



St. Patrick's National School



Information Booklet for Parents of Junior Infants

2026-2027

Baconstown, Enfield, Co Meath.

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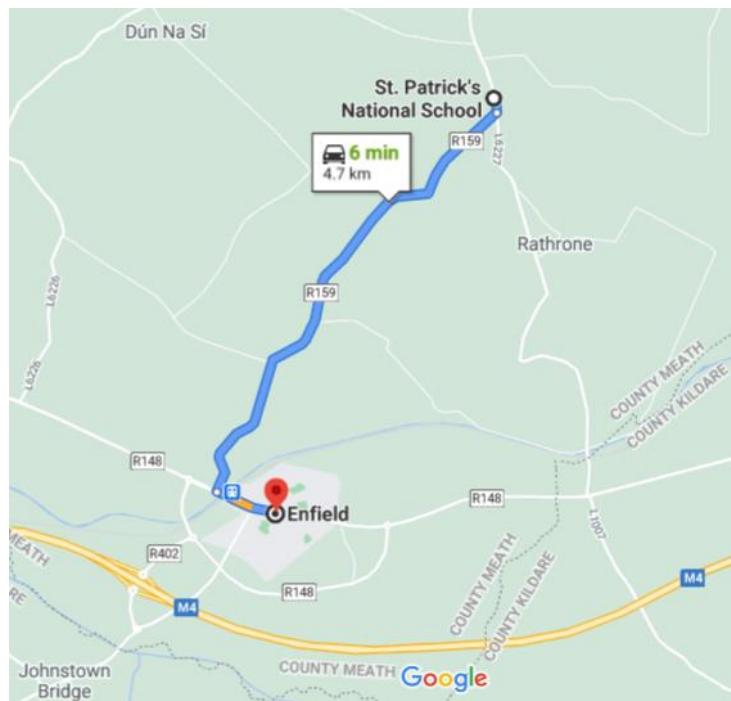
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Welcome to St. Patrick's N.S.

Introduction

We have put together this booklet for you so that you can find out a little more about our lovely school and what to expect in Junior Infants. Our website www.baconstownschool.ie will also give you an insight into our wonderful school.

St. Patrick's N.S. is located on the Trim Road, just over 4km from Enfield town. Our school is an eight teacher school, with 148 children currently enrolled. There are six mainstream teachers and two full time special educational needs teachers, including the Principal. It is a coeducational school, with classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. St. Patrick's National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of Most Rev. Thomas Deenihan, Bishop of Meath. Our Principal is Mr. Cathal Fenton.



Starting Primary School

Starting primary school is often one of the first big changes in the life of your child. It is the start of an eight year journey that will see your child grow and develop in this ever changing world. As a school, we welcome parental involvement in the education of your child, as it presents enormous possibilities to enhance the existing educational partnership between teachers and parents. Parenting and teaching are two very different but closely related responsibilities. Generally, they are quite distinct, but there are also aspects of them which merge into each other. It is essential, therefore, that there be understanding and mutual respect between teacher and parent. While it is true that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children, it is also true that the school has a value and an importance that is fundamental. It is within this context that St. Patrick's NS, functions as a Catholic school, serving a (mainly) Catholic community.



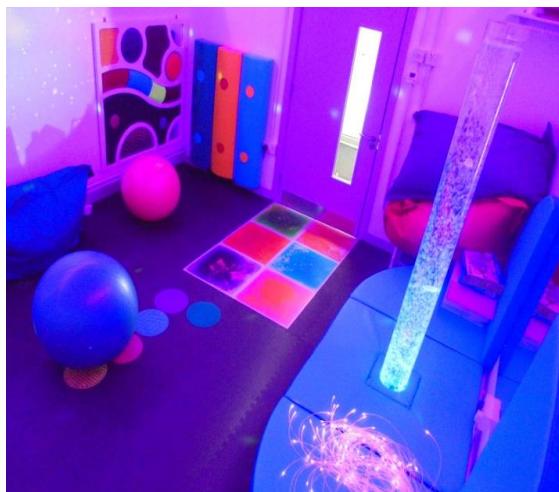
Some of the Facilities in our School



Our Infant Classroom



Our School Courtyard



Sensory Room



Soft Play Area



Library



Hall

Some of the Activities our Pupils Enjoy



GAA



Creative Schools



Arts



Book Fair



Musicals



STEM



Computers

Athletics

Preparing your Child for Starting School

Parents and prospective pupils will be invited to our school in May 2025 for an informative afternoon. Here is some useful advice in helping you prepare your child for school.

Help Prepare your Child for Learning

- **A positive attitude:** It is important to create a positive attitude towards learning. If children have this positive attitude, then they will try to become involved in the learning process.
- **Curiosity:** The natural inquisitiveness of children should be encouraged. It is central to the learning process. Children will be encouraged to ask more questions when they get positive and encouraging responses.
- **Self-confidence:** If children are confident about their abilities and capabilities then they will be more willing to take on new challenges.
- **Listening:** Children should be encouraged to develop good listening skills. Instruction and directions are given continually at school so children need to be good listeners if they are to participate fully in school life.
- **Interacting with others:** Children need to learn how to be sociable, how to share and take turns. They also need to learn respect for others and to be aware of the feelings of others.
- **Independence:** Before your child starts Junior Infants in September, it is important that they are as independent as possible. It would greatly help your child's progression this year, if he/she was able to do the following things before starting school:
 - Put on and take off coat, zip it up/zip it down and hang it up.
 - Use and flush the toilet, wash and dry their hands without assistance.
 - Use a tissue when necessary.
 - Recognise their own belongings.
 - Open and close their own lunchbox and schoolbag.
 - Share toys with others and take turns.
 - Tidy up and put toys away.

The Importance of Play

Play is an important way for your child to learn and to work with other children. It encourages children to build relationships, be creative, develop their imagination, use language and develop their fine and gross motor skills. It is so important to encourage your child to play every day and to join in the play. Encourage your child to talk about their play. Children should have simple jigsaws, blocks and build with and make use of recyclable materials.



Language

The importance of language cannot be over emphasised. Language is essential for developing reading and writing and is also a vital part of the social and emotional development of children. In developing your child's language skills, encourage your child to listen, talk, explain, question, tell and retell.

Reading

Read to your child regularly. This encourages a love of books and creates and interest in reading. Ensure that reading is an enjoyable experience. The child's main interest will be in the pictures so allow time to examine and talk about them. We would encourage you all to become members of our local library.



The Curriculum

- In March 2023, the Primary Curriculum Framework was launched and it will replace the 1999 Primary Curriculum. The new framework presents five broad curriculum areas: Arts Education, Language, /Social and Environmental Education, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Education and Wellbeing. At present, the new curriculum specifications are being developed and staff will have training on the Primary Curriculum Framework over the course of 2025/2026. This will be the framework of your child's curriculum for coming years.

Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, has been updated and relaunched in October 2024. However, in primary schools, Aistear no longer applies directly. Instead, the Primary Curriculum Framework is used, which emphasizes play-based learning and has been aligned with Aistear's principles to ensure a smooth transition for children from early learning and care settings to primary school.

The Primary Curriculum Framework focuses on :

- Holistic Development: Supporting children's overall development, including their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth.
- Play-Based Learning: Encouraging children to learn through play and exploration.
- Continuity and Progression: Building on children's prior learning experiences and ensuring a seamless transition between early learning and care settings and primary school.

The updated Aistear framework, applicable to children from birth to six years in early learning and care settings, emphasizes:

The updated Aistear framework, applicable to children from birth to six years in early learning and care settings, emphasizes:

- Child-Centered Approach*: Focusing on the child's interests, needs, and agency.
- Play and Exploration: Encouraging children to engage in play and exploration to learn and develop.
- Relationships and Interactions: Building strong relationships with children, parents, and other educators to support their learning and development.

- **Station teaching** is introduced in Junior Infants. This is where the class is divided into small groups to target literacy or numeracy. The purpose of station teaching is direct intense teaching in small groups. A member of the SEN team will also come into the class and take a group.
- Your child's moral and social education is covered throughout the school day for example sharing with their peers, saying we are sorry, taking turns etc.
- **Phonics** We use a Jolly Phonics programme in Junior Infants. At the beginning of the school year, each Junior Infant will be given his or her own sounds books, which will be added to as the year progresses. We would strongly encourage you to reinforce the sounds and actions with your child at home **every night**. This will greatly benefit your child when he or she begins reading and writing.

School Uniform

In September 2023, we launched a new school uniform. Our new school uniform comprises of :

- Maroon half zip with school crest (Hunter)
- Plain navy cotton/fleece tracksuit bottoms (Hunter) - glossy or nylon bottoms are not acceptable as there are too many colour variations.
- Plain maroon colour polo shirt (can be crested or non crested).

Our school uniform suppliers are CJ Murtagh, Trim and Books & Gifts, Kilcock.



Healthy Eating Policy

Our school has a healthy eating policy in place. A healthy packed lunch may include a sandwich, some fruit, yoghurt and a suitable drink. Fizzy drinks and unhealthy foods such as chocolate bars, biscuits, sweets, crisps and chocolate spread are not permitted. We have Fridays a day for a little treat. **Nuts or nut products are also not permitted.** Please ensure that your child's lunch box and drink bottle can be easily opened and are also labelled clearly. We are currently at ETender level for Hot School Meals. We hope to launch this in early 2026.



Punctuality and Attendance



Pupils are expected to be punctual and to attend school every day. Excellent attendance is extremely important to your child's progress. Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, our school is obliged to report to the National Educational Welfare Board every time a pupil has reached 20 days absence in one school year. If your child is absent from school for any reason, **a note must be provided** to the class teacher explaining the reason for his / her absence. This may also be completed via Aladdin Connect (our school administration system). You will receive more guidance on this in September.

Our school day commences at 8:50am sharp and all Junior and Senior Infants go home at 1:30pm. Our break times are morning break from 10:30-10:50, while their lunch break is from 12:30-12:50. It is very important that the children are collected from the school gate on time to avoid unnecessary upset. If your child is going to 'After School' on certain days, can you please let the class teacher know at the beginning of the school year. If for any reason your child has to leave the school early, a signed written consent is required and the child must be signed out at the school office.

Generally, Junior Infants will have a **shorter school day** for the first two weeks. They will start at 8:50am and finish at 12 noon. Thereafter, your child will be in school for the full infant day, 8:50am - 1:30pm.

Booklist

Under the free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme, parents are no longer required to make any contribution towards the cost of schoolbooks at present.



Each child will need their own stationery at the beginning and throughout the school year. Please note that markers and colouring pencils are not permitted in school. A list of required stationery will be distributed in May/June 2024.

Other Points to Note

- Visual Arts will take place every week. Each child will need their own art shirt for art. An old t-shirt would be perfect! Please ensure that your child's art shirt is clearly labelled.
- There will be a **materials fee**, which will cover the cost of your child's art supplies and Aistear equipment for the year. It will also include a display book which will be used as your child's Self-Assessment Learning Folder. This will be collected in September.

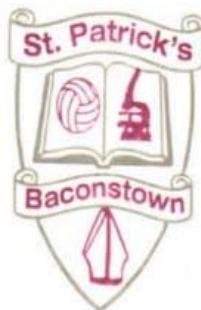




The First Day

It is really important that you establish a good routine for your child coming to school. On your child's first day at school, we would encourage you to come a few minutes before school starts. When you arrive at the classroom, be as casual as you can. Having settled your child, said goodbye and assured them that you will be back to collect them, it is really important that you then leave your child. Almost every child will be busy and happy within minutes of their parents leaving. It is important to note that it takes time for children to adapt to school life and routine. For the first two weeks, parents can walk their children up the steps to the wooden gate. To promote independence, we would encourage the pupils to walk up the steps independently thereafter.

We look forward to warmly welcoming you to St. Patrick's N.S. Baconstown. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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