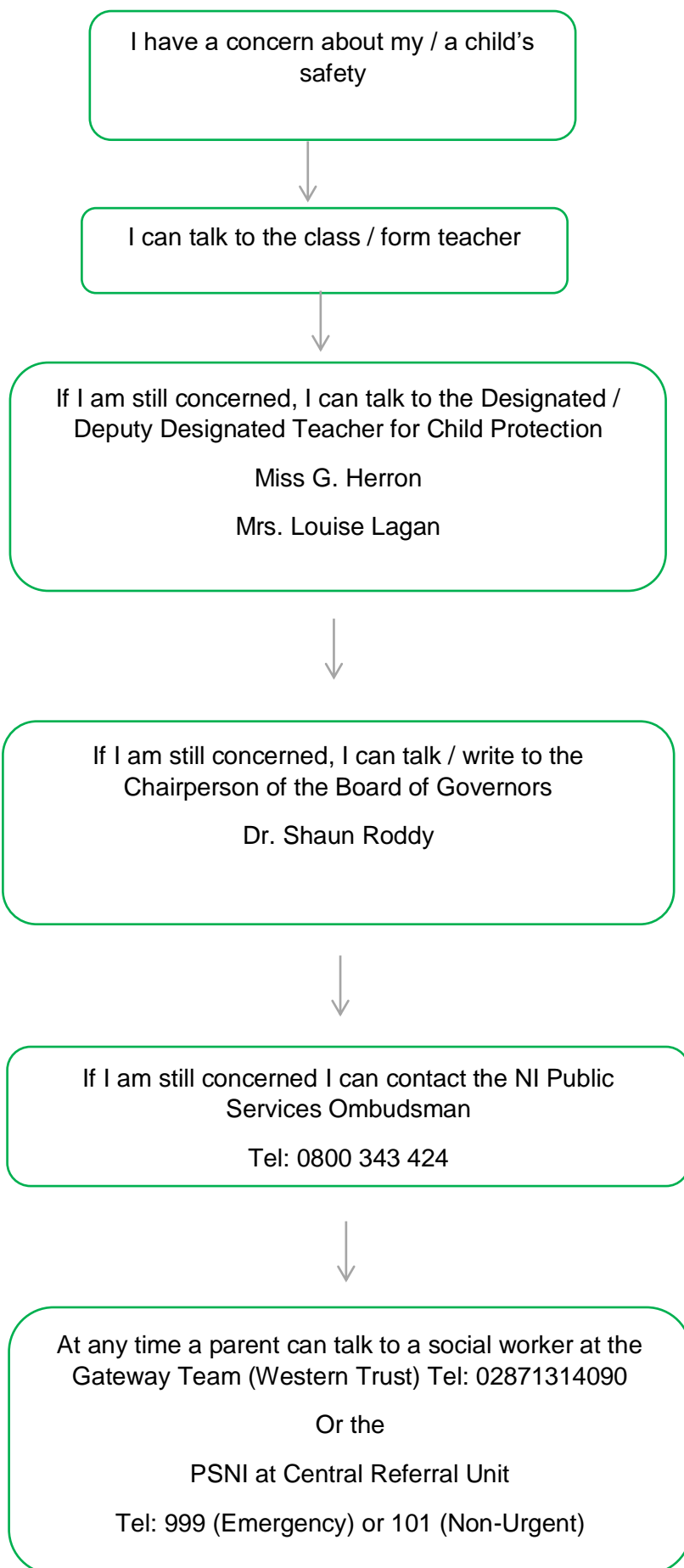
Staff are also aware of adults who have parental responsibility for the pupils in our school. Staff ensure that pupils are collected only by those adults who have parental responsibility or nominated adults. In the interests of security and the welfare of your child, parents/guardians are asked to send in a written request (signed and dated) if they wish to take their child out of school.

The Safeguarding Team:

- Designated teacher for child protection is **Miss Geraldine Herron**
- Deputy Designated Teacher **Mrs Louise Lagan**
- The Chairperson of the Board of Governors is **Dr. Shaun Roddy**
- The Designated Governor for Child Protection is **Dr. Shaun Roddy**
- **Mrs Fiona Patton is also on our Safeguarding Team**



PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS WHO WISH TO RAISE A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN



Anti-bullying

We aim to create a culture wherein every pupil is respected, valued and cared for and so sees it as his/her responsibility to stand up against bullying. We encourage children, parents and staff to report it. We encourage pupils to support their peers and use strategies that equip them to play an active part in preventing bullying from happening. We encourage development of self-confidence and self-esteem by promoting an ethos of good communication among staff, pupils and parents where those who are vulnerable will feel able to come forward and confide in staff. We celebrate anti-bullying week every November to raise awareness. Copies of our Anti Bullying Policy are available from the school office. Every year the NSPCC, CyberPals and the PSNI visit the school to discuss the importance of internet safety.



Positive behaviour

Children are expected to behave in a way which shows consideration for other people and their property. Children are expected to treat their peers and adults with politeness and kindness and to have regard for the safety of themselves and others. The school operates a Positive Behaviour Programme based on rules, rewards and consequences, which encourage all children to make positive choices about their behaviour.

At the beginning of each academic year, the children in each class agree the Positive Behaviour Programme and a pupil code of conduct. Pupils' are rewarded for making positive behaviour choices through their class rewards system (pupil of the week and pupil of the month etc.) as well as through class and whole school rewards. Copies of the agreed Positive Behaviour Policy and the pupils' code of conduct will be sent to parents in the first term.





Healthy eating and lifestyles

Our aim is to promote healthy lifestyles for our pupils and we have a suite of Health Promoting policies in operation to support this. We promote healthy lifestyles as part of the curriculum (primarily through PDMU, the World Around Us & P.E.) and through our numerous after-school clubs (e.g. Cookery, Gaelic Football and Camogie/Hurling). Cancer Focus N.I. visit the school annually and talk to the children about healthy lifestyle choices.

As a school, we have been awarded the Health Promoting School Award (Gold) in 2007 and again in 2009. Additionally, the school has been awarded:

- The Healthy Munch Box Challenge Award in 2008 - 2016.
- The Smart Snacks Certificate in 2006 - 2016.
- 1st place in the P.7 Hope North West Drugs Awareness competition 2007, 2008 and 2009. Runners up in 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- 3RD place in the Derry Road Safety Quiz 2019



We encourage children to eat a balanced diet and develop healthy eating habits. The development of Smart Snacks for mid-morning break five days per week supports the development of our pupils' healthy eating habits. The Smart Snacks policy encourages all pupils to eat fruit and/or vegetables and drink milk or water at break-time. Milk and fruit/vegetables are available at break-time for those who wish to purchase it.

Pupils are actively encouraged to drink water throughout the school day and they can bring their own individual water bottles to school.



Pupils can bring their own lunch to school or order meals in the canteen. We have a policy on 'the Promotion of Healthy Eating Habits and Improving Oral Health in Children' in operation and children are encouraged to choose the healthy options for school lunches. Our school participates in the 'Healthy Munch Box Challenge'. Pupils are praised daily for making healthy choices at lunch-time and pupils are rewarded for making healthy break and lunch choices during weekly assemblies. The school dinner menu consists of numerous healthy options. The school canteen does not sell sweets, crisps or fizzy drinks as St. Finlough's P.S., Sistrakeel is a Health Promoting School.

School council

At St. Finlough's PS we place great emphasis on child-centred provision and as part of this we value and respect the views and opinions of our children. We include them in our continuing cycles of school improvement questionnaires and we also follow their lead in the school council. A school council is a formal group of pupils within a school who are elected by their peers to represent them and their views.

Why have a school council?

There are lots of reasons.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people should have a say in decisions that affect their lives. A school council can provide a meaningful way in which pupils can voice their opinions and have their views taken into account in decisions which impact upon their education and school experiences.

Our school council that is supported by Mrs. Lagan, aims to help to improve many aspects of school life. It is an important and useful way for us as a school to provide leadership and development opportunities for our pupils. Our council has prioritised fund raising, charity work, organising fun activities and assisting in smooth school management and behaviour as their focus for this year.

Within the school curriculum, one of the key areas making up the 'Learning for Life and Work' theme is active participation. The curriculum requires that young people are provided with opportunities to participate in school and society. School councils are an excellent way in which to increase participation, teaching young people about democracy, local and global citizenship and accountability.

Our student council are responsible for setting their own meeting agendas and recording the minutes as well as following through the decisions which they have made to improve their school. This is also shared with our Board of Governors.

Within our school we also have elected digital leaders, an eco-council and a rights respecting steering group made up of our pupils. These children assist in the leadership of our school and in decision making. The voice of the pupil is central to our child centered provision.





Eco committee

Like our student council, this group of children are responsible for leading and managing all things 'green' in their school. Saving energy, recycling, maintaining a clean school environment and leading various eco initiatives.

Our eco council, supported by Mrs. Lagan and Fr. Mc Dermott are responsible for setting their own agenda, recording the minutes of meetings and following through decisions made. This year they have prioritised the creation of a bug-hotel in the school grounds, planting and the development of an eco area.

Our school is also involved with Sustrans in promoting active travel choices, this also supports our eco councils aims and objectives.



Our Eco- code ...

G row our own fruit and vegetables.	
R educe, Reuse, Recycle our waste.	
E at healthy snacks and lunches.	
E xercise as much as we can.	
N ature - look after our plants and animals.	

The Eco Committee was set up by the pupils in consultation with staff and is responsible for developing the school's response to "green" issues. Some of the achievements of the Eco-committee include:

- a reduction in electricity used, paper bills, waste in the black bins and water used
- the development of a compost system which is used to fertilise fruit and vegetables grown by the pupils



- the development of a recycling system for paper, cardboard and glass etc.

Digital leaders

A Digital Leader is a very innovative and creative pupil who helps other pupils, parents, teachers and even the principal in using technology in the classroom and across the school.

Digital Leaders in St. Finlough's Primary School will get the chance to do the following things and much more through the year:

- Help younger pupils in the school to use iPads and computers to create amazing projects in the classroom.
- Let everyone in the community know about how to keep safe online.
- Provide technical support for teachers using technology - downloading apps, setting up the Green Screen, charging and connecting devices to the internet and the Interactive Whiteboard.
- Make decisions about ICT provision in the school and provide feedback to improve teaching and learning as well as resource management.

Homework

As outlined in our Homework Policy, we believe that homework can play an important part in the education process. It allows pupils to practice, apply, consolidate and extend what has been learnt in school and at the same time facilitates parental involvement in the child's learning. The type of homework set will range from informal tasks in the early years to more formal arrangements in senior classes. Tasks will be directly related to work going on in the classroom. We aim to establish a genuine partnership between teachers, pupils and parents, relating to homework tasks. Parental support and encouragement will be vital for the success of the homework programme.

Community links



'it takes a whole village to raise a child'





The school plays a very active role in the religious life of the parish. The priest visits the school on a regular basis and we have school prayer services and assemblies where parents and members of the wider community are invited. Parents are also invited to participate in pre-sacramental meetings and the parish community celebrates the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation in St. Finlough's Church in Ballykelly. Our school choir sings at special celebrations in St. Finlough's Church and to local community groups such as the Alzheimer's society and nursing homes. We also perform at the switching on of the Christmas lights in both Ballykelly and Limavady.

We are proud to support Glack Community Association and have hosted a family fun day during the summer holidays which has proved most successful and enjoyable. This year Glack community association funded all of our end of year school trips which included visits to; Rathlin Island, The Ulster American Folk Park and The Flowerfield Arts Centre for a ceramics workshop. The school also hosts a popular preschool groups facilitated by the Dungiven Dry Arch Centre on Mondays which include baby massage and song, rhyme and movement.

The school also fosters close links with Glack GAC, assisting with their communication to their club members. We also offer hurling, camogie and Gaelic football as facilitated by the Ulster Council for Gaelic games. KS2 children participate in a variety of Gaelic/Hurling/Camogie blitzes and gaelic fun days which are facilitated by Doire GAA mBunscol.





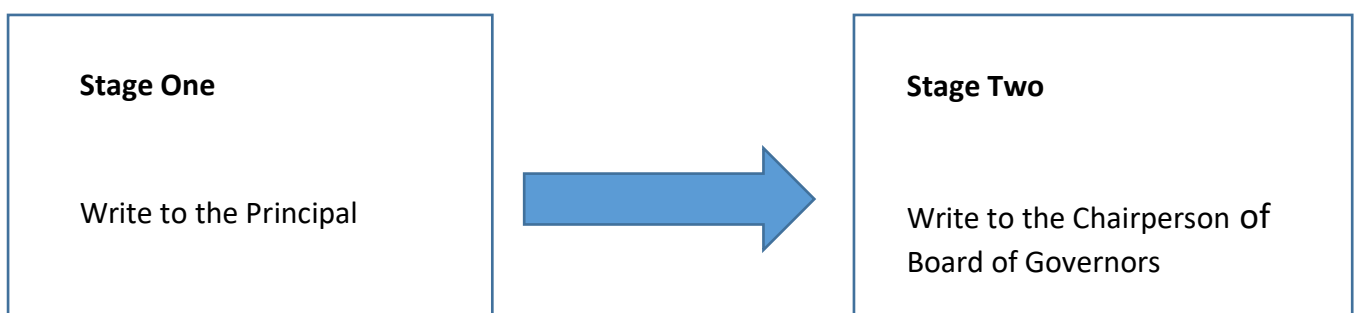
Complaints procedures

Parents are encouraged to discuss any matters of concern with the appropriate member of staff (in the first instance) whenever they feel this is necessary. Often potential problems can be avoided if they are detected early and dealt with promptly. Class teachers and the Principal are available after 3.00 pm daily. Whilst we operate an open door policy, where parents are most welcome to speak to staff informally before and after school, parents are advised to make an appointment for all meetings.

At St. Finlough's PS, Sistrakeel, we are committed to listening about our service. We use information in the form of comments and complaints, wherever possible to improve our service. We encourage and welcome all comments and views, both positive and negative. Our Handling Complaints Policy is designed to establish a clear mechanism for the resolution of complaints which can be verbal, written, taped or emailed.

Our complaints procedures do not replace or supplement other established procedures such as Child Protection procedures. We are unable to deal with anonymous complaints and therefore our complaints procedures do not provide for a resolution of anonymous complaints except for the referral of Child Protection concerns (in line with our Child Protection policy, procedures and guidelines).

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE –AT A GLANCE



Time Limit

Please contact the school as soon as possible, unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of origin of the complaint to the school.



Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school Principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. *If the complaint is about the Principal, proceed to Stage Two.* The school requires complaints to be made in writing, where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process. *(see guidance notes for further information)*

Please provide as much information as possible including;

- name and contact details
- what the complaint is about
- what has already been done to try to resolve it and
- what you would like the school to do to resolve the complaint.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a response normally made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing by the Principal and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage 1, the complaint may be progressed to Stage 2 which is overseen by the Board of Governors.

Stage Two

If the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the Chairperson of the Board of Governors *(care of the school and marked 'private and confidential')*. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support the complainant with this process. The Chairperson will convene a committee to review the complaint. Please provide as much detail as possible as indicated above.

The complaint will normally be acknowledged within 5 school working days and a final response normally made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the complaint. The response will be issued in writing by the Chairperson of the committee.

These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.



Contact details for NIPSO are:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO

Telephone: 02890 233821

Freephone: 0800 34 34 24

Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk

Web: www.nipso.org.uk

Documents

Copies of our School Development Plan and all of our school policies are available on request from the school office on request. A selection of our policies can also be found on our school website.

The documents available:

- The Governors' statement of aims of the school.
- Any statutory documents.
- Any published HMI reports referring to the school.
- The School Development Plan, Action plans and subject schemes, which are drawn up with respect to the Curriculum.
- All School policies - such as Pastoral Care, Anti-bullying, Child Protection, Intimate Care, Safe Use of the Internet, Positive Behaviour and Handling Complaints etc.

St. Finlough's Primary School Standards, data analysis and national averages.

The teachers will keep detailed records of each child's work and progress, from P1 to P7, so that a clear picture is available for all to see. The teaching staff will monitor and evaluate their teaching and learning methods to ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to the needs of the pupils and is delivered at a pace appropriate to the ability of each pupil. We compare and contrast our children's attainments in comparison to the Northern Ireland average. **We liaise closely with Educational Psychology, the Reading Centre, Behaviour Support, RISE NI and the Autism Advisory Service, as well as other services, as when necessary, to support parents and staff in meeting the needs of all our pupils.**

Educate
&
Care



Conclusion

I hope that having read our prospectus, you have some idea of the rich and varied life that your child will have whilst being a pupil at St. Finlough's PS, Sistrakeel.

You can be assured that, by working in partnership with our school community, your child will have optimum opportunities to learn and develop to his/her full potential. Your child's learning, happiness and well-being will be our concern at all times during his/her years at St. Finlough's PS.

