



SCOIL MHUIRE ALLENWOOD

Allenwood, Naas, Co. Kildare

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Junior Infant Information Booklet

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Fáilte romhat agus roimh do pháiste.

Starting school will be a big change in the life of your child. He/she is facing the wider world of classroom and school. This may seem a big step for someone so small but most children manage it without any great fuss or stress – and in fact take to it like ducks to water.

However, it is also a time when parents and teachers should take special care to ensure that the transition from home to school is as smooth as possible. If the child's first experience of school is one of happy involvement, a very good foundation will have been laid for fruitful school years ahead.

We know from experience that parents are very anxious to help in any way possible. We have, therefore, included some ideas for the home, which should stimulate the child's interest and nurture their desire to know more.

Getting Ready for Learning

Children are natural learners. They have an inbuilt curiosity and an eagerness to know more about everything – about themselves, about others and about the world around them. And they learn fast – but only when they are ready and their interest is aroused.

Our first year in school therefore, is mainly about settling in, relating to others, making friends, feeling happy and gradually getting used to the routine of the school. On the learning side the emphasis is on getting children ready for learning by:

- Developing their oral language and expression.
- Sharpening their senses, especially seeing, hearing and touching.
- Developing physical co-ordination especially of hand and fingers.
- Extending their concentration span and getting them to listen attentively.
- Learning through play – the most enjoyable and effective way.
- Co-operating with the teacher and other children.
- Performing tasks by themselves.
- Working with others and sharing with them.

Before Your Child Starts...

You should ensure that they are as independent as possible – physically, emotionally and socially. If they can look after themselves in these areas they will feel secure and confident and settle in readily.

It would help greatly if they are able to:

- Button and unbutton their coats and hang them up.
- Use the toilet without help.
- Also encourage personal hygiene and cleanliness. Your child should know to flush the toilet and wash their hands, without having to be told.
- Use a tissue when necessary.
- Share toys and playthings with others and “take turns”.
- Tidy up and put away their playthings.

Preparing for the ‘Big Day’

The child’s first day at school is a day to remember for the rest of their lives. You can help to make it a really happy one for them.

- Tell them about school beforehand and talk about it as a happy place where there will be a big welcome for them and they will meet new friends.
- **Label everything with the child’s name.**

The Big Day

Coming in...

When you arrive at the classroom, be as casual as you can. They will meet the teacher and the other children and will be shown their chair.

Hopefully they will be absorbed in their new surroundings. So having assured them you will be back to collect them, wish them goodbye and make your getaway without delay.

Packed Lunches

A healthy packed lunch should contain bread or an alternative, a savoury filling which provides protein and some fruit and/or vegetables. No glass bottles or fizzy drinks.

Going Home

- Be sure to collect them on time.
- If at any time the collecting routine has to be changed ensure you tell the child and the teacher.

Handling the Upset Child

In spite of the best efforts of both teacher and parents a small number of children will still become upset. If your child happens to be one of them don't panic. Patience and perseverance can work wonders.

A word of Advice

- Try not to show any outward signs of your distress.
- When you have reassured them, leave as fast as possible. The teacher can distract and humour them more easily when you are not there.

As Time Goes on...

- School begins at 9.20a.m. To ease the child into the school routine we have a policy where Junior Infants go home for the first two weeks at 12.30p.m. After that they go home at 2.00p.m. Please make sure that your child is collected promptly.
- Please check your child's bag regularly for notes.
- You have received a book list outlining the books and other bits and pieces your child will need for the year.

Some Important Areas of Early Learning

Aistear – Learning Through Play

Early childhood is an important time for learning and development. Children learn through discussion, exploration and play. Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework provides opportunities for supporting children's learning through play. Throughout the year junior and senior infants will engage in various play sessions aimed at developing skills and understanding in a variety of areas. These sessions were structured to promote learning. The children enjoy these Aistear/Play sessions with activities including construction, role play, small world (farm animals, dolls house etc.), board games, listening games. This active learning allows the children to explore objects, materials and their environment, to develop social skills and to become confident and independent.

Language

It is important that the child's ability to talk is as advanced as possible.

You Can Help...

- Talk to your child naturally and casually about things of interest that you or they may be doing at home, in the shop, in the car, etc.
- Nurture their sense of curiosity and wonder.
- They will have their own particular favourite stories that they never tire of hearing. Repeat them over and over again and gradually get them to retell the story to you.

Reading

- Have attractive colourful books in the home
- Read them a variety of stories from time to time. They will get to associate these wonderful tales with books and reading.
- Look at the pictures with them and talk to them about what they say.
- Read them nursery rhymes and stories. Repeat the same one several times.

Understanding Maths

Maths is part of the language they use in understanding and talking about certain things in their daily experience e.g.

- They associate certain numbers with particular things – two hands, four wheels, five fingers etc.
- Counting – one, two, three, four, etc.
- Colours – Black, white, red, green, etc.
- Prepositions (telling position) and their opposites: over/under, before/after, inside/outside etc.
- Odd One Out – difference in size/colour etc.

You Can Help...

- In the course of your ordinary daily routine in the home, in the shop, in the neighbourhood you should use suitable opportunities to casually introduce the maths vocabulary referred to above. E.g. How many cakes? The glass is full/empty. We turn left at the lights.
- The child gets to understand Maths best by handling and investigating and using concrete materials.

Gaeilge

All children enjoy learning another language besides their own language. They have no difficulty in picking it up because it fascinates them as another code of communication. They are free of any hang-ups about Irish. So please be careful that anything you say does not give a negative attitude to your child.

When they learn new words in school encourage them to use them at home. Use little Irish phrases or words now and again. Children are delighted to find out that their parents are into their new code as well.

Getting Ready For Writing

Making letters on paper is not easy for the small child. They must learn to hold the pencil properly and make regular shapes. Their hand and finger muscles are only gradually developing at this stage.

You Can Help...

They must develop the ability to get the hand and eye working together. This is very important. Get them toys like:

Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc.

Play dough (Marla) to make their own shapes.

A colouring book and thick crayons.

Sheet of paper that they can cut up with a safe scissors.

When they begin to use a pencil make sure that they hold it correctly at the start.

Don't discourage left-handedness.

Social Skills

Social skills are very important. We encourage good manners at all times, please/thank you, addressing teacher properly, being courteous to fellow students and teachers. Rough behaviour is totally discouraged.

Parting Thoughts

Who is the boss?

Bit by bit the child will get used to the general discipline of the classroom. They will get to understand very quickly that in certain important matters an instruction from the teacher must be obeyed promptly and without question

Teacher and Parent

At the early stage some parents meet the teacher almost daily and this is a very desirable thing. However, if there is something in particular that you would like to discuss you can arrange to meet the teacher at a time when you both can have a little peace and quiet.

Our Hope

We are offering this Guide to Parents as a little practical help in dealing with the education of their children at the very early stages. We will be very happy if you dip into it from time to time and find something in it of value to you and your child.

“Mol an óige, agus tiocfaidh sé”

Opening and Closing Times.

The school will open to receive pupils at the hour of 9.20am.

School will commence at 9.20am each morning and finish at 2pm (Junior & Senior Infants) & 3pm for all other classes.

- **All Junior & Senior Infants** finish school at 2pm each day and **must be** collected at that time as they become anxious otherwise.
- In the case of children **travelling to school by bus**, the school cannot accept responsibility for their early arrival or escorting them from the bus.

Parents are requested to advise the class teacher when they are unable to collect their child and have arranged for another person to do so.

Emergency Closures:

The safety of the children is of primary importance at all times. We have a text line in the school which allows us to text you if necessary. Unless otherwise instructed, the mother of the child will receive the text message. In the event of an emergency closure (e.g. no heat, no water etc) the decision to close the school will be taken by the Board of Management at the earliest possible time so as to maximise notice to parents/guardians.

WE ASK THAT YOU ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL ALWAYS HAS AN UP-TO-DATE AND IMMEDIATE CONTACT NUMBER, WHICH YOU CAN BE QUICKLY CONTACTED ON.

School Attendance

As part of the Education Welfare Act 2000, Tusla, formerly (National Education Welfare Board) has been established. **TUSLA** is required to ensure that every child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives an appropriate education. Tusla has appointed Educational Welfare Officers to support regular school attendance. The school is obliged to keep a record of all student absences and the reasons for such absences.

The school is also obliged to make a report to the Education Welfare Board if a child is absent from school for more than 20 days in the year or if there are concerns about attendance for other reasons. Parents are required to notify the school by filling the form provided and to explain the reason for absence even if absent for just for one day.

Healthy Lunch Policy



The school has a **Healthy Lunch Policy**, in place. It operates 5 days a week. This policy was agreed between parents and school and is endorsed by the Board of Management. It now constitutes part of our S.P.H.E. programme. Good eating habits established early in life are a key factor in preventing diet related diseases such as Heart Disease, Cancer, Obesity, Tooth Decay and Gum disease etc. in later life. Figures from the H.S.E indicate that schools that have a good healthy lunch policy have fewer children attending their dental clinics for fillings. Sugar is a major cause of cavities and decay in teeth.

- *A high intake of fat, salt or sugar is unhealthy.*
- **Food high in fibre** – fruit, vegetables and wholemeal should be eaten every day. Cheese strings or slices are ideal finger snacks.
- **Water and milk** should take the place of sugar enriched drinks. **Fizzy drinks, crisps, buns and cakes are not allowed.**
- All children should have sandwiches, scones, brown bread, rolls, crackers or pittas with their choice of topping or filling as the basis of their lunch (excluding chocolate spread)
- *Hyperactivity, asthma and skin problems have been linked to diet.*

Peanuts and peanut products are not allowed as some pupils have an allergy to nuts.

School Uniform

Navy Skirt or pinafore

Navy trousers

Navy V-neck jumper or cardigan. (No colour trim)

Light blue blouse

Red tie (available in school) €4

Navy socks or tights

School Tracksuit

School uniform or tracksuits must be worn at all times except on non-uniform days and you will be notified about these.

Our tracksuit is worn on P.E. days instead of the regular uniform.

Tracksuits have to be ordered through the school and are only available once a year. The order is placed in March for collection in June. A deposit of €10 is required with each order. It is recommended that you purchase plain blue polo shirts or polo necks to be worn with uniform tracksuits.

It is very important that children wear runners on P.E. days for safety reasons. All footwear worn to school should be suitable for active play during lunchtime.

Safety at School



In the interests of safety, we would ask Parents/Guardians to take note of the following **Car Parking Issues**.

We would ask all parents who are collecting children to please park their cars in a marked parking space on arrival in the churchyard. Each parent/guardian is responsible to escort his/her child safely to the school gate.

Below are the rules regarding traffic in the church grounds

- Traffic should enter church grounds by the south gate only and exit by the other gate (i.e. that is the gate beside the boys' school).
- A walkway is clearly marked for children going to buses and awaiting collection. This runs from the small gate entrance to the back building to the main church grounds gate near the front building. Please keep this clear at set down and pick up times.

Do not park behind the yellow line.

Speed limit at all times is 5mph. **PLEASE RESPECT THE DISABLED PARKING SPACES**

Be vigilant at all times.

All the children are at risk if these simple rules are not adhered to. Road safety is all our responsibility.

Contact Numbers

We would ask you to ensure that the school has **Current** contact numbers in case of an emergency. You are asked to complete the **contact numbers form**, which is available in the school office. In the event of a change of phone number please inform the school **in writing**.

Use of Internet

As part of the school curriculum children will have access to the Internet. The teachers will guide the pupils towards appropriate materials during school. High quality filtering software is installed on the network. **Children will not have unsupervised access to the Internet.** The school website is now launched and will be accessible by any Internet user around the world. The website will contain information and pictures of school activities as well as projects, artwork, and writing of some pupils. The work will be presented in an educational context. Photos will be in groups or will be activity based; not focusing directly on children and no personal details will be given. You will be asked to sign a use of Internet Permission Form when your child starts school. Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school.²

Medical Treatment

Please sign the authorisation for medical treatment so that the school staff can seek emergency medical help in the event that they cannot contact anyone on the contact numbers form. **The contact numbers form** is available from the school office. The school has a strict policy in the relation to the administration of medicines. Routine first aid will be administered as per Health Board guidelines issued to the schools by the Dept of Education and Science. Medicines will not be administered in school except in case of emergencies where agreed procedures are in place. If your child has a long term recurring health problem please contact the school to make arrangements for such procedures. If your child needs to use an inhaler in school please contact the school to discuss administration, storage etc. The HSE request us to send them Names, Addresses & Phone numbers each year for the purpose of Dental, Vision & Hearing and Vaccination clinics. You will be asked to sign a consent form when your child starts school, if you agree for this information to be sent to the HSE.

Health

If a child has any physical or health problems the principal should be informed when the child is being enrolled. If a problem develops the principal should be told immediately. In this way appropriate provisions can be put in place. **The above information will be treated with respect & confidence.**

Infectious disease

Please notify the school if your child is diagnosed with an infectious disease.

Head Lice:

Head lice are regular visitors in all schools! Please check your child's hair regularly (i.e. at least once a week) for head lice. Head lice can spread rapidly within a school, unless all affected children are promptly treated. Delay in identifying and treating all infected children can result in a cycle of repeated infestation with treated children becoming re-infected. It is possible to have head lice for months without realising; the outbreak may only be detected when it starts to spread. This is never a pleasant occurrence, particularly as people of any age can get a head lice infestation. Please report it to the school so we can alert others. Lotions and shampoos are readily available from your local pharmacy.

Please DO NOT send your child to school if they are unwell

.Immunisation & Screening

The Health Service Executive provides some medical screening for school going children. It also provides booster immunisations for some childhood diseases. No Immunisation & Screening is carried out without parental consent.

Insurance Forms

It is strongly recommended that you take out this optional insurance, which for €9 will cover your child for a full year against accidental injury at school or at home.

Weekly Envelope



The weekly envelope collection is a very important source of income for the day-to-day running costs of the school and for the provision of equipment and resources for the classrooms. We ask families to contribute €2 (approx) weekly, if possible, and we have always had a good response. We distribute envelopes at the beginning of each term (with the option to pay the term in full) and on a weekly basis also. There is often a lot of discussion about this in the media and we would stress that **this is a voluntary contribution and you don't have to feel under pressure to pay.**

Mission Statement

Scoil Mhuire Allenwood is a Catholic primary school, under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. It opened on 30th August 2017 following the amalgamation of Allenwood BNS and Allenwood GNS.

The school is a centre of excellence where professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe, happy environment.

Teachers and staff are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of each pupil, irrespective of race, colour, creed or ability.

The culture of the school is determined by the young age of the pupils where the uniqueness of each child is nurtured and developed holistically by the schools child-centred approach to learning.

The policies, practices and attitudes of the school, such as those in our dealings with pupils, staff, parents and the wider community are inspired by the values of the Christian Gospel. Prayer and reflection will be regular features of the school day thus nurturing in the children, a living relationship with God. The celebration of the liturgical seasons and the sacraments will form part of the rhythm of the school year and the children will be given the opportunity to participate in these celebrations.

The school fosters an active partnership with the parents/guardians which contributes to the positive learning experience of the pupils.