



**Some Helpful Information for Parents of Junior Infants  
Starting Primary School**

## **Fáilte romhat agus roimh do pháiste chuig Scoil Bhríde**

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to Scoil Bhríde. We look forward to working with you and making the move to our school a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

Starting school is a big milestone in your child's life. Up to this they have felt safe and secure with you in the home and family but now they are 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. Our teaching staff will make every effort to make this transition seamless and stress free.

It is important too, particularly during the first year that parents understand achievement will come in many forms, academic, social and personal.

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.

With these aims in mind we have put together this little booklet as a general guide for parents. It deals briefly with the period before your child comes to school and their introductory stage in Junior Infants.

We trust you will find it helpful and that your child will be happy and fulfilled with us.

**Eimear Hennessy**  
**Principal**

## 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.

Because they come to us so young, we must guard against putting pressure on them to learn what they are not yet ready for. Demanding too much too soon can switch a child off completely. At the same time, we must cultivate readiness so that they can get moving as soon as possible.

**The rates of progress of children can vary greatly.** We try to give them an opportunity to move ahead at their own pace or as near to it as possible.

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.
- Teaching each child to accept the general order, which is necessary for the class to work well.

## Preparing for the Big Day

- The child's first day at school is a day to remember for the rest of their life. **You can help to make it a really happy one**
- **Tell your child about school beforehand**, casually, and talk about it as a happy place where there will be a big welcome for them, and they will meet new friends.
- Your child will like to have their new school tracksuit and their new bag when they begin. These help them to identify more readily with the school and other children.
- Please ensure that all items of school uniform are labelled.

## The Big Day

### Coming in...

**On the first morning**, you may bring your child to the Junior Front Door at 9.30am. The teacher will be there to greet you.

When you arrive at the classroom, **be as casual as you can**. Your child will meet the teacher and the other children in their new classroom.

Hopefully, they will be absorbed in their new surroundings. Then, having given assurance that you will be back to collect them, wave goodbye and **make your getaway without delay**.

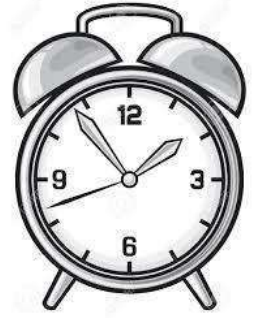
### Going Home

- Be sure to collect your child on time at 12 O'clock from her teacher on this day. Children can become very upset if they think they have been forgotten.

### As Time Goes On.....

- School begins at 8.50am. To ease the child into the school routine we have a policy where Junior Infants go home for the first two weeks at 12 O'clock.
- After that they go home at 1.30pm. Your child will be brought to the entrance hall and released to you by the class teacher. Please make sure your child is collected on time each day.
- If at any time the collecting routine has to be changed ensure you tell the child and put it in a written note to the teacher in advance.

**Get your child into the habit of being in good time for school from the beginning.**



## **School Times**

School gates open:	8.50a.m
Assembly time:	8.50 - 9.00a.m.
School starts:	9.00a.m.
Small break:	10.40 - 11.00a.m.
Lunch break:	12.40 - 1.00p.m.
Finishing Time:	1.30p.m.

## **Attendance**

Good attendance is a priority in our school. Children who arrive after 9.00am must be signed in by an adult. If you are collecting your child early, you need to put an early leaving note on Aladdin, and she must be signed out when leaving the school. The sign in/sign out book is kept at the main reception. If your child is absent, please put an explanation on the Aladdin Connect App.

Parents will be informed via Aladdin Connect when a child has missed 15 school days. This is an automatic notice that is sent.

*Under the Education Welfare Act 200, parents must let the school know if their child is absent and why. The school must report the non-attendance of any pupil who misses 20 days or more in any school year, including sickness and hospitalisations, to the Education Welfare Board.*



## Handling the Upset Child

Despite 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 do not panic. Patience and perseverance can work wonders.

### A Word of Advice

- Trust the teacher. She is experienced and resourceful and is used to coping with all kinds of starting-off problems.
- Try not to show any outward signs of your own distress. Sometimes the parents are more upset than the child and are the main cause of their anxiety.
- When you have reassured them, leave as fast as possible. The teacher can distract and humour them more easily when you are not around.
- You must be firm from the start. Even if a child is upset you must insist that they stay for a short time. They must never feel that they are winning the psychological battle of wills.

## Before Your Child Starts

You should ensure that your child is as independent as possible - physically, emotionally, and socially. If she can look after herself in these areas, she will feel secure and confident and settle in readily.

It would help greatly if she were able to-

- **Button and unbutton her coat, put it on, take it off and hang it up.**
- **Use the toilet without help and manage her clothing.**
- **Flush the toilet, wash and dry her hands, without help.**
- **Use a tissue when necessary.**
- **Share toys and playthings with others and "take turns."**
- **Tidy up and put away playthings.**
- **Wear 'Velcro' runners, Junior Infants cannot manage laces.**
- **Carry her own schoolbag. The bag must be big enough to carry a large A4 folder.**
- **Open and close her own schoolbag.**
- **Eat lunch independently.**
- **Manage opening and closing her own lunchbox and drink independently.**



## Packed Lunches - Healthy Eating

### *Scoil Bhríde is a nut free school*

We would ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start. Lunch is an important meal for school going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar, or salt. It should also provide dietary fibre (roughage). Please, only give your child something you feel she can easily manage to eat.

### **Start with the Basics**

A healthy packed lunch should contain bread or an alternative, a savoury filling which provides protein, a suitable drink, some fruit and/or vegetables.

### **Bread & Alternatives**

Bread, rolls, scones, crackers preferably wholemeal, wholegrain rice & pasta.

### **Savouries**

Lean Meat, chicken/turkey, tuna/sardines, cheese, quiche

### **Fruit & Vegetables**

Apples, Banana, Peach, Plum, and Pineapple cubes, Mandarins, Orange segments, Grapes, Fruit Salad, Dried fruit, Tomato, Cucumber, Sweetcorn, Coleslaw, Celery.

### **Drinks** (In beakers or plastic bottles. No cartons allowed)

Water, juices

**Treats:** Friday only - something small.

### **Children are not allowed to bring the following to school:**

- Crisps (Including crisp style snacks)
- Fizzy drinks
- Lollipops
- Chewing gum

### **The Lunch Bag - School Lunch Delivery service**

The Lunch Bag delivery service is in operation in Scoil Bhríde. (see info sheet at back of booklet)

## General Behaviour

### Do's

Do be kind and helpful

Do be gentle

Do listen

Do work hard

Do be honest

Do look after property

### Don'ts

Don't hurt people's feelings.

Don't hurt anyone

Don't interrupt

Don't waste your time

Don't cover up the truth

Don't waste or damage things.

**Social skills are very important.** We always encourage good manners, **please/thank you, addressing teachers properly, being courteous** to fellow pupils and staff. Encourage your child to mix rather than be dependent on one friend.

## General Information

### Uniform

Our Junior Infant pupils school uniform is a navy tracksuit, white polo shirt and white soled runners with Velcro straps. Navy school shorts can be worn during the summer months. Bicycle shorts and leggings are forbidden. She must wear her uniform every day. A crested tracksuit can be bought in 'Q & M Casuals in Clane. A generic navy tracksuit can be bought in any shop. A crest can be purchased in the office for €4 which can be sewn on to the tracksuit top. It is advisable to purchase two tracksuits in case of accidents or spillages.

*Please label each item of your child's uniform especially tracksuit tops and coats.*

- Nail varnish and coloured hair are not allowed as per our code of conduct.
- One pair of stud earrings only - no hoop earrings allowed. (Health & Safety)

### Punctuality

It is very important that your child is on time as lateness is unsettling for everyone. If a child is late, please bring them to the main office. **Children must be signed in by an adult.** Parents are unable to walk their child to the classroom for Child Protection reasons.

Also, please be on time to collect your child. It is very distressing for your child if you are late.

### Pupil Early Collection

The school needs to be notified if a child is being collected early. If you are taking your daughter out early, she must be 'signed out' in the office. Please enter an early leaving note on Aladdin.

If someone other than a parent or guardian is collecting a child, please notify the school in writing. Pupils must only be signed out by an adult. (16 years or over)

## **Illness**

Children who are sick should not be sent to school. Situations may arise when a child becomes unwell during the day. Parents/Guardians will be contacted. Please make sure we have an emergency contact number on file. You can update these details on the Aladdin Connect App

## **Health**

If your child has an allergy, medical condition, problem with sight, or has any specific needs, please make sure your child's teacher is informed. If you have any medical reports which may have an impact on your child's ability to learn, please share them with her teacher.

## **Entering and Exiting**

The Junior Infants enter and exit the school at the entrance to the old building. After the first two weeks, children walk into the yard from the school gate independently. Parents must remain at the gate.

## **School Policies:**

Policies are available to view on the school website. [www.scoilbhrideclane.ie](http://www.scoilbhrideclane.ie)

## **Family Circumstances**

Please inform the principal of any family circumstances that are relevant to your child's school life e.g. separation, custody arrangements, bereavements etc. Please keep the class teacher informed of happenings in the child's life which may affect her schoolwork.

## **Label everything**

Label all your child's belongings with a permanent pen, clothes marker, or iron on labels.

## **Birthdays and Invitations**

Please do not send in treats for your child's class on their birthday. A number of children have allergies, and we are not able to give them out. Invitations **cannot** be given out on the school premises.

## **Dogs**

Please be advised that dogs cannot enter the school grounds under any circumstances, for Health & Safety reasons.

## **Communicating with Parents**

We in Scoil Bhríde place great importance on open communication. There are a wide variety of ways in which we do this including:

- Aladdin Connect App
- Website - [www.scoilbhrideclane.ie](http://www.scoilbhrideclane.ie)
- Monthly newsletters sent via the Aladdin Connect App.
- The school will send a notice to the mobile phone number given as the main contact with up-to-date information, such as reminders, school closures due to weather etc.
- Annual parent teacher meetings for Junior Infants in January/February.
- Meetings with class teacher by appointment during the year.
- Informal messages to the teacher at home time etc.
- End of year reports are issued in June.
- Parent Teacher Association meetings: The school has a very active PTA which we would encourage you to join.
- All payment requests e.g., school tours, Swimming lessons are sent via the Aladdin app. All payments are paid on-line.
- Consent for school trips/tours are made via the Aladdin App.
- Permission to have photos on website is given via the Aladdin App.

## **Concerns:**

If parents have any concerns, please share them first and foremost with the class teacher. Only if matters are still unresolved should the principal be involved.

## Helpful Hints

- Children need plenty of rest after the effort and excitement of a day at school. You should ensure that she gets to bed early and has a good night's sleep.
- When she has settled in and hopefully, looks upon school as a "home from home" do continue to show interest in her daily adventures. Give her an ear if she wants to tell you things. Phrase your questions in a positive language.
- If she tells you something that concerns you, always tell the teacher.
- If her progress is slow do not compare her adversely with other children while she is listening. Loss of self-esteem can be very damaging to her.
- Your daughter is not going to be a model of perfection all the time- thankfully. You should try to have patience with her shortcomings and praise her for her achievements.
- Children often "forget" or relay messages incorrectly, so we will send a notice via Aladdin Connect when necessary. Please make sure you have downloaded the App to receive all communications from the school and your daughter's teacher.

## SOME IMPORTANT AREAS OF EARLY LEARNING

### Spoken Language

It is important that the child's ability to talk is as advanced as possible. It is through speech that children communicate their thoughts and feelings, their needs and desires, curiosity, and wonder. If she cannot express these in words, she will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from the learning activity of the class.

That is why a lot of attention is given to language development in the first years of school.

### You Can Help...

- Talk to your child naturally and casually about things of interest that you may be doing-at home, in the shop, in the car, etc. Remember that all the time your child is absorbing the language they hear about them. It takes children a while to make it their own and to use it for their own needs.
- Try to make time to listen when your child wants to tell you something that is important to them.
- Answer genuine questions with patience and in an adequate way. Always nurture your child's sense of curiosity and wonder.
- Introduce your child gently to the ideas of why? How? When? Where? If? etc. These demand more advanced language structures.

## Getting ready to read

Learning to read is a gradual process and a lot of preparatory work must be done before a child is introduced to her first reader.

We deliberately do not rush children into reading. We get them ready for it over an extended period. Reading is something to be enjoyed. It should not feel pressured for a small child.

- Have attractive colourful books in the home.
- Read your child a variety of stories from time to time. She will get to associate these wonderful tales with books and reading.
- Teach your child to respect and care for books.
- They must be minded and handled carefully and put away safely.
- Look at the pictures. You can tell a wonderful story from pictures.
- Read her nursery rhymes and encourage her to learn them.
- Remember that the teacher is the best judge of what rate of progress is best suited to each child.
- Point out words in her environment.
- Take your child to the library. Read stories together. Share a love of books and words.





## Understanding Maths

Maths for the small child has nothing to do with "sums" or figures or tables or adding and subtracting. This will come later. Maths is part of the language she uses in understanding and talking about certain things in her daily experience e.g.

- She associates 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.
- Matching/Sorting - objects of the same size/colour/texture/shape etc.
- Odd One Out - difference in size/colour etc.

Understanding of these concepts comes very quickly for some children. For others it takes a long time. Be patient. You cannot force Maths understanding on a child.

### **But You Can Help...**

- In the course of your 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 real objects. This has been her natural method of learning since she was a baby. This at times can be a nuisance but if it allows her to do the learning herself the final result is well worth it.



## **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 unless they become aware that the home attitude towards it is not good. So please be careful that anything you say does not give a negative attitude to your child.

If 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. If they must learn Irish, let them enjoy it and master it to the best of their ability.

## **Getting Ready For Writing**

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

## **You Can Help...**

- She must develop the ability to get the hand and eye working together. This is very important. Get her manipulating toys like:
  - (a) Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc.
  - (b) Playdough to make her own shapes
  - (c) A colouring book and thick crayons
  - (d) Sheets of paper that she can cut up with a safe scissors
- When she begins to use a pencil make sure that she holds it correctly at the start. It will be difficult to change her pencil grip later.
- She may be making capital letters at home even before she comes to school. This is fine. But when she starts making lower case letters at school you should try to get her to discontinue the capital letters and practise her new system whenever she feels like it. Consult the teacher about this.
- Don't discourage left-handedness. If that is her definite natural inclination, don't attempt to change it.

## Other Areas of the Curriculum

Children in junior infants learn a lot through many other activities, which may seem simple, but which are essential building blocks. Their general development is enhanced through Art & Craft, P.E., Music, Nature, S.P.H.E and Religious Education.

Children's moral and social education is covered right through the school day e.g., kindness to others, sharing with them, saying we are sorry, being respectful of others and our school etc. We have a Catholic Ethos in Scoil Bhríde. We pray daily, observe the church festivals and follow the 'Grow in Love' programme.

We follow the Primary School Curriculum set out by the Department of Education and Skills. All our policies are available to read in the school.

## PARTING THOUGHTS

### Who is the Boss?

Bit by bit your daughter will get used to the general discipline of the classroom. She will get to understand very quickly that in certain important matters an instruction from the teacher must be obeyed promptly.

### Teacher and Parent

At the early stages 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. Please contact the school office at 045 868614 or E- Mail: [info@scoilbhrideclane.ie](mailto:info@scoilbhrideclane.ie) to make an appointment.

### 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.



# How parents register for Aladdin Connect



## 1. Link From School

You will receive either a text or email from the school.

Within this message there will be a link unique to you.

Simply tap on this link to begin.



## 2. Connect Registration

The link will direct you to the Connect registration page.

You will be required to enter information such as your child's **first name** and **date of birth**, along with your **own name**.



## 3. Account Setup

The next step is to setup your login details.

To create your account you will be asked to enter an **email** and **password** that will act as your login.

Make sure to select an email you have access to and a password you will remember.



## 4. Account Created

Once you have created your account you will be greeted with this screen.

The next step is to download the Connect app.

If you are on mobile you can click the continue button to be directed to download the app.



## 5. Download App

You can find the Connect app on both the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

The App is free to install so you will need to simply press the install button to add it to your device.



## 6. Sign Into App

Once you have installed the Connect app the last step is to login.

Parents will use the details set up in **step 3** in order to login.

Once signed in parents will be prompted to enter their mobile number for validation.



# THE LUNCH BAG

EMPOWERED, EDUCATED EATING



To pay simply add your card. Remember! Your money is always yours. You can discontinue service at any time.

WE ARE A SCHOOL LUNCH COMPANY WHO DELIVER LUNCH TO YOUR NEW SCHOOL. NOW THAT YOUR CHILD IS STARTING BIG SCHOOL, HOW ABOUT EMPOWERING THEM TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN NUTRITION TO SET THEM UP FOR LIFE AS A BIG KID!

- For the same cost as a homemade lunch, your child has the choice of a different, fresh lunch every day of the week.
- Swap stressful mornings for sitting with your child to make good nutritional choices, at a time that suits you both.
- Allow your child to taste new foods without additional cost or food waste.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Download our app
2. Order before 12noon
3. Suppliers deliver fresh produce to us everyday
4. Your lunch is then made in sterile kitchens
5. Lunch is delivered straight to the classroom the next day
6. Children compost & recycle responsibly!



The selection of healthy food options is fantastic. The app is very easy to navigate for children and encourages them to get actively involved in making good food choices. It is a cost effective service which offers great flexibility in terms of ordering to suit different tastes and needs. - Heidi, a happy mum



VISIT  
[WWW.THELUNCHBAG.IE](http://WWW.THELUNCHBAG.IE)  
FOR ENTERTAINING  
EDUCATIONAL  
VIDEOS!



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# INFANT GRAB BAG

HALF SANDWICH / WRAP / ROLL  
2 EXTRA ITEMS OF YOUR CHOICE!

Find it on the 'Infant Grab Bag' section of the app



## HALF SANDWICH

Ham  
Cheese  
Chicken  
Ham & Cheese

## HALF WRAP

Chicken  
Chicken Tikka  
Ham & Cheese  
Chicken Stuffing

## HALF ROLL

Chicken  
Chicken Tikka  
Ham & Cheese  
Chicken Stuffing

## BUILD YOUR OWN!

Create your own unique lunch to suit your requirements! View our full kids menu at [www.thelunchbag.ie](http://www.thelunchbag.ie)

## ALLERGIES

We take kids safety very seriously. Therefore, once we know that your child has an allergy, we will ensure that foodstuff unsuited to them is blocked from their menu. We also adapt the menu to ensure it reflects the school's Healthy Eating & Allergy Policies.



TONNES OF HEALTHY SNACKS

VEG TRAYS & SALADS

COLD PASTAS

FRESH FRUIT & CHOPPED FRUIT POTS



JUST A FEW OF OUR PROUD SUPPLIERS

