

**ST. MARY'S PRIMARY
SCHOOL
AUGHLISNAFIN**



**AN INFORMATION BOOKLET
FOR P.1. PARENTS**



WELCOME

Dear Parent,

Welcome to our school and thank-you for choosing our school for your child. Your child is very precious to you; therefore, we hope to make the transition into the school environment as stress free and enjoyable as possible for both your child and you as a parent!

I hope that you find this booklet of use. We look forward to meeting your child as they start this very special and important chapter of their lives.

Best Wishes,

Melissa Cahill.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Principal: Mr Murphy

Vice Principal: Mr Higgins

Secretary: Mrs Cairns

Teachers: Mrs Cahill
Mrs Mc Evoy
Mr Higgins
Mrs Mc Cormick
Mr Grant
Miss Clancy

Classroom assistants:
Mrs Amanda Binks, Mrs Mary Blaney,
Mrs Fionnuala Ward and Ms Keavy
Burns

School address: St. Mary's Primary School
5 Aughlisnafin Road
Castlewellan
Co. Down
BT31 9JP

Telephone No: 028 437 78460

Email: info@aughlisnafinps.castlewellan.ni.sch.uk

SCHOOL DAY

- **A security system is installed in the school for your child's safety. External doors cannot be opened without a key fob. All visitors to the school should report to the office by buzzing the button on the wall to gain access to the school.**
- **School starts at 9.00am. The children may be dropped off from 8.45am.**
- **The school day for Rec/P.1 finishes at 1.45pm Monday-Thursday and 1.05pm on Friday. Please try to be on time when collecting your child, as a child left to the end becomes very fretful. If you change your child's usual collection method /person, please send a note in with your child or phone the school to inform us of this. The children should be collected at the gate, parents should not come up to the classroom.**
- **Dinner money should be paid for the week or individual days on Monday morning.**
- **If during the year your child is absent from school for any reason a note should be sent into school explaining the absence.**
- **In circumstances that your child must be collected from school early to attend an appointment etc. the teacher should be informed of this before hand. A parent lifting a child early must report to the office in the school and not directly to the classroom.**
- **In the event of an emergency etc. and your child must be collected early the parent should again report to the office and not directly to classroom.**
- **Never take your child out of school during the school day without first reporting to the office.**

OUR UNIFORM

GIRLS:

- **School jumper or cardigan (green) with the school crest and School tie (green and navy); both items can be purchased in John Mc Kenny's main street Castlewellan.**
- **Navy skirt or pinafore.**
- **A white shirt/blouse. A short-sleeved blouse is more appropriate as your child will be playing in water, sand, and painting pictures.**
- **White socks/navy tights.**
- **Black shoes.**
- **A green gingham summer dress may be worn in warmer weather.**

BOYS:

- **School jumper (green) with the school crest and School tie (green and navy); both items can be purchased in John Mc Kenny's main street Castlewellan.**
- **Navy trousers.**
- **A white shirt. A short-sleeved shirt is more appropriate as your child will be playing in water, sand, and painting pictures.**
- **Black shoes.**

P.E.

- **On P.E. day the children come into school in their P.E. gear. I will send home a note to let you know when this begins.**
 - **Your child should wear practical clothing for P.E. preferably tracksuit bottoms and a T-shirt with a fleece /warm top.**
 - **Your child should also wear sensible shoes for P.E. i.e., Trainers.**
 - **Jeans, skirts, and boots are not appropriate P.E. gear.**
 - **The children quite frequently go outside for P.E. During the winter months, the children should wear appropriate warm and waterproof clothing. In the summer months if the weather is hot, please make sure that your child has sun cream on and a hat.**
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- **Please label all items of your child's uniform and P.E. gear. An unlabelled jumper cannot be identified.**
 - **If your child accidentally takes home another child's jumper etc., please return it to school.**
 - **I would be grateful if each child had a change of clothes to be left in school on their peg. A pair of jogging bottoms, a top, underwear and socks should be adequate. These should be sent in in a bag that has been clearly marked with your child's name. I would very much appreciate if a packet of baby wipes could also be included in the bag**
 - **Please send a coat to school every day even if the weather is warm in the morning, as by evening time it could be raining!**

HOMEWORK

- **Your child will need a strong plastic A4 sized folder with a zip for their homework.**
- **They will also need; a pencil, eraser, sharpener, colouring pencils or twistables, a pair of safe children's scissors and glue at home to complete their homework.**
- **All written homework must be completed using a writing pencil, not a colouring pencil.**
- **All pictures must be coloured in unless otherwise stated. These must be coloured with colouring pencils and not markers.**
- **ALL HOMEWORK MUST BE CHECKED AND SIGNED BY A PARENT.**
- **Get your child into a good homework routine from the start. Encourage your child to do their homework in a quite environment with the television turned off.**
- **Clear a space for your child to do their homework away from food.**
- **Encourage your child to take pride in their work and to care for their books and pages.**
- **Please allow your child to complete their homework independently. Certainly, guidance is recommended, but it must be their work. Encourage your child to take pride in their work and try their best. Make sure to praise and encourage their efforts.**
- **Try to complete the homework before the children get too tired.**
- **Homework's will begin when the children have settled. Quite often the homework's will be reading or a practical activity.**
- **Your child will also need to bring in a large pritt stick for their own personal use in the classroom.**

MEALS

- **BREAK** - we encourage the children to bring in a healthy break i.e., fruit, bread, yoghurts, cheese, crackers etc. Please try not to send in junk food, as not only is it unhealthy for your child but it tends to make them hyper in class and therefore difficult for them to concentrate.
- **LUNCH** – Again we encourage healthy eating and no junk food or fizzy drinks. Please send your child's drink in a plastic container/bottle and not glass for safety purposes.
- We have a healthy eating policy Monday-Thursday, with Friday being a treat day, on Friday the children may bring in a small treat for their break/lunch.
- School dinners are available each day and all meals intended to be taken during the week should be paid for on a Monday. Please try, if possible, to enclose the correct amount to save your child carrying change around in school. The price of school dinners is currently £2.60 this may go up in September.
- Please make sure your child takes a drink to school each day in a re-sealable container.
- Remember to send a spoon for yogurts. If your child cannot peel their own orange, please send it in peeled.
- We do not heat up food for children.

HELPING YOUR CHILD IN P.1.

REFLECTION

- I need my family very much.
- Hold my hand it makes me feel secure.
- Hug me I know you love me.
- Look at me when you talk to me.
- Give me your time and attention.
- Share books with me and help me to enjoy reading.
- Make me feel relaxed with you.
- Read to me and let me enjoy stories.
- Talk to me and tell me about my world.
- Help me to become independent.
- Don't lose patience when I am slow, I am only learning.
- Share my television programmes with me.
- Help me to choose.

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD BY:




- Talking to them about their day, often information is not forthcoming they will talk when they are ready!
- Visit the library frequently, read stories and recite nursery rhymes with them. A daddy reading is a good role model to encourage boys to read.
- Encourage good pencil control, colouring and writing.
- Let your child practise cutting with a pair of safe craft scissors.
- Help your child build up concentration skills, sitting in front of the television/ play station for long periods does not necessarily mean that your child has good concentration! Please try to limit screen time on all gadgets. Encourage your child to complete puzzles, colour pictures or play board games and develop their imaginations.
- Make sure your child has a set bedtime and is getting sufficient sleep.
- Encourage sharing and turn taking.
- If another child hits your child, teach them to inform an adult not to hit back.
- Show an interest in your child's homework/ schoolwork.
- In the good weather send your child outside to play rather than continual watching of television /playing on the computer.
- Encourage independence i.e., dressing, putting on their coats, shoes etc. This we have found is a big issue especially putting on and taking off jumpers.
- Monitor your child's homework and sign it.
- Learning homework is crucial especially learning their phonics sounds, children who do not learn these, fall behind in their reading and independent writing. If your child does not have a sound grasp of these, they will struggle to make progress in reading and writing.

A FEW IDEAS/THINGS TO CONSIDER IN PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR P.1.

- **Develop pencil control with tripod grip (two fingers and thumb)**
- **Encourage your child to draw pictures and to colour in.**
- **Encourage your child to make marks on paper and write letters (do not teach them Capital letters in the middle of their name, this should only be for the first letter.)**
- **Familiarise your child with jolly phonics. (There are good videos on you tube)**
- **Know how to hold and turn the pages of a book.**
- **To be able to recognise their own name.**
- **Talk to your child and model the correct language rather than correct what they have said e.g., your child may say, “I seen a car”, you can model this correctly by saying “You saw a car”.**
- **Encourage the correct use of he, she, we, they, us etc.**
- **Develop positional language so your child knows above, below, under, on top, beside, beneath etc.**
- **Encourage your child to use a pair of child safe craft scissors under your supervision. Encourage them to cut in straight lines, to cut out pictures and shapes.**
- **Recognise colours and be able to name these.**
- **Count objects slowly and point to each item as they count.**
- **Recognise numbers on dice, recognise dots on a die firstly by counting and then by sight.**
- **Recognise and name shapes, square, circle, rectangle, and triangle.**
- **To be able to organise themselves carry and tidy away their own things.**
- **Practise opening and closing school bags and lunch boxes.**
- **Practising opening pots, juice bottles, peeling bananas and peeling oranges.**
- **Putting on and taking off jumpers, coats, and shoes.**
- **To be able to attend to themselves whilst at the toilet.**
- **To be independent in toilet routines.**
- **To begin to know how to deal with conflict situations. We don't hit we tell an adult.**
- **We take care of toys we don't throw or break them, or peel pictures off jigsaws or tear books etc.**
- **We respect others and listen to all adults in the school.**

DEVELOPING PENCIL CONTROL AND GRIP

We are encouraging the children to use a tripod grip to hold their pencil. Some children have an awkward grip or poor pencil control. Encourage your child to hold their pencil properly and practise making marks initially and progressing later to writing letters, numbers and drawing pictures. Many children find colouring in difficult, keep practising to develop their fine motor skills, strength, and dexterity in their fingers.

 <p>OT Mom Learning Activities</p>	<p>This is the ideal pencil grip with the thumb, index and middle fingers holding the pencil. Those three fingers can move freely because the ring and little finger are curled gently into the palm, giving the hand stability.</p>
 <p>OT Mom Learning Activities</p>	<p>When writing, the last joint of the index finger should be slightly extended.</p>
 <p>(c) ot-mom-learning-activities</p>	<p>As you can see, from this photo and the next: when the last joint is slightly extended, it can stretch back and forth more easily.</p>
 <p>(c) ot-mom-learning-activities</p>	<p>Try it yourself to see the range of motion that you achieve. These finger movements are necessary for good handwriting skills.</p>



This is also considered a mature pencil grasp. The difference is that the last knuckle of the index finger is flexed (bent) instead of extended.



Compare the range of movement with a flexed index finger to the pictures above. You may also find that your hand tires more easily.



Some children tend to let their thumb wrap around the pencil. This limits how much the fingers can move and handwriting can be more tiring. This pencil grasp is not ideal.



Some experts suggest that to have the middle finger on top of the pencil with the index finger is acceptable, with the pencil resting on the ring finger. However, this does limit the movement of the fingers, and children with this pencil grip tend to grip the pencil too tightly, as can be seen by the white joints in this picture.

DEVELOPING CONCENTRATION SKILLS

We work hard on encouraging and building up concentration and persistence with tasks in class. It is important in school that children learn to sit, listen, and attend to what the teacher says. The children also need to be able to complete activities that they are given. If your child struggles with concentration, then you could support us by setting up a routine at home that will give your child plenty of practise and opportunity for building up their concentration skills.

- Set aside time every day so that you and your child can sit together at a table and work on some sort of structured play activity. E.g., drawing, colouring, jigsaws, construction, board or card games, story time, memory games etc. This should vary as your child will often have to do activities that they may not choose/ or perhaps like doing.**
- Parents should gradually build up their child's concentration span in short steps. If you think your child can concentrate for three minutes, then start with that amount of time. Then over time you can build up or extend your child's concentration span from three minutes to five minutes then to eight minutes and to ten minutes. It is really a question of regular practise and lots of experience in concentrating.**
- It is important to reward your child for concentrating, staying on task, and completing activities. You can do this in simple ways by praising them for concentrating and using a simple sticker and star charts.**
- Limit your child's television and computer (screen time) and encourage them to play and interact socially with others.**
- Story time at night will develop their concentration, develop their vocabulary, and allow you to spend some quality time with your child.**
- Reduce screen time on tablets, television, laptops, and videos etc. especially at night-time, as the lights emitted from the gadgets and the content will keep your child's brain awake and this is not good for regular sleep patterns.**

CONCERNS

- **If at any time throughout the year you have concerns about your child or are unsure about anything, please don't hesitate to contact me.**
- **If you need to speak to me at any stage, please phone the school to arrange a time to meet with me.**
- **I am usually in my classroom before school starts or down at the gate in the evening at home time for quick enquiries.**
- **Please avoid coming to the classroom between the hours of 9.00am and 1.45pm as I am teaching. Please feel free to send a note in with your child or phone me if you have any concerns.**

TOILET ROUTINE AND INDEPENDENCE

- **All children coming to school should be fully toilet trained. They should be able to attend to themselves in the toilet, wipe themselves properly and have been taught how to flush the toilet and wash their hands.**
- **Children should be encouraged to put on and take off their own jumpers and coats. They should also be encouraged to put on and take off their own shoes.**

BEHAVIOUR

We operate a positive behaviour policy in our classroom; this is also known as assertive discipline. We have a classroom management plan, and the children are taught the class rules, the rewards for acceptable behaviour and consequences for the child should they choose not to follow the class rules. The children then all know the rules and understand the behaviour that is expected of them and the consequences of any unacceptable behaviour.

The children in the class work towards a shared reward of their choice, they save marbles in a jar and when the jar is full, they receive a whole class reward.

We encourage pupils to tell an adult if someone is annoying them and not to hit back.

Bullying is not tolerated by any pupil. Bullying is something that is ongoing over a period of time, not a once off incident.

Some children take a little while to adjust to a new environment, new adults, and new classmates. You may experience some periods of up and down behaviour; this is normal don't panic it will settle! All children are different, and they will all get there in their own time.

The children receive good news notes and star of the week certificates and prizes. We also award prizes to two pupils each month for our pupils of the month.