

# Information Booklet



## Learn Together to Live Together

(Updated May 2024)



**We welcome you and your child into our school community! We hope your child will develop to the best of their potential in our care. We welcome your support and positive participation in order to achieve this for your child and all the children in our school.**

### **An Educate Together School**

Rush and Lusk Educate Together N.S. is part of a vibrant and growing educational sector in Ireland. An Educate Together National School is generally set up in response to interest in equality based education in a particular area. The schools apply to the Department of Education for recognition and operate under the same rules applying to all National Schools.

All National Schools operate under the 1998 Education Act, which recognises the patron as manager of the school. The patron for our school is Educate Together, an umbrella organisation for all Educate Together National Schools. The main task of the Patron is to ensure that the ethos and characteristic spirit of the school is maintained.

### **Rush and Lusk Educate Together NS**

- ❖ is a National School under the Department of Education
- ❖ is co-educational
- ❖ is equality based
- ❖ has classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class
- ❖ Has two classes for children with Autism.
- ❖ is child-centred and follows the Revised Primary Curriculum
- ❖ encourages the active involvement of parents

### **Being equality based**

- ❖ We recognise all ethical and religious traditions.
- ❖ We cherish and respect the religious, cultural and social identity of every child and family that attends the school.
- ❖ We offer an Ethical Education Curriculum, called the Learn Together Programme.
- ❖ We facilitate any group of parents wishing to organise faith instruction and preparation for specific faith celebrations for their children after-school hours.

## Ethical Education Curriculum

The Educate Together Ethical Education Curriculum has four Strands:

### 1. An Ethical Approach to the Environment Strand



- Develop a knowledge, understanding and respect for the natural environment and an appreciation of its fragility and vulnerability.
- Explore the interdependence of life and the impact of over-consumption on the planet.
- Recognise the importance of active citizenship in attempting to redress the impact of human over-consumption on the environment.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the urgency needed to protect the environment for present and future life on the planet.

### 2. Equality and Justice Strand



- Develop a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of issues relating to human rights, equality, culture, diversity, social justice and social inclusiveness.
- Develop a critical way of being, fostering questioning, analysis and open engagement with ethical and social justice issues.
- Feel empowered to become informed, ethical and active citizens.

### 3. Values and Ethical Perspectives Strand



- Develop a critical knowledge, understanding and awareness of right and wrong and a heightened awareness of social, ethical, and moral standards through reflection on life itself learn to explore their own identities and in doing so, strengthen and enhance their self-worth and self-esteem.
- Explore, understand and identify appropriate responses to the multitude and richness of human emotions.
- Identify values integral to personal development which can inform ethical decisions.

### 4. Belief Systems Strand



- Develop knowledge and understanding of the richness of belief systems and worldviews, both religious and secular, and relate these to the human experience and day-to-day life.
- Develop an understanding of the right to hold and practise a belief or worldview and to change that belief at any time.
- Develop knowledge of conceptual understandings as they relate to religious and secular beliefs.
- Relate aspects of religious and secular beliefs to individual experience, leading to enhanced mutual understandings.
- Develop an understanding that beliefs and the practise of beliefs can vary from culture to culture and individual to individual.

## **Our Mission Statement**

**Learn Together to Live Together**

## **Our Vision Statement**

**We aspire to be a listening school informed by the values of respect and inclusiveness.**

**We aim to create a stimulating environment, in which everyone feels comfortable, safe and welcome.**

**We promote social responsibility, understanding and appreciation of difference.**

**Within this social environment, we respect each child as an individual and encourage their development socially, academically and emotionally.**

**We participate positively and actively in the local community and global society**



## **Background to our school**

In early 2003 a group of parents from the Rush / Lusk area met with the Educate Together organisation with a view to setting up an Educate Together school in the area. Their main initial tasks were to find suitable premises for the school and to apply to the Department of Education for recognition. Following a lengthy search and tireless work by the Rush and Lusk Educate Together Association, the Scout Den in Kenure Park became the first premises where the school could be established.

The school opened on 1st September 2003 in Rush. We began with 24 children and two teachers. In March 2004 we moved to Hanna's Avenue where we continued to grow and develop happily in a peaceful, rural setting. At the end of August 2008, we moved yet again – to our temporary purpose-built school, provided by the Department of Education and Skills. Our new permanent school building opened in February 2024. It accommodates all our classes and includes 2 classrooms for children with Additional Needs in Autism.

The development of a new school from the initial idea and dream, through all the challenges and changes, to a flourishing school community can only happen when there is commitment, support, help and belief on the part of everyone involved along the road. Our school has been very fortunate to grow through a community of enthusiastic and hard-working staff, PGTA, parents and children. The school community you see now is a great tribute to their ongoing dynamism and support. We should also acknowledge the many long hours of hard work and planning contributed by our previous Boards of Management, especially in our initial years – their voluntary dedication is immeasurable.

By September 2024, our enrolment will be around 410 children.

## **The Board of Management**

The Board of Management has overall responsibility for the running of the school. As in all National Schools, the Board of Management of the school operates for four years. Our current Board of Management came into office in December 2023.

The following nominees are on the Board of Management:

<i>Patron Nominee</i>	-	<i>Lesley Smyth (Chairperson)</i>
<i>Patron Nominee</i>	-	<i>Jane Smith</i>
<i>Parent Nominees</i>	-	<i>Anna Drennan &amp; Michael Kavanagh</i>
<i>Community Nominees</i>	-	<i>Amandeep Kaur &amp; Paul Walsh</i>
<i>Teacher Nominee</i>	-	<i>Simon Mc Conkey</i>
<i>Principal</i>	-	<i>Noel Reilly</i>

## **School Staff**

Principal: Noel Reilly

Deputy Principal: Helen O'Reilly

27 Teaching Staff

15 Additional Needs Assistants

3 Ancillary Staff  
Wendy Williams (Secretary)  
Ann O Donoghue (Secretary)  
Herby Donnelly (Caretaker)

## **Partnership in the School**

We try to involve all members of the school community in the work of our school through committees, consultation around new policies, and opportunities to help with school activities over the year.

A number of school policies have been formulated through a consultative process involving the Board of Management, staff, parents and the children. These include our School Mission and Vision Statement, Code of Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Equality Policy, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy, Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Homework Policy, Child Protection policy, Substance Use Policy and Parental Involvement policy. Many of these policies are on our website: [www.ralet.ie](http://www.ralet.ie)

### **Parent/Guardian Teacher Association**

The Parent Guardian Teacher Association of Rush and Lusk Educate Together signifies another element of partnership within the school. The PGTA held its first meeting in February 2005. While all parents/guardians are automatically members of the Association, the committee usually consists of parent/guardian representatives from different class groups in the school and teacher representatives.

The purpose of the PGTA is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians of children attending the school can work together in the interests of the children and for their best possible education.

The PGTA works with the Principal, Board of Management and staff to build effective partnership between home and school. This is one way for you to become actively involved in your child's school.

### **Student Council:**

Our Student Council has been up and running since early 2007 with representation from First to Sixth class. This forum provides our children with opportunities to offer opinions and suggestions on school-life and school development.

### **A 'Green School':**

In 2004-2005 we began working towards acquiring our first Green School Flag. Since then we have achieved seven Green Flags and we recently were awarded our eighth flag which is on the theme of Global Citizenship- Marine Environment. The themes we have covered to date are Waste Management, Energy, Water Conservation, Transport, Biodiversity and Global Citizenship- Waste, Global Citizenship-Energy. **In keeping with our green ethos the children are encouraged to cut down on packaging for lunches and to re-use and recycle where possible. We also encourage as many people as possible to walk or cycle to and from school.**

### **Autism Friendly Schools:**

We are currently part of a project promoting greater awareness around Autism.

### **Wellbeing:**

We are one of twenty primary schools nationally selected in 2019 to engage in a pilot Wellbeing project as part of our School Self Evaluation.

As a school we are engaged with the Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) which stems from best practice in many Australian schools. We are currently receiving training for all teachers and special needs assistants over a two year period (2022-2024).

### **Other school activities:**

Over your child's time in school there may be opportunities for them to get involved in a variety of activities: outings to museums, concerts and galleries, participating in science and quiz challenges / projects and charity initiatives linked to the community, choir and other music projects, developing our school garden and interschool Leagues in chess, football and athletics.



## School Transport Scheme:

This scheme is run by the Department of Education for children who live outside the Lusk area and as such is governed by its regulations. Parents should contact Bus Eireann (School transport Scheme) on their website [www.buseireann](http://www.buseireann) for details of application and costs. This year our service is operated by Usshers Coaches, Drogheda.

## School Day:

- 8.45 am** School begins (Gates/ doors open from 8.40 a.m.)
- Two breaks** First (10 minutes) with small snack & another for Lunch (30 minutes) and outside play (weather dependent.)
- 1.25 pm.** Junior / Senior Infant classes home time
- 2.25 pm.** First to Sixth classes home time

## Office Hours:

The following are times when the office is open for contact and support:

Monday, Tuesday, & Friday: **8.45am – 2.45pm.**  
Wednesday & Thursday: **8:30am - 4pm.**

School phone: 01-8430525

School email address: [office@ralet.ie](mailto:office@ralet.ie)

School website: [www.ralet.ie](http://www.ralet.ie)

**All visitors must report to the school office on arrival.**



## **Tips for Parents of Junior Infants:**

- ❖ It is important to talk about school, especially about the possibility of new friends and new activities. If you can, prepare your child for being away from you by leaving them with a friend, relative or neighbour for a time.
- ❖ Being in school means your child extends their social contact to mixing with many peers and developing independence. It is important to help your child develop social skills needed for school such as sharing (toys and games, time, space and attention), listening, turn-taking, tidying up and helping out.
- ❖ Try to develop independent play and concentration through activities such as creating / colouring pictures, construction and cutting, playing board-games and doing jigsaws.
- ❖ The first few days can be an emotional time for children and parents. Trust your child's teacher! The well-being and safety of the children is our shared priority. If you are feeling upset, try not to show it – leave your child with their teacher and explain that you will be back at the appropriate time. Sometimes a small soft toy from home can be a comfort for the first days.
- ❖ Accept that your child will be tired coming home and might need a rest or quiet time after school.
- ❖ Talk about your child's school-day – ask questions related to school-day activities, such as hearing stories, learning rhymes, telling news, painting/colouring pictures, playing games and singing.
- ❖ Be sure that your child recognises their own belongings, including clothing. **Please label belongings clearly.**
- ❖ Practise opening and closing buttons and zips with your child.
- ❖ Trousers with elasticated waists and shoes that close with Velcro allow children of this age to develop greater independence.
- ❖ When starting school your child should be able to go to the toilet independently. Check that they can wipe themselves and know appropriate use of toilet-paper, the routine of flushing the toilet, and washing hands.
- ❖ Choose a school bag that will hold a lunch-box, a drink and a folder. The lunch-box and drinks bottle should be secure but opened easily.

## **Communications:**

As part of our ethos, all children and adults, including staff are addressed by first names.

- ❖ The school uses a dedicated school App (Aladdin Connect), e-mail, and text to contact parents/guardians about general school information. It is important to let us know of any changes to your contact details, and to check your messages regularly.
- ❖ A meeting for parents/guardians is held in September to give a general overview of the year ahead, to familiarise you with the curriculum and your child's life in school. Individual parent/guardian-teacher meetings are held later in the year. School reports are written once a year - in early June.
- ❖ If you have any queries, problems or concerns regarding your child, please email the office to contact your child's teacher to make an appointment. When making this appointment please indicate the nature of your concern e.g. class work, behaviour related, personal. The teacher will arrange a time when they can give you the time and privacy you may need. In addition, if there is a change in home circumstances (e.g. illness, separation, or anything you feel may affect your child), it is important to let us know. We can assure you of the utmost confidentiality.

### **❖ General Communication**

- To request an appointment to speak with a teacher please email the office.
- Absences - note on Aladdin, or email the office
- Medicine/ Allergy updates - please email the office
- Late arrival/ early collection of children - Note on Aladdin or email the office

### **Communication regarding specific issues**

- (a) A parent/ guardian must firstly discuss their concern with the teacher.  
The majority of issues can be resolved amicably by directly meeting the teacher. When you are making contact through the school email, please put F.A.O Teacher's Name (CONFIDENTIAL) in the subject heading. It would be preferable to give a general outline of why you are requesting a meeting rather than going into detail in an email.
- (b) If unresolved then a parent/guardian can discuss their concerns with the principal.
- ❖ In situations where parents/guardians are living separately, it is important to note that we have a Custody and Separation Policy that enables us to support the needs of children and parents to the best of our ability. This is available on our website.

## **Personal Devices**

- The school does not allow students to access the internet on school premises using personal devices, such as mobile phones. In particular, connecting personal devices to the school network is strictly prohibited.
- The school recognises that a parent or guardian may wish their child to have a personal device. In this case, the phone must not be switched on without a teacher's permission while on the school premises. If a child uses a personal device such as a mobile phone without permission, it will be confiscated and will only be returned to a parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be contacted to inform them that the phone has been confiscated.

## **Other General Information**

- ❖ The Department of Education has revised guidelines and procedures for all schools in relation to Child Protection and Welfare. These guidelines promote the welfare of all children. The Board of Management of our school has adopted these guidelines fully as school policy. Please see our website for full details. If there is a matter of concern in relation to children, we are obliged to report this to the Tusla Service Executive (HSE).
- ❖ The Stay Safe Programme is implemented fully as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education Curriculum in the school. This programme is a personal safety skills programme for children. Its overall objective is to prevent child abuse, bullying and other forms of victimisation. Please see the website [www.staysafe.ie/parents](http://www.staysafe.ie/parents) for fuller details.
- ❖ You have received a copy of the school Code of Behaviour & ICT Acceptable Use Policy – please keep these safe for future reference.
- ❖ If a child is absent for any reason you must notify the school and explain the reason for absence. This is usually done on the Aladdin App, or note to the class teacher. The school is obliged to report to Tusla if a child has missed 20 days or more in the school year.
- ❖ It is very important that the children arrive at school on time. School begins at 8.45 a.m. (Gates open at 8.40 a.m.). Parents are asked to ensure that their child does not enter the school premises before 8.40am, as the children are not insured before official opening hours.
- ❖ We appreciate parents' / guardians' co-operation in collecting children promptly at home-time. Children get anxious if collected late and teachers have further duties to undertake once the class has been dismissed.

- ❖ If you need to collect your child before official school closing time, you would need to inform the school by Aladdin, phone, or email. This should only happen for very urgent reasons.
- ❖ The school must know at all times the names of emergency contacts of those designated to collect your child. These can be added and updated in Aladdin.
- ❖ Children in **Junior Infants to 1st class** must be collected from the teacher at the designated area at home-time and must be supervised by adults and use pathways to access cars.  
Children in **2nd class** must have permission from their parents/guardians to leave on their own from school.  
Children from **3rd Class to 6th Class** can walk/cycle home independently.
- ❖ We ask all parents/guardians to adhere to Traffic Management Systems put in place by the Board of Management.
- ❖ We encourage parents/guardians to make use of the school-bus where eligible, to walk, cycle, scoot or car-pool in order to help reduce traffic congestion.
- ❖ If children cycle or bring a scooter/flicker to school, we would advise that the children have a helmet and a lock and that their name is on their bike/scooter/flicker to clearly identify them.
- ❖ Birthday invitations or festive cards – We request that the handing out of these be organised outside of school as the selective issuing of these to some children can cause others to feel excluded.
- ❖ We discourage children from bringing toys to school (except on special days arranged by the class teacher).

### **Clothing & Footwear**

- ❖ The school does not have a school uniform. However, we encourage parents to dress their child in **simple, appropriate, practical clothing** that is suitable for all school activities.
- ❖ 2. We discourage the display of obvious designer labels, inappropriate, violent or frightening slogans and images. We recommend comfortable, versatile clothing such as tracksuits and footwear that is suitable for running and physical activity. Crop tops above the belly button are not appropriate for school.

## **Health and Safety:**

- ❖ Flip-flops and open sandals are not safe for running and therefore are highly inappropriate.
- ❖ The wearing of jewellery such as chains / necklaces and large or hoop-earrings can be hazardous in the playground or at PE. Teachers may ask children to remove these items when going outside.
- ❖ False nails are a Health & Safety risk and unsuitable for children in a primary school as they prevent children from engaging properly in both work and play.
- ❖ Beauty products such as perfumes, fake tan and sprays can often contain chemicals or ingredients that children and staff are allergic to. These products should not be worn or brought into school by any children.
- ❖ It is vital that you make the school aware of any medical conditions or allergies that your child might have. The school has a policy - Managing Health Conditions & Administration of Medicines Policy - and there are particular procedures to be followed should a child need any medication in school. If you need to discuss the details further, please speak to the Principal and get the necessary forms.
- ❖ The school comes under Area 8 of the HSE.
- ❖ Junior Infants are offered 4 in 1 and MMR vaccinations.
- ❖ Dental check-ups are organised by the HSE for children in Sixth Class.
- ❖ Children receive a hearing and vision test in Senior Infants.
- ❖ It is school policy that, if a child is judged to be genuinely unwell / has an accident needing special attention, the child should be collected at the earliest possible time.
- ❖ Head lice can be a problem in schools – check your child’s hair regularly.

## Sensory Supports

- ❖ Rest assured that if your child has a specific recommendation in a Psychological Report or Occupational Therapy report for additional support such as wobble cushions, ear defenders or fidget tools the school will provide the appropriate support necessary.
- ❖ If there is no report recommending the use of these items then there must be a valid reason in writing to [raletprincipal@ralet.ie](mailto:raletprincipal@ralet.ie) outlining why your child needs them. As a school we endeavour to promote and build greater resilience for all.

## Healthy Lunch Policy:

The Board of Management advocates a Healthy Lunch Policy. Research has shown that children's behaviour and ability to learn is affected by the food they eat. Here are some suggestions to help you provide a healthy lunch for your child:



- Roll or sandwich with cheese, meat or salad filling.
- Scone and butter
- Rice cakes (plain or yoghurt)
- Crackers
- Pasta/Pasta salad
- Raw vegetables, cheese
- Fruit, raisins
- Yoghurt
- Milk, water, fruit juice, diluted sugar-free drink



## The following items should not be given for lunch:

- Fizzy drinks such as Coke, 7-Up, Fanta and drinks with high sugar content, including energy drinks
- Crisps and crisp-type snacks
- Sweets
- Popcorn (due to the fact that it is regarded as a possible choking hazard)

**The following foods are strictly forbidden:**

- **All products containing nuts including peanut butter and nutella. Please check that lunch items brought to school do not contain nut-traces.**



- **Chewing gum is not allowed on the school premises!**



- Children are permitted to bring **one small** treat to school on a Friday. A treat could be a biscuit **or** small piece of chocolate or one mini-bar. Sharing bags should not be brought to school.
- As some children may have a serious intolerance to particular foods (e.g. nuts, gluten products, dairy products, certain fruits), please talk to your child about the danger of sharing certain foods with classmates.

**We hope the information in this booklet will explain a little about life in our school and answer some of your questions.**

**Should you need further information or clarification on any area, please feel free to contact us in the office by email [office@ralet.ie](mailto:office@ralet.ie) or by phone at 01-8430525.**



