

# St. Brigid's Primary School Mayogall

## Prospectus





# **ST. BRIGID'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**52 Mayogall Road, Magherafelt, Co. Derry BT45 8PG**

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**Website: [www.stbrigidsmayogall.ni.org](http://www.stbrigidsmayogall.ni.org)**

**Tel: 028 7964 2014**

**Principal: Mrs M. O'Kane**

**Fax: 028 7964 5658**

Dear Parent,

I welcome you and your child to St. Brigid's Primary School. This prospectus has been written especially for parents/carers to help inform you about the nature and life of our school. We are very proud of our school and its excellent reputation. We are an award-winning and innovative school and we are constantly striving to improve.

St Brigid's Primary School has a passionate and dedicated staff. We strive daily to create a happy and caring school community where everyone loves to learn and is enabled to reach their full potential. We seek to provide an exciting and stimulating learning experience for all our children.

We are a nurturing school and seek to care for the academic, physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of all our children. A genuine and caring environment infuses the school atmosphere and is evident everywhere in our school – within each classroom, the Hall and our playgrounds.

The high level of dedication and commitment from all staff minimises behavioural problems such as bullying. We focus on the positive aspects of work, attitude and behaviour. We promote Catholic values and are open and welcoming to all children from any religious or ethnic background.

Children coming into school bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding about the world around them. It is our aim to build on this and promote a willingness and enthusiasm to learn more. We recognise that each child is different. We will build on their strengths and help your child work through the areas they need to improve in order to succeed. We love to celebrate success no matter how big or small. The school is brightly decorated with a clear emphasis on displaying children's work and on celebrating their successes and achievements. If you have any queries or difficulties at any time you are most welcome to contact me or visit the school and I will be happy to discuss matters with you. Our school motto is 'Together in Learning' – together we can give your child the best possible educational experience.

Yours sincerely,

*Mary O'Kane*



MEMBERS OF BOARD OF GOVERNORS (2014 ~ 2018)

*The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for the effective management of the school.*

TRUSTEE REPRESENTATIVES (NOMINATED)

Father E. Graham  
Dr Caithlin Woulahan  
Mr J. Currie



E. A. REPRESENTATIVES (NOMINATED)

Mrs B. Henry (Chairperson)  
Ms. J. Mc Laughlin

DEPT. OF EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE (NOMINATED)

Mrs Anne McCorry



PARENT REPRESENTATIVE (ELECTED)

Mrs M. Mc Mullan

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE (ELECTED)

Mrs P. Mc Crum



SECRETARY

Mrs M. O'Kane

SCHOOL SECRETARY

Bottom: Mrs Mary McEldowney

Our school secretary Mrs Mary McEldowney is the first point of contact with the school. She maintains all attendance and punctuality records. If you need to take your child out of school early, please sign the Temporary Absence book in reception. Mrs McEldowney also collects payment for milk.



## Staff Staff



Mrs Aileen Michell Teacher P1  
Mrs Paula McCrum Teacher P1/2  
Mrs Claire Vallyley Teacher P2/3  
Miss Grainne Dobbin Teacher P2/3  
Mrs Mary O'Kane Principal  
Mrs Mary McEldowney Secretary  
Mrs Anne McGlinchey Teacher P1/2/SEN  
Mrs Cathy Donaghy Teacher P3  
Mrs Ursula Quinn Teacher P4



Miss Atiyah Doherty Teacher P4/5  
Mr Ryan Doherty Teacher P5  
Mr Enda Mulholland Teacher P6  
Mrs Joanne McNeill Teacher P6/7  
Mrs Ciara O'Neill Teacher P6/7  
Mrs Grainne O'Hara Teacher P7  
Mrs Amanda McMullan Assistant P1  
Mrs Caitriona Darragh Assistant P1/2  
Mrs Clodagh Casey Assistant P2/3  
Mrs Jacquelyn Laws Assistant P2



Miss Cathy McKenna Assistant P3  
Mrs Jemma O'Kane Assistant P4  
Mrs Susie Kuczogzi Assistant P4/5  
Miss Louise McKenna Assistant P5  
Mrs Mary McCloskey Assistant P6  
Miss Rhiannon Hegarty Assistant P6/7  
Mrs Gillian Artt Assistant P7  
Mrs Anne Hegarty Assistant SEN  
Mr Sean Scullion Music Co-ordinator  
Mr Paddy Breen Building Supervisor

Despite our building being over 40 years old it is maintained to a very high standard and is a regular winner of the Best Kept Schools Award. Our school very clean and tidy but we need support in order to keep it this way:

Remember:

- ❖ Clean your feet on the mat before entering the school building.
- ❖ Ensure that your shoes have non-marking soles.
- ❖ Put all litter into the designated bins.
- ❖ Treat the school toilets as you would your bathroom at home!
- ❖ Each afternoon when the "tidy-up bell" is sounded, put all property back in its place and remove all items from the floor.



Staff who support our work in St. Brigid's P.S.

The School nurse is:  
Victoria French



Our School Doctor is:  
Dr. Yvonne Doherty.

The Education Authority Psychologist Dr Tony Murphy assesses children who are referred to the Board by the school SENCOs.

R.I.S.E. Team:

Lee Anne Wilson	~	Speech and Language Therapist
Lydia Steele	~	Behavioural Therapist
Siobhan McDermott	~	Occupational Therapist
Janet Gavin	~	Therapy Assistant
Brenda Higgins	~	Specialist Language Teacher
Una O'Boyle	~	L.T.S.S.
Deirdre Johnston	~	L.T.S.S.



Fundamental Sports Tutor:

Ciaran Sharkey is our Sports Tutor who teaches Gaelic fundamental skills to pupils in P1, P2 and P3.

Music Teacher:

Mr Sean Scullion is our specialist music teacher. He prepares the school choir for performances and Sacramental ceremonies. Mr Scullion takes the choir each Wednesday afternoon.



## How well resourced is St. Brigid's P.S?



The school currently caters for approximately 265 children and employs 13 teachers and 12 Classroom Assistants.

Class sizes currently range from 20 to 28 pupils; with smaller classes being in Foundation Stage and Composite Classes.

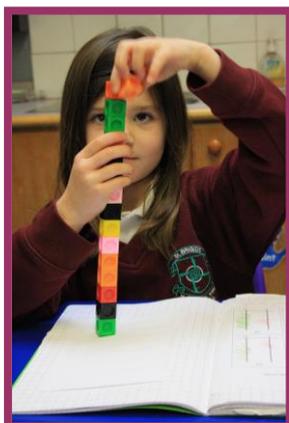
St. Brigid's PS is a co-educational, Catholic Maintained school serving the parish of Lavey. The school was built in 1972. The campus consists of:

- ❖ 5 classrooms in the main building
- ❖ 6 mobile classrooms
- ❖ A Library
- ❖ 3 rooms for Special Needs teaching or Occupational Therapy etc.
- ❖ An Assembly Hall/Canteen
- ❖ School Kitchen (meals cooked onsite by 4 experienced kitchen staff).



There are three playgrounds - one for each Key Stage. There is a covered pergola area in Foundation Stage for outdoor play. The school leases a grass pitch at the rear of the school (O'Donnell Park). We have a soft play area, garden and eco-areas including a greenhouse.

Every classroom in St. Brigid's PS has been fitted with an interactive whiteboard. The school environment allows us to cater for all eight intelligences which children possess and which we will nurture during their time in our school.



## VISION STATEMENT

St Brigid's Primary School is a learning school, where we wish to create a warm, welcoming atmosphere in which we show commitment to a Catholic way of life, educating for the 21st century.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission in St. Brigid's Primary School is to provide an exciting and stimulating learning experience for all of 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 is incumbent upon all of us to be life long learners, to keep abreast of new ideas, emerging technologies, innovations in education, continually challenge expectations 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 the community which we serve. In so doing 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.

le chéile in eolas

## ENABLING LEARNING TO HAPPEN



## GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

St Brigid's is a Catholic school and as such is an extension of your Catholic home. It is there that our pupils first experience the Catholic faith in practice from you, the parents.

In this school one of our main aims is to promote values and a way of life in keeping with our shared faith and your aspirations. The staff firmly believe the total atmosphere in the school is very important for the positive growth of each child. Staff members recognise that our faith must be evident throughout the teaching programme and reflected in the school's pastoral care provision.

We appreciate the very important partnership role which you, the parents, play in the education of your child who has been learning from you in the crucial early years. The interest and example you have shown will now be evident.

The active and constructive co-operation between parent/teacher and home/school must be on-going and based firmly on mutual respect and understanding.

## STATEMENT OF AIMS

The staff of St Brigid's are responsive and sympathetic to the individual needs and abilities of our pupils and aim to:-

- > help your child develop values, beliefs and attitudes in keeping with our Catholic faith;
- > recognise your child's individuality, talents and potential;
- > provide your child with a broad and balanced curriculum in keeping with the requirements of the Revised Curriculum;
- > promote the development of your child's self-confidence, self-respect and self-discipline;
- > encourage your child's understanding of each person's present and future role as a valued and contributing member of our community;
- > encourage your child to be aware of and respect the immediate environment leading to a better understanding of the widening world and its resources;
- > encourage in your child a sense of community with tolerance and respect for others who differ in religion, culture, social background or nationality;
- > help your child develop an open, enquiring mind and the ability to question and make informed decisions;
- > help your child to value the importance of personal health and fitness.

It is the aim of the staff to provide for the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, cultural and physical development of your child in a friendly, caring and disciplined environment.

## Curriculum

*"St. Brigid's Primary School promotes high achievement and learning for life by working with children to achieve a broad and balanced curriculum delivered with support and encouragement to succeed."*



In line with the Revised Northern Ireland Primary Curriculum it is the aim of this school to:-

- ❖ Create a stimulating and challenging learning environment;
- ❖ Continually strive for improvement, working together towards common goals.
- ❖ Enable our pupils to have high standards in Literacy, Numeracy and I.C.T.
- ❖ Create a generation of independent learners, creative thinkers and problem solvers.

## CURRICULUM SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

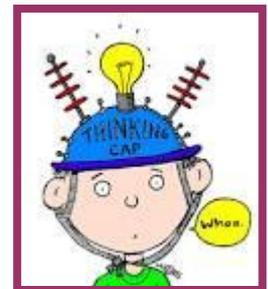
### Thinking skills and Personal Capabilities

- ❖ Managing Information
- ❖ Being Creative
- ❖ Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- ❖ Working with Others
- ❖ Self Management

We plan to develop the following attitudes and dispositions:



- ❖ Personal Responsibility
- ❖ Concern for Others
- ❖ Commitment
- ❖ Determination
- ❖ Resourcefulness
- ❖ Openness to New Ideas
- ❖ Self Confidence
- ❖ Curiosity
- ❖ Community Spirit
- ❖ Flexibility
- ❖ Tolerance
- ❖ Integrity
- ❖ Moral Courage Respect



## Formally Assessed Skills

Using Communication  
Using Mathematics  
Using I.C.T.



## LEARNING AREAS

Language & Literacy  
Religious Education  
Mathematics & Numeracy  
The Arts  
The World Around Us  
Physical Education  
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding



## CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

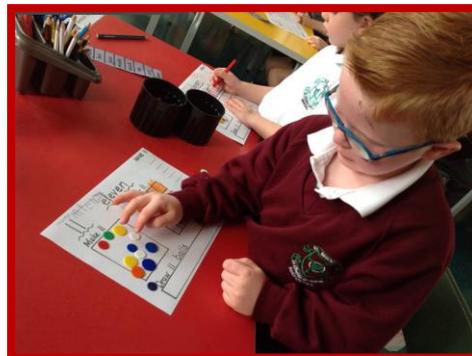
To develop the young person as: An individual, a contributor to society and a contributor to the economy & environment.

[The following is a brief description of the learning areas which make up the N.I. Revised Curriculum in St Brigid's Primary School:](#)

## MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY

The Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2 aim to develop the application of mathematics and numeracy across the curriculum and in real life situations.

Children are encouraged to explore and investigate a wide range of purposeful activities. In all Key Stages pupils are involved in making full use of electronic sources, practical materials and resources. Children are provided with valuable experiences which enable them to develop: processes in mathematics,



number, measures, shape and space and handling data. The Heinemann Active Mathematics Programme and Steps Programme as well as a variety of teaching texts are used by pupils throughout the school. Our Numeracy Co-ordinator is Mrs. U. Quinn

## LANGUAGE & LITERACY

Language and Literacy are fundamental in the development of each individual child's ability to interact, express and communicate with confidence. Children's knowledge, skills and understanding are nurtured through a range of talking and listening and reading and writing activities.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 use Jolly Phonics to develop reading skills.



A wide variety of reading schemes and books are used to teach reading and to promote a love of books. Pupils in Year 3 participate in the Paired Reading programme with their parents. Pupils in Foundation Stage classes are paired with Reading buddies in senior classes. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils use novels and a range of factual books. In Key Stage 2 all pupils have access to Accelerated Reading.



The School library, resource areas and Interactive Whiteboards give children access to living books as well as computers, CD Roms and listening centres. The school has an excellent range of reading resources to suit all ages and interests. Our Literacy Co-ordinator is Mrs. P. Mc Crum, assisted by Mrs G. O'Hara.

## THE WORLD AROUND US

(Geography, History and Science and Technology)

The World Around Us throughout all Key Stages is planned to connect learning across the three areas mentioned above. Children are provided with opportunities to develop their Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, critical and creative thinking, personal and interpersonal skills through a choice of topics. At all stages children are encouraged to become active participants in the learning process, linking learning to current events.

Our W.A.U. Co-ordinator is Mr E. Mulholland.





## THE ARTS

(Art and Design, Music and Drama)

Children are able to express their ideas, feelings and interpretations of the world in diverse ways by developing their creativity through Art and Design, Music and Drama. Each individual is encouraged to explore and combine their own experiences with their imagination and natural curiosity. These are developed and built upon from year to year fostering children's artistic, musical and kinaesthetic talents and intelligences. Throughout the year, many opportunities are offered for children to participate in role-play, assemblies, seasonal plays and concerts. Our Arts Co-Ordinator is Mrs C. O'Neill.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The PE curriculum includes games, athletics, swimming and dance. Through a wide range of physical activities children will develop their knowledge, understanding and skills by participating in a broad and balanced physical education programme.

Facilities for sport in the school include a small assembly hall, three marked playgrounds for games and a small grass pitch "O'Donnell Park". The markings in the playground allow for team games such as football, basketball, netball and athletics. Swimming lessons (for P6 and P7 pupils) are provided by a qualified ASA swimming coach at Greenvale Leisure Centre. The school employs a



number of specialist coaches for soccer, Gaelic games, rugby etc. The range of sporting activities available to the children includes; athletics, rugby, camogie, dance, Gaelic football, hurling, netball, golf, playground games, rounders, soccer, swimming and inter-school competitions. Our PE Co-ordinator is Mr R. Doherty.



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

Through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding children will be encouraged to become personally, emotionally, socially and physically aware individuals. This in turn will enable them to become more confident and responsible when making decisions and choices throughout their lives.

Our PDMU Co-ordinator is Mrs A. Mitchell.



## PLAY BASED LEARNING

Children in years 1 - 4 take part in Play Based Learning which is an important part of the learning process. Children have many and varied opportunities to learn and develop skills. They learn to express their thoughts and feelings through play. They satisfy their natural curiosity by exploring, experimenting and developing skills which will help them come to terms with the real world. Our Play Co-Ordinator is Mrs C. Vallely.



Areas of play explored include:

- Learning through Dramatic Play
- Learning through Sand Play
- Learning through Water Play
- Learning through Dough/Clay
- Learning through Table Top Play
- Learning through Small World
- Learning through Construction
- Learning through Creative Play



*Children should bring a warm coat to school every day as outdoor play is an important part of the Foundation Stage Curriculum.*



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Religious Education programme of study holds a central position within the school curriculum. Sacraments celebrated during primary school include:

Penance

Holy Communion

Confirmation

Religious Education seeks not only to impart knowledge but also to develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes. It is concerned with the spiritual growth of the individual, both in relation to the school and parish community. Whole school Masses are held throughout the year in school and at St. Mary's church.



In addition, the school chaplain Fr. Graham visits classes throughout the year.

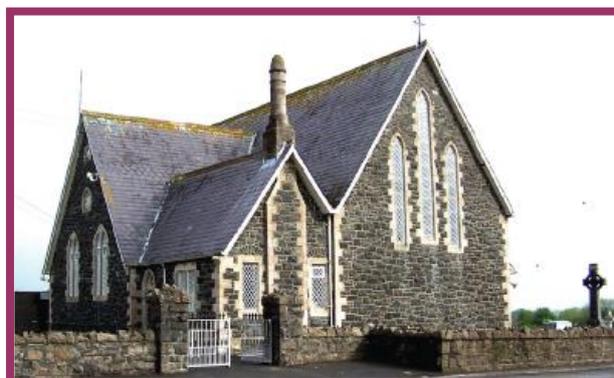


Masses are also arranged to mark special occasions e.g. beginning of the year (September), Year 7 Thanksgiving Mass (June). These liturgies are made as relevant and meaningful as possible by encouraging the active involvement of the pupils, parents and staff. Prayer Services are held throughout the year for years 1 - 7. Each Friday morning one class attends morning Mass in the Church.

All pupils follow the recommended 'Grow in Love' series. Teachers pass on Christian values and beliefs through example and personal witness.

Our religious faith is also celebrated through daily assemblies, concerts and outside events which occur throughout the school year.

Our pupils fund raise for numerous charities showing generosity and concern for others less fortunate. Our RE Co-ordinator is Miss S. O'Kane.



## ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Regular assessment is carried out to evaluate pupil progress and the success of teaching strategies.

Assessment takes the following forms:-

- > Regular testing by class teachers eg. Numeracy, Literacy and end of topic tests.
- > Standardised testing in Mathematics, Reading, Spelling and Verbal Reasoning.
- > Statutory assessment at end of Key Stage.

The results of this statutory assessment are made known to the parents and benchmark data for NI schools is also provided (when available). Results of Year 7 pupils are forwarded to the

post- primary schools they will attend. Each term the Senior Leadership Team analyse test data to identify underachievement and where necessary put intervention strategies in place. Data is also shared with the St. Patrick's College Direct Feeder Primary Schools.



## ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Clear learning intentions are set for pupils at the start of lessons and success criteria are shared. Pupils will be involved in setting individual targets and by



Key Stage 2 will know their preferred learning style. Pupils will be actively involved in peer and self-assessment and reflective self-evaluation. Success in learning will be celebrated through the school rewards system, e.g. Excellence Board, Merit Assembly. Teachers and teaching assistants in Brigid's P.S. work closely together to plan learning experiences for children. Each curricular area has a policy statement and schemes of work. Lessons are differentiated to account for different pupil ability levels and learning styles.

These policy statements and schemes of work are available in the school for parents.

## KEY STAGES:

At primary level, the seven year period of compulsory schooling is divided into:-

- Foundation Stage - Years 1 and 2,
- Key Stage 1 (KS1) - Years 3 and 4,
- Key Stage 2 (KS2) - Years 5, 6 and 7.



## ICT

In June 2011 we were awarded the Naace charter mark for excellent practice in I.C.T.

*"In all the work assessed (P1 - P7) there was clear evidence of high standards and progression in the development of children's ICT skills. The children routinely use ICT as an integral part of their learning across the curriculum and as a result they are practised in their ICT skills and confident about carrying out tasks."*



## iPADS:

In St. Brigid's P.S. we are fortunate to have over 80 iPads. The iPads are timetabled so that all pupils from P1 ~ P7 can access them at least twice per week.

## GOOGLE CHROMEBOOKS:

Each pupil in Key Stage 2 has access one-to-one technology due to the provision of Google Chrome Books by the JDO Foundation in America. Each class from P5 - P7 is linked to a partner in the USA to work on joint projects together.

## DIGITAL SCHOOL OF DISTINCTION:



The school received the prestigious Digital School Award in March 2017 for excellent practice in ICT. The assessor's report commented on: "the wide range of ICT activities demonstrated at assessment, the high levels of ICT-enriched teaching and learning, the staff expertise and insightful professional dialogue about innovation, the inspirational children and global engagement with external organisations using advanced ICT. The standards of digital teaching and learning are outstanding in this school."



We do have a very active presence on social media: Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Check us out .....



## PASTORAL CARE

The school's pastoral care programme seeks to support the learning and development of the children in all aspects of school life.

Pastoral care is an integral part of the school's ethos and curriculum and permeates every aspect of school life. All members of the

school community need to feel valued as they work together.

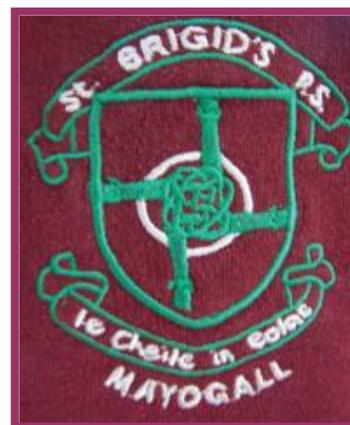
Liaison with parents is a very important aspect of the policy. Many opportunities, formal and informal, are available for contact with the staff to inform, to advise and to discuss your child's progress or deal with any other relevant matter.

Parent Teacher Meetings in Terms 1 and 2 (October and February) Formal Written Report, Term 3.

## CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

Staff members, teaching and non-teaching, are fully trained in pastoral care, child protection and safeguarding.

A designated teacher has been appointed (Mrs C. Donaghy) to promote good pastoral practice with the school and to monitor the policy. The deputy-designated teacher is Mrs P. Mc Crum.



## SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (S.E.N.)

One of the major strengths of St Brigid's PS is our provision for children with additional needs. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Initially they will be catered for within their own class. The teacher will do this by matching the work to your child's level of ability. If your child continues to have difficulties additional support will be provided. The school has a number of trained Reading Partners and Toe by Toe practitioners.



Additional accommodation has been provided for SEN withdrawal groups. St. Brigid's P.S. prides itself on the high quality of additional support given to those children who have Special Needs.

S.E.N.C.O.s ~ Mrs A. Mc Glinchey and Mrs P. Mc Crum

*Teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated regularly by the principal, vice-principal and subject co-ordinators.*



## HOME SCHOOL CONTACTS

During your child's time in the school you will have many opportunities for formal and informal links with the staff. You are invited to avail of them for the benefit of your child.

Listed below are the main occasions for home/school contacts:

- > Initial meeting for parents of Year 1 pupils,
- > Parent/Teacher consultation meeting in October and February,
- > Board of Governors Annual Report in December.
- > Sacramental preparation - First Confession, Communion, Confirmation
- > School Performances,
- > Mass ~ at beginning and end of academic year.

You are also encouraged to visit the school at any other mutually convenient time to discuss any aspect of your child's education. With regard to pupil safety, child protection and safeguarding, no adult can go into a classroom without registering at reception first. Sorry, no exceptions - this is about child safety! Information relating to the numerous events throughout the year will be detailed in school newsletters or in letters to the parents of the pupils concerned.



## Discipline

In St Brigid's PS we firmly believe that every pupil has the right not to be bullied. We define bullying as:

*"deliberately harmful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself."*

We in St Brigid's PS endeavour to have children learning in a safe and secure environment free from bullying. As a consequence we take anti-social behaviour very seriously indeed. Much time and effort is given by all staff in the development of an anti-bullying culture in our school.



The School Discipline Policy ensures that when incidents of bullying are reported, these are fully investigated and acted upon. Children are encouraged to speak to Assistants, Teachers or the Principal if they experience bullying and not to remain silent.

Circle Time is used throughout the school in an effort to encourage children to discuss school-related issues and for the purpose of raising pupil self-esteem.

A Playground Buddy System is well established in the school with P6 and P7 pupils being trained to lead playground games with younger children and to ensure that no child feels left out or isolated.

Senior pupils are trained as Peer Mediators so that playground disputes can be settled by the children themselves in a fair and efficient manner.

The school's discipline policy in keeping with its Catholic aims and ethos is based on fairness and respect. Emphasis is placed on self discipline and pupils are treated as individuals.

**Any form of bullying is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated.**

If you feel your child is being bullied please contact the school immediately so that the matter can be dealt with.

If your child is involved in bullying your support will be sought in addressing the problem.

In this school we aim to:



- provide a supportive environment where the child can learn effectively
- help the pupil develop a sense of self-esteem and self control
- encourage the development of caring and responsible pupils

The school rules and standards of behaviour are explained to the children and are available to parents. The rules are based on the principles of common sense and courtesy and designed to maintain a safe and pleasant environment for pupils and staff. Pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner as far as their level of maturity permits. Pupils are involved in drawing up class rules.

The co-operation and support of parents is very important in maintaining effective discipline in the school.

Acceptance of admission to the school implies your acceptance of the school's discipline policy.

### SCHOOL RULES

The rules set down, the standards expected, in this policy are considered reasonable, acceptable and within the capabilities of our pupils. They are designed to develop in each pupil a sense of self-discipline and responsibility.

Pupils must;

- > come to school on time,
- > assemble in playground as instructed by teacher/supervisor before entering school (morning, mid-morning, lunch break),
- > walk in a quiet and orderly manner within the school,
- > take proper care of school books, equipment and property,
- > complete homework tasks in a manner satisfactory to teacher,
- > avoid littering the school building and grounds,
- > obtain permission before leaving classroom, dining hall, grounds,
- > obey instructions given by teachers and supervisors including those occasions when involved in school activities off the school premises,
- > show respect for all staff, visitors and peers,
- > avoid fighting, bullying, threatening behaviour,
- > avoid using foul language or engaging in indecent behaviour,
- > behave on way to and from school - on foot, by bus,
- > avoid going unnecessarily on areas of grass,
- > wear the standard school uniform,
- > refrain from chewing gum, spitting,
- > treat others with respect.
- > never bring mobile phones into school/on trips

Pupils, parents and staff have worked together to devise a set of playground rules. These are displayed clearly in each playground.

## ACCEPTABLE USE OF THE INTERNET

The greatest impact on education in recent times has come through Information Communication Technology (ICT). In school the number of personal computers is rising, many homes also have high-level machines. Presently in St. Brigid's we have 20 networked computers, 20 laptops, 117 chromebooks and 13 interactive whiteboards and over 80 iPads. We are connected in school to the Internet. The World Wide Web is a vast network, which has much to offer of educational value. We require all our pupils to have parental consent so that they can gain access to the Internet. Once your permission is given, then the child can use this facility under teacher guidance.

The Internet is used:

- > To skill children in using e-mail.
- > To investigate and research school projects.
- > To help develop children's ICT skills and research skills.

Children must be vigilant in the use of the Internet.

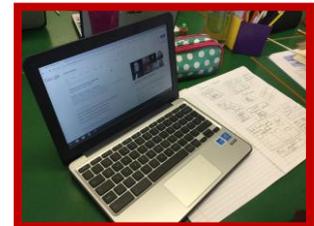
In school we use a Virtual Learning Forum called Equella. This is designed to give protection against accessing unsuitable material. Pupils are warned that they should immediately tell the teacher if unsuitable material is screened.



The JDO Foundation is a philanthropic organisation set up by Judy Coon. Her father was an oil tycoon and Judy was a special needs teacher so she is using her charitable organisation to promote global partnerships in schools using technology. The JDO Foundation pays for one to one technology so every pupil in P5, 6 and 7 will receive a Google Chromebook laptop (117 in total and 12 mini iPads) to use in school. Each class will also be given 3 iPads.

We have been given partner schools:-

P7	Bradford Elementary in Denver, Colorado
P6/7 and P6	Ava Elementary School in Ava, Missouri
P5	Loretto Academy in El Paso, Texas



The pupils work on a joint project and communicate by video conference and e mail. Because of the time difference pupils have to stay late once per month until 4pm so and their American partners come to school early so that they can make contact!

The JDO Foundation investment in technology in St Brigid's PS was in excess of £20,000. However, we have had to purchase an additional broadband 'Classnet' to run all this extra hardware. The cost of installing this is £2548 then our monthly line rental.

Please be vigilant at home about children using the Internet.

In St. Brigid's school, we agree with the Department of Education's recommendations that:

- > Parents should discuss safe use of the Internet with their children.
- > Parents should get to know the sites their children visit and talk about these.
- > Parents should ensure that children do not give out personal information, such as names, phone numbers, addresses.
- > Parents should tell children not to respond to unwelcome or abusive messages.

### SCHOOL COUNCIL

In St Brigid's PS we have a very active School Council, liaising between staff and pupils. We at St Brigid's pride ourselves in putting pupils first. Each class elects councillors to represent their interests on the school council. Class councils are held every month from P1 - P7; their concerns are passed to the School Council. A member of the Board of Governors, the Principal and Vice-Principal meet with the School Council to negotiate on a wide range of issues affecting the children. Our school councillors are not only hard-working, dedicated and responsible but act as ambassadors for school councils across Northern Ireland and are often used as a model of good practice.

The School Council effected many changes to school life eg. Break time provision, playground rules, non-uniform days, trips etc.

School Council is elected each year, meets monthly and helps make important decisions in St. Brigid's P. S.



## SCHOOL DAY

- > Pupils should arrive at school between 9:00am and 9:15am.
- > You are asked to have your child in school on time.
- > The staff will provide supervision from 9:00am - 9:15am.



Please Note: There is NO supervision of children who arrive before this time. Children should not enter the school building.

9:15am	Assembly
9:15am - 12.15pm	Morning Session
10:45am - 11:00am	Morning break (supervised)
12:15pm - 12:45pm	First Sitting for Lunch
12:30pm - 1:00pm	Second Sitting for Lunch
12:45pm - 1:15pm	Third Sitting for Lunch
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Afternoon Session - Years 1 and 2
1:00pm - 3:00pm	Afternoon Session - Years 3 - 7
3:00pm - 4:00pm	After School Clubs

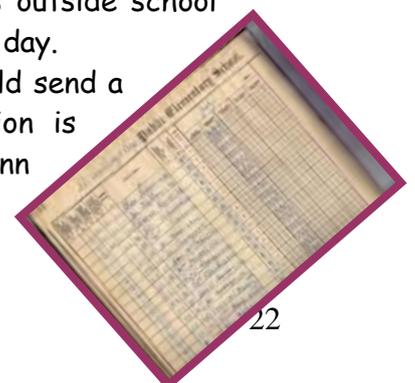
## ATTENDANCE

- > It is important that your child attends regularly.
- > If your child is unwell it is best for him/her to remain at home.

Please Note: In addition to the child's home telephone number at least one other contact person and telephone number must be available in the event of illness or emergency.

Parents are asked to arrange medical/dental appointments outside school hours to avoid absences and disruption to your child's school day.

On your child's return to school following absence you should send a note giving the reason for the absence. This information is required by the Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O.) Mrs Lynn Dinsmore who regularly monitors attendance.



## INTAKE ARRANGEMENTS

### YEAR 1

By phasing our induction process over a number of weeks in Term 3 of their pre-school year, most children are ready for the first day of school - usually the first day of September. For the first two weeks they go home at 12 noon, then 12.30 but the school day extends to 2pm by the end of September.



### EARLY DAYS

- > You should bring your child to school on time. You may wish to remain with your child for a short time. Before leaving reassure your child you will return later. Parents who accompany children to and from school should use these opportunities to teach Road Safety.
- > In the interests of safety parents must park at the Chapel carpark - there is no vehicular admission to the school carpark except for those with written permission from Chair of Governors under Disability Access.
- > To help your child cope with starting school and to ensure that the settling in period is as easy as possible class for Year 1 pupils will end at lunchtime/1pm until the end of September.
- > It is very important that all pupils, especially those in Years 1 and 2 are aware of the arrangements for getting them home.
- > Parents who call to collect children should wait at the doorway of the classroom in the Foundation Stage Playground.
- > Try not to be late as this can cause your child anxiety.

### AFTER SCHOOL

At first your child may find school tiring but given time, attention and regular bedtime, will be much better able to cope.

Let your child know and see that you are interested in what is happening at school.

Set aside time each day to talk about what he/she has been doing.

If your child sees you value education then he/she will appreciate more fully the importance of ongoing effort on his/her part.



## HOMEWORK

It is important that homework is seen and valued as an integral part of your child's school work. It extends learning opportunities and helps your child get used to the discipline of home study. Homework allows teachers to assess the effectiveness of their teaching by providing evidence of the child's level of understanding of work. You are asked to find time in order to provide active support and a suitable environment to ensure the required work is done. The homework activities given may involve oral preparation, written exercises, revision and practical work. Homework is most beneficial when it is given adequate time and done with care and attention. It is important that written work is well presented. Learning homeworks should also be seen as equally important.

You should contact the teacher if difficulties regarding homework are experienced. It may also be necessary for the teacher to contact you should problems arise.

- ❖ Read with your child every night.
- ❖ Practise sounds.
- ❖ Count, sort, play maths games.



## General Information

### UNIFORM

The uniform gives the children a sense of belonging and reflects the individuality of the school.

Pupils are encouraged to take care with their appearance and to take pride in the wearing of the uniform.

Parents should ensure that their child is provided with, and wears the uniform as detailed below.

#### BOYS

Grey trousers

White polo shirt with logo

Wine sweatshirt with badge



#### GIRLS

Grey skirt/ grey trousers

White polo shirt logo

Wine sweatshirt with badge

Fleece, rain jacket and hat are also available but are not essential items of uniform. Uniforms are available from Select Kidz, Schoolwear, Unit 12, The Diamond Centre, Magherafelt, BT45 6ED.

Footwear should have a non-marking sole eg. a trainer type shoe.

**For P.E., pupils should wear school T-shirt which is plain white with embroidered school crest and plain wine shorts and slippers/trainers.**

You are asked to make sure your child brings the P.E. gear on those days timetabled.

For health and hygiene reasons pupils must change their clothing for P.E. We would ask you to ensure that your child can dress/undress without assistance.

***PLEASE MARK YOUR CHILD'S NAME CLEARLY ON ALL ITEMS OF CLOTHING.***



## MEALS

Children may have:

- School Dinner
- Packed Lunch

School dinners are available and should be paid for by your child to canteen staff. Money cannot be paid in advance.

- > A copy of the menu is sent home in September.
- > Please try to ensure the correct money is sent with your child.



If you believe your child is entitled to have free meals you should complete an application form and send it to the Education Authority (N.E. Region), County Hall, 182 Galgorm Rd, Ballymena.

- > Application forms are available from the school secretary.
- > Lunches and drinks should be packed separately from books to avoid damage in the event of spills.
- > Your child's name should be put on his/her lunch box.
- \* Please note: **NO GLASS BOTTLES / FIZZY DRINKS / CHOCOLATE / CRISPS.**



Photo: Kitchen Staff: Miss Donna Marron (cook-in-charge) Mrs Monica Shaw, Mrs Kate O'Neill and Mrs Tracey Nicholl.

## MILK:

Milk is ordered on a termly basis. Your child pays in advance when milk letters are sent out. Milk can also be ordered and paid for in September for the complete school year. Please ensure that you send the letter back promptly to facilitate ordering.



## MEDICINES

If your child has asthma and needs to take an inhaler regularly it is advisable that one is kept in the classroom. Inhalers should be clearly labelled with the child's name and instructions for use. Children should not bring any other medicines into school, other than those for which a School Medication Consent Form has been signed and agreed as part of a Care Plan. These forms are only available from Mrs O'Kane or Mrs McCrum. The school has an agreed policy on the use of medicines. Most staff are trained in the use of epipens. A Care Plan must be completed for all pupils with medical needs.



## ILLNESSES AND ACCIDENTS



In the event of illness or accident we will try to contact you at home. Please make sure that any changes of telephone numbers are given to the secretary, including mobile numbers.

If we are unable to contact parents (or child minder) and your child needs attention we will contact your doctor's surgery or go to A & E at Antrim hospital. At all times we will seek to act in the best interests of your child.

If your child is ill before the beginning of the school day please do not send him or her to school. It is much better to stay at home until he or she is fully well.

We are advised by the School's Medical Service about infections and other conditions. Some of these, such as chicken pox, measles and impetigo require exclusion from school for varying lengths of time. Others require no exclusion. A copy of this advice is available from the school.

## FIRST AID

Mrs Caitriona Darragh is our assigned First Aider. All staff attend to minor cuts and bruises. Most staff in St. Brigid's P.S. have updated First Aid training. If necessary the school will contact parents if a child needs medical/hospital care.



## HEAD LICE

Notes are no longer issued from the school and the nurse no longer carries out any head examinations. The current advice issued through Homefirst is that parents should regularly check hair. Shampoo containing pesticides should only be used if lice are found. Nits (eggs) should be brushed or combed out. Advice leaflets are available from Homefirst in Magherafelt (028 796 31031).

## CHARGES AND REMISSIONS

No charges will be made for normal curricular provision. Charges for transport, admission and accommodation will be made for the additional educational and cultural activities provided. The school will attempt to keep these charges to a minimum.

## HEALTHY EATING

St Brigid's has attained official status as a Health Promoting School. Children have a break each day (10:45 - 11:00am). Children may bring in a snack or purchase toast, fruit etc from the canteen. Children are expected to show respect for their food, whether this is the lunch that has been prepared at home or dinner from the school canteen.



In St. Brigid's we expect a good standard of behaviour during lunchtime. Children should

show the same high standard of behaviour that we expect while sitting at our tables at home.

In September 2005 St. Brigid's Primary School became a Health Promoting School. As you are aware diet has a huge impact on health and educational attainment.

The food eaten throughout life can promote better health or contribute to ill health. Good nutrition during childhood and adolescence is essential to optimise growth and development and to protect against the development of diet-related diseases. For example adequate calcium, along with physical activity, is vital to maximise bone development and prevent osteoporosis in later life. Eating patterns that are rich in fruit, vegetables, fibre and starch carbohydrate and low in fat can reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease and some cancers. Reducing the consumption of foods and drink containing sugar can also help to prevent tooth decay.

## PEANUT ALLERGIES

We have a number of children throughout the school who suffer from this allergy, ranging from mild to extremely serious. We would ask parents not to send children to school with food containing peanuts. This will ensure the safety of all our pupils. Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Health Promoting Schools initiative aims to enable schools to provide an environment where the physical and mental well being, health and safety of staff and pupils are supported, in partnership with family, community and external agencies.

**Your commitment to keeping St. Brigid's a Health Promoting School:**

- > No fizzy drinks are to be consumed in school.
- > No chocolate bars.
- > No crisps



## ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL

All doors to the school have security controlled access. Please press the buzzer at the front entrance. Entrance is controlled from the school office. On entering the school, please report to the office (not to your child's classroom). Your co-operation with this arrangement is important for the safety of all pupils. Please do not go to the mobile classrooms without permission from school office.

No children should enter the school building in the morning unless directed to by the teacher on duty.

No child may leave school during the school day until an adult has signed the Temporary Absence Book.



## TRAFFIC ACCESS

Please be very vigilant if you ever have occasion to drive into the school car park. On entering turn left into the car park. Your child must use the footpath and should not walk through the car park - or across the gravelled area.

Parents must not turn right into the staff car park as pupils line up in this area.



## A Community School

### EDUCATION FOR DIVERSITY AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

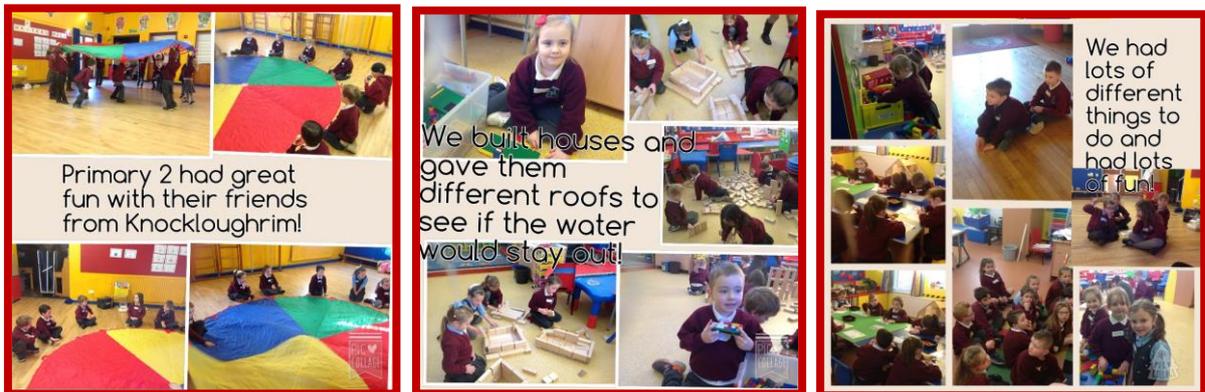
Commitment to the Catholic system of education does not imply a disregard for the religious and cultural traditions of other people in our community.

The Board of Governors and staff actively encourage meaningful contacts between our pupils and other schools groups and cultures within both the local and the wider community.

The pupils enjoy these exchanges through our extensive cross-community and extra curricular programmes which include sports events, inter-schools projects and competitions, visits to places of interest in the North of Ireland and in the South of Ireland and also association with numerous charitable and community organisations.

Special cross community links have been established with Knockloughrim Primary School as part of the Shared Education Programme. All our pupils are involved in a range of events which may be school based or involve educational visits.

In St. Brigid's we welcome children from all countries.



Pupils with their partners from Knockloughrim P.S.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In keeping with the ethos of the school for the development of the whole child many additional experiences and activities are provided by the staff.

These activities may take place on or off the school premises.

Pupils are encouraged to take part in outdoor and indoor sports -

- > Gaelic, soccer, netball, uni-hoc,
- > cross country, athletics, swimming,
- > drama performances, choir, theatre visits,
- > art and craft exhibitions,
- > public speaking, quiz competitions,
- > field trips and educational visits including residential.



Teachers and classroom assistants also organise and supervise clubs for P3 - P7 pupils in the areas of :

Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Languages, Sport, ICT, Cycling, Quiz and Crafts.

Admission to these clubs depends on the number of children wishing to take part with priority being given to senior pupils.

Clubs take place from 3:00pm - 4:00pm. Parents are responsible for transport arrangements of children after the club activity ends.



## RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL STATUS

In June 2009 St Brigid's attained Rights Respecting Schools Status (Level 2). The pupils discuss their rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They learn that as citizens they have specific rights which cannot be denied. They also learn that with rights come responsibilities. We believe that as a result of this work the children are more politically and globally aware of rights and responsibilities.

As a Rights Respecting School our pupils have grown in confidence and self-esteem. They know that their voice is heard, their opinions listened to and acted upon.

We have incorporated Rights Respecting ethos and values into all our school policies and procedures.

## St. Brigid's Primary School European Links



# ERASMUS +

In St Brigid's P.S. we have a number of global links with schools in the U.S.A., China and across Europe. We have three Erasmus+ projects. These European Union funded projects are managed by the British Council. Of the 15 projects passed by the Council in Northern Ireland three are co-ordinated by St. Brigid's.

Our Erasmus+ projects (where we are the co-ordinating school) for the next 3 years are:

1. Engaging Young Entrepreneurs
2. Robotics (through Lego)
3. Teaching Mathematics through Games using Multiple Intelligences.

Entrepreneurs	Robotics	Mathematics
St Brigid's PS	St Brigid's	St Brigid's PS
Poland	Ballysillan PS	Ballysillan PS
Spain	Spain	Spain
Croatia	Italy	Italy
Iceland	Belguim	Belguim
Italy	Turkey	Portugal
		Turkey



For these projects which are based over three years, there are 2 international visits for school staff per year and 1 per project to Northern Ireland. The Robotics project also has one week of training in Belfast on programming Lego using iPads.



In 2017/18 Primary 5 and 6 pupils are having lessons on coding and programming robots with Erasmus+ tutor Balazs Kecskemeti. We will link with these European partners to promote understanding and international links.



Staff from St. Brigid's visit their European partner schools to share good practice. Pupils of all ages are involved in project work on the themes and this work is shared by internet and in hard copy.



## SCHOOL INSPECTION

The Education and Training Inspectorate usually inspect schools every seven years. Our last inspection was in January 2008 so we were not surprised to hear that we were being inspected on the week beginning 21<sup>st</sup> September 2015, however, we were surprised by how early in the term it was!

A team of five inspectors led by Mrs Jill Garland inspected all areas of school life including documentation, policies, planners, interviewing children and staff and observing lessons.

The overall grade for the school is the top band which states: "The school has a high capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all learners. ETI will continue to monitor how the school sustains improvement." The detail of the inspection findings concluded that:

<b>Achievements and Outcomes</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Provision for Learning</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Pastoral Care</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>

We are delighted with the outcome and are proud of our pupils who behaved impeccably during the inspection.

Two outstanding inspection reports 2008 and 2015 is proof indeed that St. Brigid's Primary School is a great school. The full inspection report is available online at [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk).

### COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The school endeavours to work with parents at all times and to address queries, concerns and complaints immediately. A Handling Complaints Policy is in place and a copy can be acquired from the school office or website. If you as a parent remain dissatisfied, having seen the class teacher and the principal you are advised to contact the Parent Governor.

### CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS

From January 2012 the Board of Governors have for health and Safety reasons asked that you do not use the school car park. If you require Disabled Parking close to the school building you must apply to the school for a Car Park Pass. Please do not park in the Bus Park although you can use it for set down only. Please use the Chapel Car Park taking care not to block the entrance to the Parochial House.

In St Brigid's P.S. we pride ourselves on being a warm, welcoming school. Feel free to visit our school and see for yourself .....



We look forward to working with you and helping you to educate your child.  
"Le chéile in eolas - together in learning."