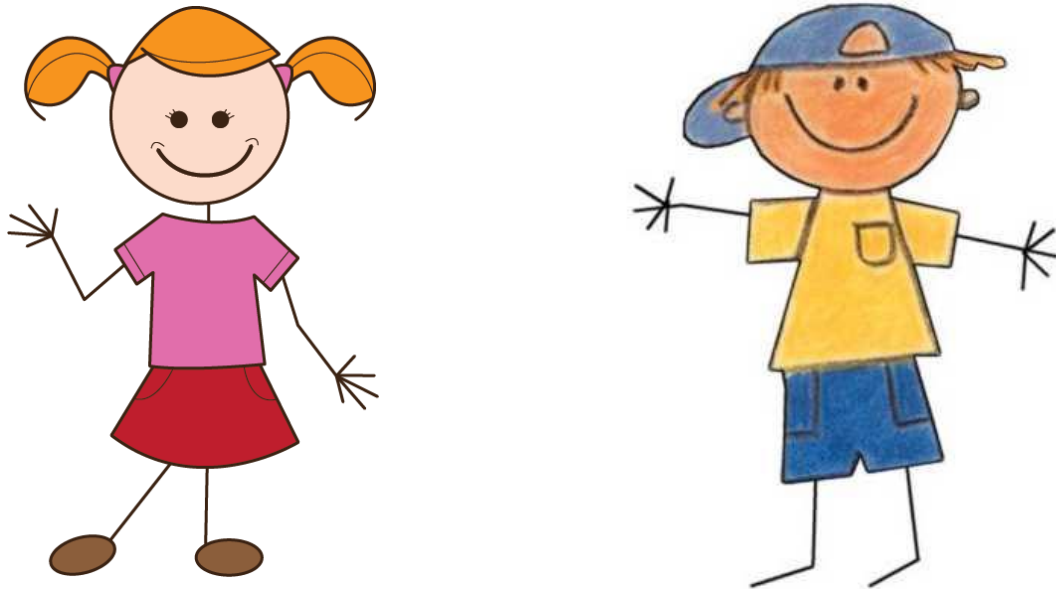




St. Catherine's
Primary School
Welcome Pack



2020/2021

Firstly, we would like to welcome you and your child to St. Catherine's Primary School.

We hope that the coming year will prove to be enjoyable, stimulating and fruitful for all.

At this time of the year we are concerned with preparing children and parents for transition to Year 1.

This booklet provides practical and useful information, as well as some valuable advice on making transition to Year 1 as smooth and trouble free as possible.

General Information

Principal: Mrs. B. Wilders

Vice Principal: Miss J. Doherty

St. Catherine's Primary School

Junior School [Years 1-4](Newtownkennedy St.)

Strabane

Co. Tyrone

BT82 8HT

Tel: 02871 382272 (Option 2)

Fax: 02871 382139

Email: bwilders592@c2kni.net

Our School Vision

Our Vision for St. Catherine's Nursery and Primary School is

that it will be ...

- An outstanding school which is **wholly** child centred
 - rooted in Gospel Values of Christ
 - Where Children come first at all times
- A school of excellent practice where dedicated, talented staff will collaborate to ensure high quality teaching and learning for all our pupils from Nursery to Year 7
- A school with a family atmosphere – where emphasis is placed on forging strong, positive relationships between pupils, parents (who are the first educators), Staff, Governors, Parish & Community which will result in...
Confident, happy young people who have high aspirations and high expectations who have developed physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, morally and spiritually, who are life long learners and who will have the skills and capabilities to be successful, confident and comfortable in an ever changing world.



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Year One Team

Junior School

Our Year One team consists of Mrs Doherty and Miss Hutton coupled with our Foundation Stage Classroom Assistants Mrs. P. Doherty , Mrs. N. Robinson, Mrs L. Kelly and Ms. G. Doherty

Your child will be based in our Year One Classrooms which are situated in the Junior Section of the building on the Ground Floor

Year One Times (These are the usual times for school start however due to COVID 19 restrictions this year, these times may be very different. We will let you know as soon as updates come from the Department of Education)

The Year One day begins at **9:00am**.

Children should be brought to the Year 1 Classroom. Eventually after a settling in period children will join the rest of the school for morning prayer.

Pick up time is at **2.15pm** at the

Side Front Door of the Junior School beside the Infant Classroom Area

Prompt arrival and pick - up of children is essential for your child's stability.

Attendance

If your child is to fully benefit from his/ her Year One experience he/she needs to attend every day, except when illness or some other reason prevents him/her from doing so.

If your child is absent, please provide a written explanation for the absence on the child's return.

Attendance is monitored monthly in the Primary School and we receive regular visits from the Educational Welfare Officer. If your child's attendance falls below 90% this will trigger the School Pupil Attendance Policy.

Sickness

Infection spreads very easily in the Year One setting and it is inadvisable to send a child to school with an illness which is very contagious. If your child contracts a very contagious illness please seek advice re: attendance at school.

If your child is very sick it is usually advisable/ sensible to keep your child at home until they feel more able for a full day but do please keep in touch with us.

If staff feel that your child is too sick to be at school you will be contacted to collect your child and seek medical advice)

Food in Year One:

The Year One Healthy Break

In order to give our wee children the best possible start in Primary School we give our Year One Pupils a Healthy Fruit Break in order to promote Healthy Eating for our pupils. This break is funded by school in Year One only. Children will be offered milk also but a payment for this milk will be required for each child if they wish to avail of it. Details of payments for milk will be sent out in the Monthly Newsletter . Milk for all our children has to be ordered in advance with the Dairy so we respectfully request that you adhere to milk order dates.

School Dinners/ Packed Lunches

A healthy school dinner is provided for Year One children at a cost of £2.60. However this service may be restricted this year due to COVID 19. We will keep in touch with you with updates. Parents who think that they may be entitled to free school meals should contact the Education Authority as soon as possible (Omagh 028 824 11411) to make an application. This year applications may be online. Free school meals cannot be given unless granted by the Education Authority.

Packed lunches should consist of foodstuffs in keeping with Food In Schools Policy.(See enclosed policy). Please send foods in your child's lunchbox which are easy to open and easy for your child to handle so as to encourage independence and self - confidence. In line with our Healthy Eating Culture crisps and chocolate are not permitted in our children's lunch boxes. Chocolate may contain nut traces and we have children in our school who are anaphylactic and may need emergency hospital attention if they come into the slightest contact with any item/ person who has had slightest trace of nuts. We treat this situation very seriously and respectfully request your support and cooperation in this matter. We also cannot allow KIWI due to children with allergies.

Our children will have a treat day every Friday where they can bring ONE treat in their lunch box BUT again this cannot be chocolate, nuts or kiwi for the above mentioned reasons.

Money

Money for school dinner should be put in a money basket in your child's classroom on the first school morning of each week in an envelope clearly marked with the child's name, the amount enclosed and what the money is for.

Please try to ensure the correct amount is enclosed as change in school is sometimes very difficult to get. If the correct amount is sent this avoids spending excess time trying to get the correct change.

Your cooperation in this matter would be very much appreciated. Our canteen operates a cash cafeteria system so all money is sent directly to the canteen and is not dealt with at the school office at all.

Uniform

Our uniform can be obtained from Select Kidz Uniform Specialist , Spencer Road, Derry. Our uniform jumper may also be obtained from GMG Logos, Orchard Road Industrial Estate, Strabane.

Our uniform consists of

Girls:

Macrae Tartan kilt / royal blue jumper with school crest/ white shirt (long or short sleeve)/ macrae tartan tie/ Navy woollen tights (Winter) or white knee length socks (Summer)/ Black shoes. Footwear with Velcro fastening is essential for your child's independence in Year One . **Children are not permitted to wear any jewellery for Health & Safety reasons.**

Boys :

Royal blue jumper with school crest/ white shirt (long or short sleeve)/ macrae tartan tie/ Navy trousers/ Navy or black socks/ Black shoes. Footwear with Velcro fastening is essential for your child's independence in Year One . **Children are not permitted to wear any jewellery for Health & Safety reasons.**

P.E. Uniform (Subject to COVID 19 Restrictions and Social Distancing Guidelines this year.)

We request for good hygiene and Health and Safety reasons that every child should wear a plain white t shirt or polo shirt and plain navy jogging bottoms for PE together with Velcro black/ navy coloured trainers. It is not advantageous that children should sit in sweaty PE Clothes all day after having had physical exercise therefore our children will be required to change from uniform to PE Gear or PE Gear back to uniform as is necessary. This can be challenging in the early stages of Year 1 but children do get used to it and get faster at it and better organised as the year progresses. We consider it helpful in their overall holistic development and prepares them well for transition to Year 2 by the end of the year. This differs from Nursery in that they wore their active clothes all the time as their learning was largely activity based and their school day was shorter. However we

request that due to changing, you put your child's name on each piece of their uniform and PE Uniform as children become very distressed if they lose/misplace or can't distinguish their own uniform items.

Please note: Children CANNOT be permitted to participate in PE if they wear jewellery of any kind especially earrings as because during high levels of movement, ear rings can get caught by other children and cause quite serious hurt. We hope that you can understand and cooperate with us on this issue.

Summer Uniform (Effective from 1st May until 30th June - unless otherwise permitted ... In the event of a heatwave prior to these dates!)

Girls:

Light blue / white checked Summer Dress available from ASDA, Dunnes, Marks & Spencer, Select Kidz and other outlets. White knee or ankle length socks/black shoes, school jumper/ cardigan or white cardigan.

Boys :

Royal blue jumper with school crest/plain white polo shirt Navy long trousers/or plain navy trouser shorts, Navy or black socks/ Black shoes. Navy football kit shorts / tops are **not** permitted.

Change of Clothes

Accidents are unavoidable with small children and we aim to limit the distress and discomfort associated with such accidents. In the event of your child wetting/soiling themselves, you will be contacted. For Child Protection and Safeguarding reasons staff are unable to change children. Occasionally we keep spares of some clothing items in school but we rely on parents to send these items back to school if they had to be used in an emergency.

Labelling

All clothes and other belongings should be clearly labelled. If a child loses a piece of their property at school - this causes them a lot of distress and also disrupts learning and teaching in Year One.

Below we have outlined the usual SETTling IN TO YEAR 1 ROUTINE.

This may now change pending Guidance from the Department of Education. In the event that the Year 1 Times are different, we will let you through our usual communication systems i.e. text message/ email/ website linked letters. Please do ensure that we have your correct mobile phone number and email address or you could miss vitally important

Settling into Year One

In Year One our settling in programme is designed to give children and parents' time to get used to a new routine, new surroundings and people, at their own pace. (See Year 1 Settling-In Policy)

A variety of measures are in place to allow for this; and staff are available and willing to advise on how to proceed if settling in proves difficult.

Staggered Intake

Small groups of children are taken into Year One over a short period at the beginning of September.

The needs of individual children are taken into account in this matter, based on the information that you have provided about your child's needs.

Shorter Day

The full Year One day often proves too tiring for children in the first few weeks of the year.

For this reason we provide a shorter day until the end of September.

Weeks 1 & 2: September 2020: 9:00am - 12:00pm

Weeks 3: September 2020: 9.00am- 12.45pm (Including Lunch)

Week 4 : September 2020 : 9.00am - 2.15pm... Full day

School Bags

Your child will need a small bag to carry his/her reading books and other information home from school. We have a customised book bag available for your child at the price of £5.

Updating Information

It is vital that we always know where to contact you, or one of your nominees.

If there is any change in address, telephone numbers, email address or other arrangements we need to know straight away.

If somebody other than one of your nominees is to collect your child we need to know, in writing if possible or by telephone.

This is particularly important this year especially due to COVID 19 Restrictions.

Curriculum

We are here to help your child develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally and we aim to do this in the Foundation Stage Year One through our structured and stimulating day in a happy, secure and caring atmosphere. Your child's happiness and contentment in the Year One is vital in forming a basis for his/ her future years of education.

The curriculum of our school takes into consideration the differing skills, previous experiences and needs of each individual child. If your child attended our Nursery he/she will normally have taken part in our Nursery - Year 1 Transition Programme. This year this programme was available via our Home Learning Area on our website. This comprises a series of lessons/ visits to the Junior School in order to prepare them for settling into Year 1.

This signifies the process of learning, Foundation Stage Year One education is thought of in terms of activities and experiences as well as knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored. Your child will be encouraged to be an active, independent learner in the 21st Century. The curriculum is very carefully planned and evaluated by the staff who are qualified teachers and child care assistants.

The curriculum is developed through themes incorporating the seven key learning areas of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

1. Language and Literacy
2. Maths and Numeracy
3. Physical Development and Movement
4. The World Around Us
5. The Arts
6. Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

7. Religious Education

Your child's work each day incorporates a combination of Play Based Learning and more formal learning but we all have fun while doing it!!!!

We will send you out a Curriculum Information Newsletter once per term to inform you of exactly what your child is studying in school so that YOU TOO can support this learning at home. If for some reason you don't receive a copy of this newsletter ... please ask your child's teacher or Principal. If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress , abilities, strengths, areas for development at any stage do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher and a meeting can be arranged to update you. Teachers meet with parents at the start of the year after settling in has occurred (you will be notified in advance when this will happen... if an appointment time doesn't suit your child's teacher will reschedule to suit a mutually agreed time). They will then send out a written end of year report in Term 3.

Due to COVID 19 Restrictions, our staff will be educating your child in school for some sessions and also providing opportunities for online learning at home via our website for when your child will not be in school. This is called **BLENDED** Learning. Our website address is www.stcatherinesps.co.uk and the password for the Home Learning Area is **catherine2020**

For all the times when your child cannot be in school teachers will have provided opportunities for learning via the website to be facilitated by parents at home.

Road Safety

When bringing your child to Primary School each day ... always hold your child's hand on leaving your car, when walking into the school grounds and when leaving the building at the end of the day.

Please do not allow your child to wander in the shrubbed area at the front of Newtownkennedy Street Site or explore grounds/outdoor play trail (without staff supervision) for Health & Safety reasons.

Traffic concerns outside our school are well noted and for that reason we have had Safer Route to Schools Signage installed. However we are constantly aware of the concerns of the area and we ask for parental support in terms of parking responsibly and exercising extreme caution at all times when crossing the road with your child . We also request that you cooperate with the school crossing

patrol lady and that you NEVER attempt to park in the school grounds or in front of the school gates. This car park is small and only used for staff at present. If every parent were to try to park in our grounds we have too many cars crossing at the main gate which is too close to where our children are walking out of school hence a greater risk of an accident. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

There will also be clear social distancing guidelines issued to parents when bringing children to school.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

This school has a very clear, detailed written policy on Child Protection and Safeguarding which is available to read in your welcome pack. It is the duty of all staff to protect all pupils from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and from neglect.

The Department of Education requires all those working in education to cooperate fully with Social Services and other agencies to protect children. St. Catherine's Primary School must, by law, inform Social Services where there is a concern about a child.

Designated Teachers for Child Protection:

Mrs. B. Wilders (Principal)

Miss J.Doherty (Vice Principal)

Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection:

Ms. Y. Mc Gowan (Junior School)

Should parents have any concerns please discuss these with the Principal / Vice Principal

(See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)

Parents' Noticeboard

Junior School : This is situated in the main entrance foyer of the school and outside the Main Office and is for your convenience. Please read any of the literature and posters as they are for your information.

Communicating to Parents

- We distribute a note every Monday detailing any events coming up (exclusively for Parents/ Pupils) in the next week.
- We produce Curriculum Newsletters once per term to keep parents up to date with what their children are learning in Year One so that they too can best support their child's learning at home.
- We use text messaging to parents. Always make sure that we have your correct mobile phone number.
- We have a facebook page

St Catherine's PS

- We also have a school website www.stcatherinesps.co.uk
- Download our FREE School APP which gives loads of information regarding the school events and can automatically notify your phone.
The App is : **St Catherines PS,Strabane**
- You can find us on Twitter also ... @StCatherinesPS
- You can find us on Instagram St Catherine's Primary School
- We have a flat screen TV in the foyer to display photos of all our children during the many learning activities that happen in school and we also post notices on this tv for your information.

School Photographer

The school photographer also comes in during Term 1 to take an individual photograph of your child and a class photograph. When this date is arranged you will be informed and you will be given the opportunity to bring along other members of the family for family group photographs.

Preparing Your Child for Primary School

1. Talk to your child about starting school. Remind them about their previous visit, how they will play with dough, sand, water, paint, jigsaws and listen to stories.
2. You can help your child become independent by encouraging them to do things for themselves- put on their own clothes, shoes, coats etc.
3. Encourage your child to go to the toilet independently and teach them to always wash their hands after going to the toilet and before/ after eating.
4. Take time to develop your child's love of books- to enjoy listening to stories- this will develop your child's level of concentration and also develop their language skills and vocabulary.
5. When writing your child's name please use lower case letters not capital letters e.g. Jack or Mary. Please encourage your child to hold a pencil and attempt to write/ copy their name.
6. Encourage your child to enjoy stories. Read to your child often and encourage your child's knowledge of familiar words.
7. **The new challenges of Social Distancing in response to COVID 19 Pandemic places additional challenges on our little children and staff. At present children will be encouraged to keep social distance from each other in school. At present the distance is 2 Metres but this may reduce to 1 Metre. Again we will update you more fully with all guidance before your child is due to start in Year 1 in September.**

School Term Holiday Dates

Holiday dates for the school year 2020/2021 will be forwarded to all parents at the beginning of the school year.

Concerns

If you have any concerns at any stage of the school year please do not hesitate to contact the Year One Team or the Principal or the Vice Principal and we will be only too happy to help. Your child is our main concern. (See enclosed Senior Leadership Team Pamphlet)

St. Catherine's Primary School - Parent Partnership

At St. Catherine's Primary School we are fully appreciative of the important role parents play in their child's development. Research advises us that parental involvement in the child's early education is essential for sustained development and progress. At St. Catherine's Primary School we encourage your participation and welcome you to work with us as partners in the following ways:-

1. Sharing information and your own observations of your child's development at home.
2. Making suggestions that you feel will enhance Primary School life.
3. Being involved in your child's learning at school and at home.
4. Participating in Parental Programmes to assist your child's learning

Finally, we hope that you and your child enjoy your Primary School experience at St. Catherine's Primary School. Exciting times ahead!

If you have any concerns, complaints or suggestions at any time you can channel them for our attention in the following ways.....

1. Phone school and request to speak to a member of staff
2. Make an appointment to see a member of staff
3. Email Principal
4. Writing them down and place them in the Parent Suggestion Box in the front foyer of the school outside the secretary's office
5. Message via the facebook medium.... However the reply may not be immediate.

We look forward to working with you.

Principal, Vice Principal & Year 1 Team

Meet the Staff



Principal



Vice - Principal



Year One Teachers



Year One Classroom Assistants