

*Scoil Naomh Pádraig  
(Buachailli)*

***ST. PATRICK'S B.N.S.  
DONABATE***



***Handbook for Parents  
[Feb 2019 revision]***

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## St. Patrick's Boys' National School

Dear Parents,

It is with greatest of pleasure that I welcome you to St. Patrick's Boys' National School.

I know that your son will be very happy in our school and that from the time he enters to the time he leaves us in sixth class, I guarantee that he will reach his full potential.

Our school is a very happy, yet hard working school and this is largely due to the dedication and enthusiasm of the Principal and Staff.

I am pleased to say that we have a Staff of the highest professional standard.

With its fine modern facilities, comfortable classrooms, good management, capable dedicated Staff and a hard-working Parents' Council, the future of our school looks very bright indeed.

Kind regards,

Mary Brooks,  
Chairperson, Board of Management.

## *Aims and Objectives*

**The aims of Primary Education are:**

1. To enable children to live full lives as children
2. To equip them to avail themselves of further education
3. To prepare them to live full and useful lives as adults in society

**Our general objectives are to help children to:**

- Develop a positive awareness of self and sensitivity to others and a respect for the rights, views and feelings of other people.
- Develop self-discipline and acceptable behaviour.
- Develop the capacity to make moral judgements.
- Develop spiritually.
- Extend their knowledge of and develop an understanding of Catholic traditions and beliefs and a respect for religious traditions and beliefs of others.
- Communicate clearly and confidently.

- Listen attentively and with understanding.
- Speak clearly and effectively.
- Read fluently and with understanding.
- Learn the habit of reading for leisure.
- Write fluently and legibly with accurate spelling, syntax and punctuation.
- Locate, extract, record and interpret information from various sources.
- Develop a competence in Irish.
- Understand computational skills and apply them accurately and speedily.
- Understand and apply mathematical concepts.
- Develop analytic and problem solving skills.
- Understand and apply basic scientific ideas.
- Extend their knowledge of and generate interest in historical, geographical, social and natural aspects of their environment and cultural heritage.

- Acquire knowledge of and an interest in the history and geography of places and times removed from their own.
- Develop the skills and knowledge to express themselves through various aesthetic activities including drama, language movement, music and visual arts.
- Develop agility and physical co-ordination.
- Develop skills & competence in the use of I.T.
- Acquire a knowledge and understanding of their bodies and develop a sense of responsibility for their own health.

*In pursuing these objectives we recognise that all areas of human development (intellectual, physical, spiritual, social etc.) are inextricably linked.*

### ***Management Structure***

A board of Management is appointed every four years and is composed of representatives of Patron, Parents and Teachers.

#### Constitution of Board of Management

- (i) Two members appointed by and representative of the Patron, Archbishop of Dublin.

- (ii) Two members, parents or legal guardians of children enrolled in the school (one being a mother, the other a father), elected by the general body of parents of children attending the school;
- (iii) The Principal Teacher of the school;
- (iv) One other teacher on the staff of the school, elected by vote of the teaching staff.
- (v) Two others co-opted by the above.

### ***Parent's Council***

St. Patrick's Boys' School Parents' Council was set up in October 1994.

The Aims and Objectives are:-

1. To promote the educational interests of the children.
2. To promote and foster good relations and co-operation between home and school.
3. To act (on behalf of parents) in an advisory and consultative capacity in relation to the school and to improve communication between parents and teachers.

4. To assist in extra-curricular activities.
5. To offer parents - programmes, information etc. which might help them fulfil their role as the primary educators of their children.

Membership is open to all parents or guardians of children enrolled in the school.

An Annual General Meeting is held in October each year. Election of members to serve on the committee takes place at this meeting. The School Principal or his representative is an ex-officio member of the committee.

### ***Home-School Links***

We believe that an effective education is based on close co-operation between home and school. We would hope that parents will always feel welcome to the school. Problems and difficulties are always easier to resolve at an early stage so please don't hesitate to contact us at any time.

In order to avoid disturbance to class work and so that a teacher can make arrangements to give you undivided attention, please ask for an appointment. The



Principal is available by appointment but it is generally best to meet the class teacher first.

For our part, we arrange an annual parent/teacher meeting when you can discuss your child's progress. We will also supply you with an annual written report of your child's progress. Every effort will be made to keep parents informed as to the school's activities through occasional meetings either for the entire parent body or for those concerned in a particular way with particular school activities.

We also communicate with parents by e-mail and text message. Do we have your contact details up to date? Please check in on our website for regular updates [www.stpatsbns.ie](http://www.stpatsbns.ie).

The Parents' Council issue regular Newsletters and from time to time the Principal will communicate by letter with all or sections of the parent body. Keep searching the schoolbags for notes!

One simple and effective method of communication between individual parents and teachers is the homework journal. Please check and sign this regularly. It is quite sufficient to send an "absence" note via the homework journal.

## ***CODE OF BEHAVIOUR***

A copy of our Code of behaviour is given on enrolment. Acceptance of our Code of Behaviour is a precondition to enrolment.

A full up to date Code of Behaviour is available from the school office or via our website [www.stpatsbns.ie](http://www.stpatsbns.ie)

### ***Parental Complaints Procedures***

We aim to provide the very best possible education for your son. However, problems do arise from time to time, but we would hope to address these problems promptly and fairly. A complaints procedure has been agreed between parents, teachers and management organisations and a copy of this procedure is available on request. According to this agreement, a parent should address a complaint to a teacher first, with a view to resolving the problem. If the difficulty is not resolved the matter should then be raised with the Principal. If the matter cannot be resolved with the Principal, the complaints procedure should then be formally invoked.

### ***The School Day***

Class starts at 9.15 a.m. and finish at 1.40 p.m. for children in infant classes and at 2.40 p.m. for all others.

There are two breaks - one at 10.45 a.m. and the other at 12.30 p.m. The second break includes an outdoor play time (weather permitting) followed by an indoor lunch time. A very small snack should also be provided for first break. The school day includes 30 mins of religious instruction often from 12.00 - 12.30 p.m.

In infant classes we use the Aistear Programme. Updates on Aistear activities are available on our website. The day begins with structured play activities which continue until 9.30 a.m. During this time the teacher will work with individual children on reading and writing activities. Children should be in class no later than 9.15 a.m. as these activities are very important.

Older classes may begin checking homework and other activities preparing for the day's work before 9.15 a.m. The school accepts responsibility for the care and safety of children from 8.45 a.m. *Please do not allow your child to arrive at school before this time.*

Children are considered "late" at 9.15 a.m.

When it is necessary for school to close early on any other occasion you will be notified in writing as early as possible.

## ***School Uniform***

A school uniform helps a child to feel that he belongs to a school. It also helps to prevent undesirable competition in clothes, especially among older children.

The school uniform consists of:

**Grey trousers, grey jumper, white shirt and a red tie.**

**Track suit: Navy with red trim and the School Crest.**

Track suit is worn on P.E. days and is available from Pat O'Farrell School Wear, Portmarnock & Airside, Swords. Tracksuits can be bought directly from the school in June.

Specific permission is sought for:

- (i) All interventions by HSE
- (ii) Accord (R.S.E.) Programme 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class.

## ***Curriculum***

The Primary School Curriculum is regarded essentially as an integrated entity, involving linguistic, mathematical, and artistic organisation of the child's knowledge and experience.

The following are the main subject areas as approved by the Department of Education.

- I) Religion
- 2) Language Irish and English  
English is the main medium of instruction
- 3) Mathematics
- 4) Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (S.E.S.E.)
- 5) The Arts including Visual Arts, Music & Drama
- 6) Physical Education
- 7) Social and Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) including Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) and Stay Safe Programme

The curriculum places great emphasis on active hands on learning with particular focus on local studies. We are fortunate to have a wonderful and varied environment on the school grounds. Most outdoor lessons are held on the school grounds, with occasional short visits to places of particular interest in the immediate locality. Parental permission for these outings is assumed as part of the child's participation in the life of the school.

***Other Activities which may vary from year to year.***

***Sport:*** Gaelic Football, Basketball, Hockey, Soccer, Athletics, Hurling. All Students participate in a yearly Sports Day.

***Concerts:*** School concerts are organised from time to time. All children will have an opportunity to take part.

Students participate in quizzes, art, story, handwriting and many other competitions. Educational School Tours are organised yearly. Various after school activities are organised from time to time.

### **Literacy & Numeracy for Learning and Life:**

*The National Strategy to Improve Literacy and Numeracy among Children and Young People 2011 - 2020*

What are we doing?

- Aistear - integrated learning time where children learn numeracy, literacy, SESE topics through play.
- Jollyphonics - learning to read using a phonic approach
- Numberworlds - Junior Infants -active hands on problem solving approach to early mathematics.
- Mata sa ráng - Maths programme we developed for senior infants based on Maths recovery programme. Its active learning to assess and improve competency in number.
- Cursive writing is taught from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class to aid spelling and fluency.
- Peer Tutoring - a programme in senior classes to enhance fluency for young readers
- Careful Assessment - monitoring of progress
- Keeping parents fully informed with annual parent/teacher meetings and annual written reports
- Annual reporting of standardised assessment testing.

- Building Bridges of Understanding - a strategy to develop higher-order reading skills in senior classes.
- We have been working hard to improve Gaeilge in our school and we were awarded the "Gaelbratach" from Gael Linn.
- Early intervention for children who need extra help and support.
- Over the last number of years we have engaged with the New Primary Language Curriculum. Which has enhanced the teaching of language in our classrooms.

### ***Relationships and Sexuality Education***

R.S.E. is taught to all classes from Infants to Sixth class and will continue in post-primary school. The programme aims to contribute to the development of the whole child as a loving and responsible person. Similar topics are treated each year in a manner suited to the age of the child.

#### ***Topics for pupils from Junior Infants to Second class include:***

- Expressing opinions and listening to the opinions of others.
- The different changes taking place in the children's bodies as they grow and develop - getting taller, running faster etc.
- Caring for themselves regarding hygiene, exercise and sleep.

- Keeping safe, knowing what to do if they get lost.
- Recognising and expressing feelings like happiness and sadness.
- Appreciating and understanding family life.
- Making and having friends.
- Coping with "falling out" with friends.
- Making responsible choices appropriate to their age.

***Topics for pupils from Third to Sixth class include:***

- Caring for themselves regarding hygiene, exercise and sleep.
- Keeping themselves safe.
- Changes in their bodies as they mature and develop
- How babies are conceived and born. (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> class programme)
- Their feelings and the appropriate expression of these feelings.
- Extended family relationships.
- Making healthy and responsible decisions.
- The nature of friendship.
- Handling conflict in friendships.
- Evaluating the portrayal of relationships and sexuality in the media.

As in the case of Religion, parents are entitled to withdraw their children from this programme, if they should feel the need. Please feel free to discuss any anxieties with the Principal.

Some topics in the R.S.E. programme are both very sensitive and very specific, e.g. body changes during



puberty, conception, intercourse, birth. In teaching these areas we will supplement our own expertise with trained counsellors and the school programme as presented by Accord. We will require your consent before your child takes part in this programme which takes place in 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class.

Many other topics of importance and sensitivity lie beyond the scope of our R.S.E. programme, as they are not suited to primary school children in a classroom setting. They are part of the programme at 2<sup>nd</sup> level schools.

Where children raise questions before the class is ready for a class-based lesson on the topic children will be told that the question will be answered later and for now the child should ask Mammy or Daddy.

### *Homework*

*Homework is, of course, the primary home/school link. Please provide your child with a warm, comfortable and quiet time and place to do homework.*

In the early years parents will have a large input into homework, listening to reading, encouraging, helping, advising, hearing spellings and tables etc.

As your child matures he will take more and more responsibility for this own work and this is to be encouraged. However, take time regularly to check the homework journal, to look over copies and discuss the content of his work.

Offer praise where praise is due and exhort your son to greater effort where necessary.

If your son regularly has difficulty with homework or seems to be spending too long at work, discuss the matter with his teacher.

### ***Monitoring Progress***

Assessment of children's progress is ongoing and continuous. It takes many forms with the emphasis changing as children mature.

#### **1. Informal Assessment:-**

Teachers form a professional opinion based on continual observation of a child's response, work and performance across a broad range of activities and curricular areas. Ultimately all other forms of assessment must be considered in the light of what the teacher observes daily.

#### **2. Criterion Referenced Tests:-**

These may be formal and informal.

They measure how well a child has mastered a particular aspect of the curriculum. An informal

criterion referenced test might be as simple as a daily or weekly spelling test. Formal tests refer to tests such as Christmas or Summer tests and may be oral or written. We use both teacher-devised test and commercially devised tests.

### 3. Standardised Tests:-

These tests compare a child's performance in a given area (say reading or maths) with the performance of other children of his age. The results are measured in terms like "reading age" or "percentile rank". The results of standardised tests are used to measure a child's long term performance, to select appropriate texts and materials for classes and groups and to monitor the over-all performance of the school. They are also a very useful guide in isolating those children who might benefit from a differentiated programme/extra help. Occasionally a child will be found to perform exceedingly well or poorly when compared to others of his age. In these cases we would recommend that the child undergo further educational assessment to ensure that his needs are met.

Results of assessments are confidential to the child's parents, teachers and Principal.

We communicate with parents by annual parent-teacher meetings and annual written reports.

## ***Additional Educational Needs***

School staff includes a dedicated special educational Team. The school is supported in its work by a psychologist from N.E.P.S. (National Education Psychologist Service). Where appropriate, a child with additional needs may also be supported by a Special Needs Assistant.

If you wish to enrol a child who has already been diagnosed with additional needs please inform the Principal as early as possible to ensure that all requisite support is in place.

We maintain a careful record of pupil's progress and follow a programme of formal standardised testing in reading and maths. We aim to identify potential learning difficulties before they emerge and to intervene as early as possible. However, some children do experience learning difficulties in spite of this approach and in such cases. The Principal will contact the parents for permission to seek advice and/or intervention from NEPS. This advice will determine the subsequent support given by the SET/and supported by Educational Psychologist.

## ***Behavioural and Emotional Problems***

Where a parent or teacher is concerned about emotional and behavioural problems they should raise

the concern with the Principal who will liaise with both parent and teacher and will refer the child to the Mater Child Guidance Clinic (C.A.M.H) (with parental consent) or the school's psychologist, if necessary.

### ***Medical Matters***

The Eastern Health Boards conducts medical and dental assessments of children at regular intervals throughout their school life, including hearing and sight tests. Immunisations are offered as appropriate. The E.H.B. communicates directly with parents regarding any action considered necessary.

### ***Accident & Emergency***

It is important that parents supply the school with home and work phone numbers and that of a neighbour who would take charge of a child if the child felt sick during the school day.

Parents are asked not to send sick children to school. It is not fair to other pupils or staff to allow a child with an infectious illness to come to school. The school does not have facilities for supervision of sick children indoors. As a rule of thumb, if a child is well enough to come to school, he is well enough to play outdoors.

In the case of a child with a chronic illness/condition which requires special arrangements, please discuss

the matter with the Principal before the child attends/return to school.

If a child takes ill during the school day every effort will be made to contact the child's parents or substitute as nominated by parents. However, in a serious emergency the child may be either taken directly to a local doctor or by ambulance to Temple St. Hospital/or other hospital as ambulance team decide.

### ***Administration of medicine***

School staff normally do not administer medicine. Normally arrangements should be made for routine medicines to be administered outside school hours. In the unlikely event that a child must self administer medicine or have medicine administered our school Administration of Medicines Policy must be followed and each case must be approved by the Board of Management. Our policy is available on our website or on request from the office. Children are strictly forbidden to bring any form of medicine to school with them.

## ***Religion***

Religious Education is taught to all classes as part of the Primary Education Curriculum.

We follow the *Grow in Love* which aims to foster faith. Faith is defined as "a personal act - the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself." The programme seeks to provide resources to help teachers, parents and priests to provide a context wherein children have the opportunity to become aware of God's invitation to hear God's word and to explore how best they can respond in their own lives. We encourage your active participation in the faith development of your children.

### ***Preparation for the sacraments***

#### ***First Penance & First Holy Communion***

The children, in the course of this year's programme prepare to celebrate, for the first time, the forgiveness of God in the Sacrament of Penance and to receive the risen Jesus as the Bread of Life in First Holy Communion.

The boys from second class make their First Confession in March and First Holy Communion is usually held in May.

#### ***Confirmation***

The aim of the sixth class Religious Education programme is communication. The children are helped

to reflect upon and explore their experience of speaking and listening, calling and responding. We help them to come to a deeper understanding of the Church as "the people of God", that each person has a role in the Church and that the work of the Church can be best achieved when each one plays their part.

### ***Preparation for the Sacrament***

- 1) Enrolment Ceremony- October/November
- 2) Service of Light - Shortly before Confirmation Ceremony
- 3) Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation - is usually between Feb and May.

Children are prepared to receive the sacraments at home, in school and by taking an active part in parish life. Preparation for First Penance and First Holy Communion begins in 1<sup>st</sup> class and continues to the end of 2<sup>nd</sup>. Similarly, preparation for Confirmation is a two year programme that begins in 5<sup>th</sup> class. Confirmation is conferred in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 6<sup>th</sup> class.

### **Child Protection Policy for Boards of Management Child Protection at St. Patrick's BNS School**

The Board of Management recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of



the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, the Board of Management of St. Patrick's Boys' National School has agreed the following child protection policy:

The Board of Management has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department's Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools as part of this overall child protection policy.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is : Brian Horan  
The Deputy Designated Liaison Person (Deputy DLP) is:  
Anthony Manning.

In it's policies, practices and activities, St. Patrick's Boys' National School will adhere to the following principles of best practice in child protection and welfare:

The school will:

- Recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations.
- Fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters.
- Adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children.

- Adopt safe practices to protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect.
- Develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- Fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.
- The school will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

The Board has ensured that the necessary school Policies relevant to Child Protection are in place, i.e. Code of Behaviour/Anti-Bullying Policy, Stay Safe Programme, Child Safeguarding Statement 2019 and the associated risk assessment document.

This policy is available to school personnel and the Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents on request and on our schools website.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

Signed: Mary Brooks,	Chairperson
Brian Horan,	D. L.P.
Anthony Manning	Deputy D.L.P.

## *Conclusion*

I am happy to present this Parents' Handbook. I hope you will find it helpful and useful. It contains some basic information about our school, what you can expect from us and what we expect from you.

When your son comes to school first he is taking his first tentative steps out of the security of his family into the wide world. We aim to provide a warm and sheltering environment to encourage him to grow in knowledge and confidence so that eight years later he will be ready to take his next onward steps with hope and enthusiasm. It is our firm belief that parents and teachers must work together in harmony to achieve this aim. I feel sure that this Handbook will be an important contribution to that harmony.

I look forward in confidence to your help and support in providing the best possible education for our boys.

Brian Horan.  
Príomhoide.