

# Starting School



'All children are gifted; some just open their packages earlier than others'



Welcome all children and their parents to a new and exciting stage in your child's life. This is probably the first big change in the life of your child. Up to this (s)he has felt safe and secure with you in the home but now (s)he is facing the wider world of the classroom and school. This may seem like a big step for someone so small but most kids manage it without fuss or stress and in fact take to it like ducks to water. During this year your child will make new friends, enjoy new experiences and will begin to learn the vital skills of reading and writing. We now, teacher and parents, have the chance to work as partners to ensure that at the end of this school year your child will have a positive attitude towards education based on social and academic confidence. We know from experience that parents are anxious to help in any way possible so we have included some ideas and guidelines to make the transition a smooth one. Also included is some general information about the school for your own knowledge.

### First Day - A Happy One!

Please be positive with your child in preparing her/him for school and explain to her/him what will happen re.teacher, other children, breaks, sitting down, tidy-up time and home time at 1.40 p.m. On arrival it is very helpful if you can show your child where to hang his/her coat and leave his/her lunch. After meeting the teacher and some other children and finding a place to sit please leave promptly because your child will pick up your anxiety. Most children, even if initially upset soon become distracted by their surroundings and settle down. Do not expect your child to be tired for the first few weeks. Building a routine in late August might help this.

### School Opening and Closing Times

School begins at 9.00 a.m in the morning Monday to Friday. A list of school closure dates will be sent out to you during the year. All Junior Infants go home at 1.40 p.m, please come promptly as your child may fret if s/he thinks he is forgotten. The children will be ready to go and will be brought out to the gate. If there is any special collection arrangements please let us know verbally or by note. **Please Note** the children will go home at 12.25 from Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> of August until Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> of September inclusive. This will gently ease the children into the routine of the school day. Please note children are not supervised before 8.45 a.m. and should not be on school grounds before this time.

### **Clothes:**

The children wear the uniform/tracksuit at all times. Please ensure that all clothes likely to be removed (i.e. coats, hats, scarves, gloves, jumpers etc.) are clearly labelled with your child's name as many children will possess similar items. We have some spare clothes and underwear for use if needed. Please clean and return these as soon as possible after any use. We do not recommend trousers with clasps or belts as they may be difficult to open. Show your child how to put on and off their jumpers, coats etc. Please do not let your child wear laced shoes if they cannot tie them themselves. It would be helpful to get your child used to recognizing and minding their own items.

### **Intimate Care and Toileting Policy**

Procedures for changing children

The following procedure will apply in cases of

- Wetting
- Soiling
- Vomiting on clothes

**At all times we will maintain the privacy and dignity of the child.**

The teacher/SNA will provide the child with a change of underwear, which the child uses to change his/herself. If necessary, we will provide a complete change of clothes. The teacher/SNA will assist the child with dressing only if absolutely necessary. If the child has soiled him/herself the parents will be contacted in order to take their child home. In the event that a parent cannot be contacted the teacher/SNA will do all that is necessary to make the child comfortable. Two members of staff will be present when dealing with intimate care needs.

Wet/soiled clothes will be put in a plastic bag and parents will be informed of what has happened when they collect their child. Parents are asked to return the clothes given to their child, washed and folded. A supply of clean underwear, wipes, track-suit bottoms etc will be kept in the school.

### **Stationery:**

All stationery is provided and kept at school. If the children want to bring in their own stationery please ensure they are labelled. **No markers** should be brought into school or used on their books and copies.

### **School Bag**

Please ensure that your child's schoolbag is large enough to hold a folder and their lunchbox.

### **Gaeilge**

Don't be surprised if you hear your child using some Irish Words during the year. Please encourage this and use some words with your child if possible.

### **Seating:**

The different tables are colour coded and the children move places usually once per week.

### **Food:**

We strongly urge you to follow a "healthy lunch box". Children are allowed to bring a treat on a Friday. Please keep to an absolute minimum sweets and biscuits. Please do not give children crisps or chewing gum and other unhealthy foods. No minerals are allowed. Please do not use any glass bottles. On starting school many children are too keyed up and distracted to eat a large lunch so we recommend a small nutritious snack, for example two sandwiches, a drink , a piece of cheese, yoghurt or fruit etc.

We try to ensure that the children eat a good portion of their lunch, particularly their sandwiches. We do not encourage swapping of lunch items. Please ensure that your child's lunch box is clearly labeled with your child's name. At the beginning of the year it would be a good idea if you told your child what he/she is to eat on every break as

they will often eat all their lunch and not spare any for the big lunch break.

### **Savings Scheme:**

The school takes part in a voluntary savings stamp scheme with the Credit Union. If you wish your child to save a little each week, please send in some money with him on Friday morning (each stamp costs 25c.) On starting to save each child will receive a little savings book.

### **Health and Safety:**

As part of our school's health programme we encourage regular washing of hands, particularly around eating time and after toilet use. We are not however always able to oversee this so please remind your child of its importance. Unfortunately germs and viruses spread very quickly in a classroom environment so it is vital that the children are encouraged to use a tissue when blowing their nose and to cover their mouth and turn away when coughing etc.

If your child develops any contagious illness such as chickenpox please keep him away from school until the period of contagion is over and inform his teacher immediately. We recommend that you check your child regularly for lice which are highly contagious, treat immediately if they occur and inform the teacher so that notification of possible risk may be sent out to other parents. All information regarding your child's health is treated in the strictest confidence.



Occasionally your permission will be required for dental, eye or other health examinations.

### **Sun Protection**

As your child is outside during hot times of the day please put sun tan lotion on your child in the morning time to prevent your child from being burnt. Please put in extra drinks on these days too as the children will be extra thirsty.

### **Assessment:**

Informal assessment will be continually made by your child's teacher. Folders are kept and passed on through the classes. From First Class on children do standardised reading and maths assessments.

### **Toys:**

There is no need for children to bring toys into school and we do not encourage this practice because of breakages, competition and peer pressure.

### **Reading:**

To foster a love of reading we advise if possible to read to your child often. Talk to you child about the books you read together. In school we use a combination of two approaches, look-and-say and phonetic. Children will begin their formal reading in January. The younger classes also partake in Shared Reading. Information will be sent out about this at a later date





### **Literacy Lift Off**

This initiative was launched recently in the school. The children from Junior Infants to Second class participate in this programme which is very beneficial to pupils of all reading abilities. The children receive a six week block of literacy instructions during Litreacy Lift Off and parents are asked to support this by reading with their child each night.

### **Oral Language**

Children absorb language easily. To develop their oral language talk to your child naturally and casually about things they are doing at home, school etc. Say some nursery rhymes with them.

### **Writing:**

Your child will be learning to write lower case letters initially so it would be very helpful if you could stick up your child's name written in this way perhaps on his/her bedroom door so that (s)he can be familiar with it. If it can be practised in writing it is even better!

### **Breaks:**

There are two breaks during the day, a short break from 10.50 to 11.00 and a longer break from 12.30 to 1.00. We try to ensure that no child feels lonely or left out, and, to this end we recommend that older brothers, sisters and friends do not monopolise the younger children's playtime which may restrict them in forming peer attachments.

### **Medical Conditions**

Please alert the teacher to any condition your child might have. Also if your child has any allergies please let us know. This will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

### **Absences**

**If your child is absent a note to the class teacher is sufficient. There is no need to ring the school to explain an absence.**

### **Money**

At various times of the year the children may need to bring in money for different things. Please place any money in an envelope with your child's name on the front of it.

### **P.E.:**

Children partake in PE throughout the school week. If time allows the children may be brought swimming during the year. Notes will be sent out at a later date. To help your child it would be good if they practiced some ball games to develop their hand eye co-ordination which is necessary to improve their writing skills. During the year outside coaches may be used in the school. It is expected that all children participate in all P.E. activities.

### **Information Bulletins:**

Please keep an eye in your child's folder and school-bag as they may contain notes for parents. Usually whole school

notes are given to heads of family. The school also used a text-a-parent service to keep parents up to date on school activities. The school also issues a newsletter one per family to parents to inform them of all that has happened in the school during the term.

### **Book List:**

Please find enclosed your child's booklist. All the books are available in the bookshop in Rathkeale and in school bookshops in Limerick. The following are a few ideas you could do to prepare your child for September

### **Developing co-ordination**

To strengthen and develop co-ordination which your child needs when reading and writing you could try the following:

- ✓ Large sheets of paper and chubby crayons for scribbling, colouring, drawing etc.
- ✓ Encourage your child to build using blocks, lego
- ✓ Make simple jigsaws
- ✓ Thread beads on a piece of string
- ✓ Sheets of paper to cut with using safety scissors
- ✓ Dolls/teddies that clothes can be taken off, buttoned, laced etc.
- ✓ Playing ball games

### **Helping your child with Maths**

From birth your child has been learning about maths. Maths is everywhere around us. Talking to your child and letting him or her take part in everyday activities like

going to the shop, cooking, or even setting the table, helps your child with maths. Knowing simple nursery rhymes, getting dressed, learning to take turns or enjoying pretend games, such as working in a post office or restaurant, all help your child to understand numbers, patterns and shapes measuring and sorting. You can help your child to solve maths problems every day by, for example, working out how to share sweets equally, by making sure everyone has a knife and fork at dinner time, or by helping him or her to measure out enough paper to wrap a present. Even when your child starts school, you can continue to play a key role in helping him or her to understand and enjoy maths.

**Here are some tips on how you can do this.**

- Give your child containers to play with. Talk about: holds more/less or empty/full. Try activities such as baking or playing with sand/water.
- Encourage your child to tidy toys. Try comparing them: This toy is heavier/lighter, or bigger/smaller than.
- Make patterns using buttons or clothes pegs. Think about pattern in colour size and shape.
- Say a simple counting rhyme together **TEN GREEN BOTTLES**
- Give your child maths objects to play with: measuring tapes, rulers, phones, watches, jugs, weighing scales.

- Look at the clock: time for school/bed
- Ask your child to help with sorting: matching socks or putting things in the fridge/press.
- Look at shapes: How many circles can you see in the kitchen? What shapes can you find in the garden? Look at books and pick out different shapes.
- Draw attention to the, days of the week and time of the day: today, yesterday, tomorrow, morning, night.
- Look at numbers on cars, buses outside shops. Have number hunts to see who can spot the most numbers.
- Measure your child: How tall is he/she? What is his/her shoe size? Use words like big/small, wide/narrow, tall short.
- Draw or make shapes using sand, pasta, crayons, cardboard cut-outs. Talk about them: square/circle, straight/curved.
- Make a pretend shop using tins and packets of food. Use real or pretend money. Talk about:  
How many?  
How much?  
What change did we get?

## Learning and Developing through play

Play is often described as children's 'work'.

Playing helps your child to

- Build relationships - by being with others: sharing and taking turns: solving problems negotiating like when two children or more want the same toy: being a leader and a follower; finding out how to join in play with others; learning about other people feelings.
- Be creative - when he/she makes outfits from old clothes: builds an apartment block out of junk materials: make a bowl from homemade play-dough and paints and decorates it with glitter for a sparkly look.
- Read, write and learn about numbers - when he/she 'reads' and tells stories: makes menus for the café or information booklets, posters and prescriptions for the veterinary clinic: pays for things in the pretend shop: writes down the scores of the matches for the news report: measure how many blocks are needed to build the road.

### **Twitter:**

The school has its own Twitter page which can be found by searching for St. Moluas NS Ardagh or by entering @st\_ns. We regularly upload photographs of school events here. Our website is [www.stmoluasns.ie](http://www.stmoluasns.ie)

### **Parent Teacher Meetings**

Every year in the first term parent- teacher meetings take place. These meetings provide an opportunity for discussing your child's progress. Please do not hesitate to approach the Junior Infant teacher at any time if there is a point upon which you feel anxious, however if you wish a more detailed discussion please arrange a convenient time in advance. Formal written reports are sent out at the end of the year.

I hope these guidelines will be of some c  
preparing your child for school.

We look forward to teaching your child  
hope we can provide a nice happy atmosfe  
children will settle in and learn many new



**WE'LL SEE YOU ON AUGUST 29<sup>th</sup>**

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Principal

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Class Teacher