**Booklet for Parents of Children Starting in Our School**

**2023+**

**Board of Management**

**Scoil Bhríde Nurney**

**2023+**



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###### Principal’s welcome

**Dia daoibh gach duine agus fáilte romhaibh!**

On behalf of the Board of Management, the staff, the pupils and myself it gives me great pleasure, as principal, to warmly welcome you to Scoil Bhríde. We hope that by using this website you will get a picture of our vision, aims and of the values we uphold.

Our school website is a very important tool in celebrating the amazing activities that take place at Scoil Bhríde. It is also a vital tool in communicating with parents, guardians, carers and visitors as well as providing information about the various policies, practice and procedures in our school. Our website has been designed to give you a taste of our school as well as providing regular updated information for parents and guardians. If you would like to hear more about our school or arrange a visit please contact us through the school office, where we would only be too delighted to help.

At Scoil Bhríde we all work together to ensure our pupils have positive and enjoyable learning experiences in a vibrant and welcoming environment. We constantly strive to provide best practice in education for the children attending our school. Each child is encouraged to enjoy learning and develop a lively and enquiring mind. We also want children to develop the ability to question and discuss rationally and apply themselves to tasks and skills as they strive to reach their full true potential in all aspects of school life. We respect all of our children for their uniqueness and we promote inclusion, tolerance and understanding throughout our school. All children are encouraged to contribute, succeed, and develop independence, self-confidence, high self-esteem, foster care, courtesy and consideration for each other.

The school has a staff of 11 teachers, 3 special needs assistants, 1 caretaker, 2 cleaners and a secretary. I personally feel privileged to lead in Scoil Bhríde such a team of professional, talented and committed staff who provide well planned and organised lessons and activities. A wide range of curriculum enrichment activities and experiences are also provided to bring the curriculum to life and make learning fun thereby enhancing children’s learning. This talented team supports the achievement of high standards in all aspects of school life: curriculum, sport, music, art, science, the environment, entrepreneurship, information technology and much more.

Every decision within the school is made by firstly considering what is in the best interest of the children. In this way children lie at the heart of everything we do. We look forward to working with parents/guardians and their child so that Scoil Bhríde can continue to be the popular and very special place that it is today. Parents are welcomed as partners in their child’s education as we believe that our pupils learn best when members of staff and parents work in partnership and so we value your involvement with your child’s education. Our pupils work hard in school; they are a credit to both their teachers, parents and guardians.

We are thankful to all who make Scoil Bhríde the vibrant, inclusive school that it is – our staff, our pupils, our parents as well as the Board of Management and Parent’s Association. All of these partnerships help us to provide an extended and rich educational experience for our pupils.

*The staff and I look forward to sharing your child’s educational journey with you!*



With best wishes!

***Dr. Vinny Thorpe***

**Principal**

*Ed.D (SL) M.Ed (SL), MA.Comp.Mus,*

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**The Purpose of this school in a nutshell is:**

* to teach the Primary Curriculum
* to assist you grow your child educationally, spiritually, emotionally, morally and culturally
* to teach your child to communicate (speak, read and write effectively), solve problems and to be polite, mannerly, respectful and disciplined
* to provide your child opportunities to learn for themselves valuable life social skills, by offering facilities where your child can interact with other children on their own merit (with parents at a distance/out of sight), thereby allowing them to (i) learn to grow (ii) start, end and fix relationships (iii) learn to cope and (iv) stand independently on their own two feet.

All these skills they must learn for themselves to succeed in life.

**Under Irish Law your child has the right to access this service in full and under Irish Law it is a parent’s responsibility to ensure that this happens**

###### Foreword

Starting school will be a very big change in the life of your child. 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.

It is important too, particularly during the first year that parents understand what the aims of the school are, as many may be expecting too much in the way of academic achievement.

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 his introductory stage in Junior Infants.

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

###### 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.

###### 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 your child is able to-

* **Button and unbutton/zip up and unzip their coat** and hang it up.
* **Use the toilet without help** and manage pants buttons
* Also **encourage personal hygiene** and cleanliness. Your child should know to flush the toilet and wash his hands, without having to be told.
* Use their tissue when necessary.
* **Share** toys and playthings with others and “take turns”.
* **Tidy up** and put away their playthings.
* Remain contentedly for a few hours in the home of a relation, friend or neighbour. If they have had this experience, then separation from their parents when they start school will not cause them any great anxiety.
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###### 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 for them.**

* **Tell them 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.
* **Don’t use school or the teacher as a threat**. “If you behave like that for teacher she’ll murder you” though said light-heartedly can make some children very apprehensive.
* Come into the school with your child on the appointed day in June. This is an opportunity for your child to meet his/her junior infant teacher and familiarise themselves a little with their new classroom, playground etc.
* They will like to have **their new uniform uniform (please see our school website www.nurneyns.com for all the information you need about our school uniform) and their new bag** when they begin. These help them identify more readily with the school and other children. Please avoid getting your child a schoolbag with wheels. They are not suitable and lead to problems. A backpack type school bag is far more suitable for your child.
* Your child’s books will be provided by the Book Rental Scheme and they will be kept in school. You will be notified of extra requirements which you must provide e.g. a painting shirt, glue etc. These will be collected on the first day by the junior infant teacher for safe keeping.

###### The Big Day

***Coming in...***

You are very welcome to come into the classroom with your child. However it is better for all the children if you make your goodbyes as soon as possible. Teacher will give you a signal when to leave on the first morning, if you so require.

Packed Lunches

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).

The **traditional packed lunch of milk and sandwiches is under attack from a range of convenience foods** like crisps, sweets, biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks. Parents and teachers are concerned about this trend but some find it difficult to come up with popular healthy alternatives. We will **ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start**. Also, please, only give your child something you feel he/she can easily manage to eat.

**Most Importantly!!! Absolutley NO NUTS or products containing nuts are allowed e.g. Nutella, chocolate spreads of any kind, peanut butter etc..**

The following guide is designed to help you provide quick, appetising, and nutritious lunches for your children.

Bread & Alternatives

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal.

Rice – wholegrain.

Pasta – wholegrain.

Potato Salad.

Wholemeal Scones.

Savouries

Lean Meat.

Chicken/Turkey.

Tinned Fish e.g. tuna/sardines.

Cheese, including Edam, blarney, cottage.

Quiche.

Pizza.

Fruit & Vegetables

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

Drinks

Milk, including low fat.

Fruit juices.

High juice Squashes, i.e. low sugar content.

Homemade soup (use Bovril occasionally as it is salty).

Yoghurt.

Start with the Basics

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

A Word about Milk

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth. If a child does not drink a glass of milk at lunch, encourage them to have a carton of yoghurt or a small helping of cheese instead.

***Going Home...***

* Be sure to **collect your child on time**. Children can become very upset if they feel they are forgotten.
* If at any time the collecting routine has to be changed ensure you tell the child and the teacher.
* Teacher will escort your child to the school gate and stay with him/her until collected.
* If for any reason, somebody other than the usual person is collecting your child at 2pm **you must notify the school in advance**.

###### 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....**

* ***Trust the teacher****.* They are experienced and resourceful professionals and are 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 the child’s 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.
* Check back discreetly in a short while. You will invariably find that calm has been restored.
* ***You must be firm from the start****.* Even if a child is upset you must insist that they stay for a short time. Just reassure them that you will be back really soon to collect them and take them home. They must never feel that they are winning the psychological battle of wills.

***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 approx. the first two weeks at 12p.m. (only pack a small snack for little lunch). After that they go home at 2p.m. Please make sure that your child is collected at 2p.m. sharp as the teacher needs that hour between 2p.m. and 3p.m. to clean up after the day and prepare for the next day. **Get them into the habit of being in good time for school from the beginning**. Mid-morning break: 11a.m. to 11.10a.m.
* Children need plenty of rest after the effort and excitement of a day at school. You should ensure that they get to bed early and have a good night’s sleep.
* When they have settled in and hopefully, looks upon school as a “home from home” do continue to show interest in their daily adventures. Give them an ear if they want to tell you things-but don’t pester them with questions. Encourage your child to use appropriate language to describe things – no “yokes” etc.
* If their progress is slow do not compare them adversely with other children while they are listening. **Loss of self-esteem can be very damaging to him.**
* **Their school is always “the greatest”-whatever its faults.**
* They are not going to be a model of perfection all the time-thankfully. You should try to have patience with their shortcomings and praise for their achievements.
* Children often “forget” or relay messages incorrectly, so **please, check your child’s bag each night for notes, especially Wednesday.**
* If your child is sick please leave him/her at home as the child will be miserable in school and illness is spread.
* We would appreciate if the money for Art and Crafts, as well as the money for Book Rental and the money for photocopying were paid before end of September. As the year goes on, there may be other demands on the purse strings, but they are optional. These include:

-School Photographs

-Educational Books and magazines

*Further details will be given during the year.*

###### Some important areas of early learning

**Developing their Command of Spoken Language.**

**It is important that the child’s ability to speak and listen is as advanced as possible**. It is through speech that they communicate their thoughts and feelings, their needs and desires, curiosity and wonder. If they cannot express these in words they will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from the learning activity of the class. This can be the first sign of failure in the school system and must be remedied, if at all possible. 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 or they may be doing-at home, in the shop, in the car, etc. Remember that all the time they are absorbing the language they hear about them. It takes them a while to make it their own and to use it for their own needs.
* Try to make time to listen when they want to tell you something that is important to them. But don’t always make them the centre of attention.
* Answer their genuine questions with patience and in an adequate way. Always nurture their sense of curiosity and wonder.
* Introduce them gently to the ideas of why? How? When? Where? If? etc. These demand more advanced language structures.
* 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 tell them to you.
* Encourage correct use of language e.g. avoid use of baby talk.

***First steps in Reading...***

Ability to read is the foundation for all future progress in our school system. However, learning to read is a gradual process and a lot of preparatory work must be done before a child is introduced to his first reader.

We very deliberately do not rush or push children into reading. We get them ready for it over an extended period. Reading is something to be enjoyed. It should never start as a chore for the small child.

***You can help...***

* 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.
* You must convey to them gradually that books are precious things. They must be minded and handled carefully and put away safely.
* Look at the pictures with them and talk to them about what they say.
* Read them nursery rhymes. They will enjoy the rhythm, rhyme, timbre and story.
* Above all, don’t push them with their early reading. You may turn them against it for evermore.
* Remember that the teacher is the best judge of what rate of progress is best suited to each child.
* Read to your child at every opportunity, ideally every day or at night time as part of the bedtime routine. This will help to foster a love of books and reading in your child which is invaluable at this pre-reading stage.

**Understanding Maths...**

**First a Word of Warning...**

Maths for the small child has nothing to do with “sums” or figures or tables or adding and subtracting. These will all come much later. Maths is really part of the language they use in understanding and talking about certain things in his 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.
* 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 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 real objects. This has been their natural method of learning since they were a baby. This at times can be a nuisance but if it allows them to do the learning themselves the final result is well worth it.

**Gaeilge...**

The emphasis is completely on the fun and enjoyment of using spoken Irish. The children at this age love Irish and attain fluency at their own level very easily. 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 effortlessly interchange words in school e.g. door/*doras*; floor/*urlár* etc..

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**.

We would want you as parents to give every encouragement and help to the small ones in their efforts to acquire Irish even if you have forgotten yours. Encourage them to use Irish 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 manipulating toys like:

1. Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc

(b) Play dough to make his/her own shapes

1. A colouring book and thick crayons

(d) Sheets of paper that can be torn into strips, crunched up into balls and cut up with a safe scissors.

* When they begin to use a pencil, make sure that they hold it correctly at the start. It will be difficult to change them later.
* Don’t discourage left-handedness. If that is their definite natural inclination, don’t attempt to change them.

The importance of the activities outline above (a) – (d) cannot be overstated. **There is no expectation of your child to be able to write when they come to school. In fact it is much better if they learn while in junior infants the correct pencil grip and correct letter formation in line with the school’s handwriting policy.** The junior infant teacher will be communicating all of this to you at the appropriate time.

**Other Areas of the Curriculum...**

The child in juniors learns a lot through many other activities, which do not need any elaboration here. Their general development is enhanced through Art & Craft, P.E., Music, Nature and of course through Religious Education.

In regard to the last area its moral and social aspects are covered right through the school day e.g. kindness to others, sharing with them, saying we are sorry, being aware of God through the beauty of nature etc.

The children learn their prayers and bible stories gradually. Again, as in the other areas we referred to already, the child will benefit from practising at home what they have learned at school. They can then make their own contribution to the usual family prayers.

**Social skills** are very important. We encourage good manners at all times, please/thank you, addressing teachers properly, being courteous to fellow students and teachers. It is important to ask your child whom they played with at school and to ensure they aren’t alone, also encourage mixing rather than being dependent on one friend only. **Rough behaviour is totally discouraged in the playground**.

***Important School Policies which you must become familiar with...***

It is of utmost importance that you visit our school website [www.nurneyns.com](http://www.nurneyns.com) to read and make yourself familiar with the following statutory and mandatory school policies:

* Child Protection
* Anti-Bullying
* Code of Behaviour
* Data Protection
* Substance Use
* Enrollment and Admissions
* Health and Safety

**Scoil Bhríde**

**Important Information for Parents and Schools about the School Playground – Expert Insight and Advice from some of the World’s Leading Child Educationalists and Child Psychologists**

**Introduction:**

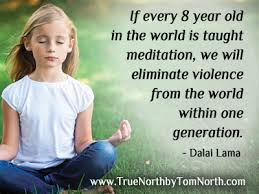
This section has been compiled to address the growing number of calls being made to Schools in relation to alleged incidents on the School Playground. This booklet aims to (i) cut down on the loss of teaching and learning time being used to address these issues (ii) show the wealth and value of life learning experiences available to children on a school yard and (iii) provide practical guidance on promoting positive mental health and well-being (in line with the Department of Education publication *“Well-Being in Primary Schools - Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion”*)

This booklet should also be read in conjunction with Scoil Bhríde’s Anti-Bullying Policy, Child Protection Policy and Code of Behaviour.

**Scoil Bhríde’s Philosophy of Education:**

1. We support the philosophy of education basic to the three main aims of primary education as stated in the Primary Curriculum

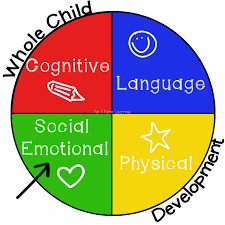
* *To enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual*
* *To enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society*
* *To prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning*

1. It is our wish that the school’s total curriculum acknowledges the variety of needs and learning abilities among the pupils and endeavours to strike a balance between an emphasis on an academic core and on the provision of a wide range of other important life learning experiences
2. We recognise how important it is for each child to develop the oral, comprehension, reading and written skills of the English language which are so necessary when working in other subject areas and when interacting with others in life. We recognise that it is extremely difficult for any child to reach his/her full potential if he/she has not mastered the basic skills of the language while in primary school
3. We recognise that individual growth best takes place in an atmosphere of openness and friendliness. Accordingly we strive, in each class and throughout the school, to create a strong sense of community so that no child will feel alienated or marginalised at school. We aim to help the children feel that their teachers are people they can trust and on whom they can depend. In a school, our size it is possible for all the teachers to get to know each child from their induction into the school.



1. We acknowledge that our school is a Catholic school and therefore we strive to create a school community where Gospel values of hope, justice, fair play, compassion, love and reconciliation are fostered. The whole school co-operates when we perform our ‘Nativity Play’ at Christmas and the school choir performs at First Confession and First Holy Communion ceremonies
2. The parents are the primary educators of their children and the school is where the professional educators complement the work of the home. In recognition of this fact the school seeks to maintain friendly collaboration and a good working rapport with all parents. The child’s balanced growth and development – not just academic progress is the focus of such collaboration
3. We believe that all children are equal regardless of gender, ability, creed or social background

**A Summary of Scoil Bhríde’s Philosophy of Education**

We have adopted the seanfhocal ***“Mol an Óige”*** (*Encourage the young*) as our school motto. Our philosophy is to know each child, to lead them with affection and fairness and to prepare them for life by developing them socially and personally into a fully rounded individual.

We aim for high academic standards and we will demand that each child does his/her best. We believe that this demand will be met by a child who is secure and happy in school and who feels his/her efforts are appreciated.

**Section Content:**

This Booklet is broken into 4 key sections:

1. *FIVE IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS A CHILD LEARNS IN THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND*
2. *TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS “WHEN YOUR CHILD FALLS OUT WITH A FRIEND ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND”*
3. *TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS “IF YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD IS GETTING A HARD TIME ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND”*
4. *TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS “WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD IS BEING EXCLUDED ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND”*
5. *HELICOPTER PARENTING*
6. **FIVE IMPORTANT AND ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS A CHILD LEARNS IN THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND**

One would normally think that a child only develops their movement skills in the playground. Aside from the development of movement skills, certain life skills or socio-emotional skills are learned in the playground. A child needs to learn to cope with their feelings and they also need to learn how to respect the feelings of others. The school playground is THE place to cultivate such skills. Why? The school playground represents the world for a child. How the child relates with other children in the playground reflects how the child relates with people in general.

1. **Building Self-Esteem.**

The best way to build self-esteem is to give opportunities for the child to succeed...and yet to fail. Yes, you read it right – to fail.

For example, when Daniel faces the monkey bars for the first time, fear settles in. He tells himself, “How can I possibly swing from those?” He tries it and falls on the first bar. He avoids the monkey bars but is faced with it everyday during [Outdoor Play Time](https://teachertinasblog.wordpress.com/2008/10/08/the-learning-environment-part-4-the-outdoor-play-area/). And so he tries again and falls again. He then decides to swing in it everyday until he swings on every bar and jumps from it like a gymnast. This is a great teaching moment for the teacher too. Whenever this child faces difficulty in any other school activity, the teacher can always encourage him by saying “Remember the time when you couldn’t swing in the monkey bars?” The child remembers and *has more confidence in taking risks, failing, practicing and eventually succeeding*. As the song goes, *“But I got to pick myself up, dust myself off, start all over again...”*

1. **Connecting with others.**

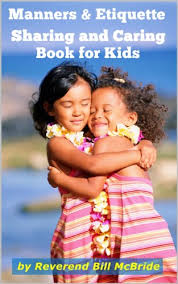
Toddlers usually engage in parallel play or playing side by side but not with each other. As they grow, they learn to interactively play with other children. They learn to come up to their classmates and ask them to play or join a group in a game of tag. The playground gives such opportunities. Games usually played in playgrounds require more than 2 children – whether it be tag, hide and seek or just simply making imaginary games.

1. **Resolving Conflict**

As in any life situation, conflict can be present in the school playground. This is normal and unavoidable. It is simply a fact of life. This conflict is usually brought about by different behaviours, attitudes and upbringing. ***Creating the conflict is easy. Resolving it takes skill.*** And this essential skill for the real world can be learned in the school playground.

What child psychologist experts love about conflict is that it is the ultimate teaching moment. The goal for conflict resolution is peace. When a child is in conflict with another child in the school playground, this can result in the game ending abruptly or the creation of enemies – things that a child does not like to happen. And so to avoid these effects, a child learns to temper down and get along with others. Now how, say the experts, can we teach adults the same thing?

1. **Taking Turns**

Oh how the world would change if everyone knew how to wait their turn! This skill should be developed early on. A child comes from a *self-centred* stage before entering school. They think that everything is theirs and they can use anything they like at any given time. When they play in the school playground with other children they realise that there are others who also want to play with the ball, the goals, the skipping rope, the hula hoop and their friends etc. And so the battle begins!

The teacher then sets the rules of taking turns. “What?!” The child exclaims. “I have to wait?!” The teacher then asks them “What if your classmates used it the whole time without giving you your turn? What would you feel?” The child thinks, “I wouldn’t want THAT to happen?” A great teaching moment.

1. **Standing Ground**

A child needs to reinforce the above 4 life skills by standing their ground. Learning to defend one’s self is a skill that every child should strengthen. This prepares them not only for self-preservation but also as an early defensive skill. This also shows how they value themselves, their identity and their territory.

1. **TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS *“WHEN YOUR CHILD FALLS OUT WITH A FRIEND ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND”***

It is distressing enough when you experience your own adult ‘bust-ups’ – so what’s the best way to deal with the upset of your child when a playground spat goes too far?



Your reaction to the problem depends very much on the age of your child – with pre-schoolers, rows are usually easily forgotten and soon blow over. However, once children reach infants age and above, friendships become more complicated. With your support, your child can learn the courage and confidence to tackle life’s many relationship challenges.

Here are ten tips to help maintain social harmony for your little ones:

1. **Arguing is not all bad**

Realise that children use arguing to work out all manner of issues, and that learning how to express one’s disagreement is an important social skill. If the dispute veers out of control it may be time to examine the root cause – perhaps it’s a simple case of incompatibility, or maybe there are underlying anxieties, jealousies or control issues which could be nipped in the bud.



1. **Keep it in perspective**

Yes, it will always be painful to watch your child being rejected by another, but unfortunately squabbles, reconciliation and/or moving on are all parts of growing-up. It would be prohibitive for a mother or father to protect their child from every little tiff, so step back. It may surprise you how quickly your child can forget about things if you don’t make too big a deal of it.

1. **Listen**

Like adults, children often just need a sounding board, so be careful not to always push a ready-made solution. By allowing your child to talk things through in their own time and neither judging them nor treating them as a victim, you will help your child to resolve their problems by allowing them to make observations and decisions by themselves.

1. **Offer support**

Instil self-confidence in your child by telling them you have faith that they will deal with the situation. If appropriate, offer suggestions, but never force your opinion. If you feel it might help, tell them about some of your own childhood fights; children often gain comfort from knowing they aren’t alone.

1. **Leave them to it**

Know when to intervene and when to steer clear. As long as no one is getting physically hurt or overly upset, the best lessons can be learned from letting our children work out their own differences. Settling arguments (like cycling a bike) is an essential life skill that can only be acquired through experience, so only step in if absolutely necessary. You may hinder your child’s developing independence if you are forever their rescuer!

1. **Avoid potentially explosive situations**

If a particular friend seems to be causing ructions, you should limit the situations that can lead to further distress outside of school. Within in a school setting this is near impossible to do as they may be in the same class or the same play yard. Within a busy school yard it would very difficult for a school to micro-manage such a situation. Bear in mind also that school playground time in an Irish Primary school is also only 40 minutes, so it is only a small portion of the school day.

1. **Respect your child’s decision**

If your child decides they no longer want to play with a friend, it’s your job to support them in that decision. They may well have a very good reason that you might never find out – but it is their right as an individual to choose their playmates, so never enforce a friendship against their wishes.

1. **Encourage your child to take responsibility for their actions**

Once the initial storm has blown over, offer to talk through the whole thing without attaching blame. This gives your child the opportunity to realise their mistakes and take responsibility for their part in the problem. From this they can choose to apologise and/or make changes to their future behaviour.

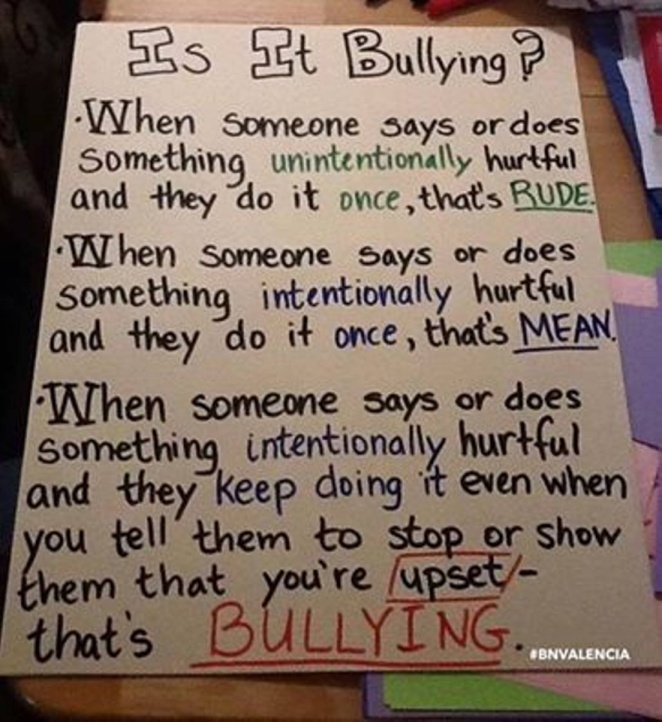


1. **Don’t make it personal**

Accept that fights among friends are normal and view them as a necessary part of your child’s development. It is nothing to do with you and you shouldn’t attach your own feelings to those of your children. Appreciate that kids’ friendships typically change with the weather – what lasts a lifetime as an adult may stretch only a fortnight with a seven-year-old.

1. **Broaden their horizons**

At school help your child to have a wide social group so that if friendships do go awry, they have others to fall back on. This can be encouraged by involving them in different afterschool clubs and activities, and inviting more than just one best friend home to play.



**Important note:**

*While childhood disputes are a normal part of growing up, always bear in mind the difference between regular arguments and issues involving bullying (‘Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time’), violence or racism, and adjust your role accordingly.*

*Please refer to the schools (i) Anti-Bullying Policy (ii) Child Protection Policy and (iii) Child Protection Policy for further information.*

1. **TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS “IF YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD IS GETTING A HARD TIME ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND”**

***Letting your kids fight their own battles***

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Say your child was called a nasty name on the playground or didn’t get invited to a classmate’s birthday party. Say they feel jealous because another child is smart and well-liked. Or they desperately desire something another child has. Or their close friend is moving away, and they’re fretting about their friendship.

Would you intervene by talking to their parents?

Some parents do pick up the phone. But they shouldn’t, according to Joyce Marter, LCPC, psychotherapist and owner of [Urban Balance LLC](http://www.urbanbalance.org/), a multi-site counseling practice.

In these cases, the parents no doubt mean well. They love their kids and want to protect them, Marter says.

But intervening in your child’s battles can actually backfire – and affect their development*. “If we fight our kids’ battles we are unintentionally communicating that we do not believe they are capable themselves,”* Marter says. Through these battles, kids learn how to communicate effectively and resolve conflicts, she said. This not only improves their self-esteem, but also helps them feel empowered, she adds.

Of course, this is very different from stepping in when your child is getting bullied. *(See more on the definition of bullying in the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy)*

If you fell your child is getting a hard time in the school playground, don’t despair. Here are some ways to help conquer the conflict and build their self-esteem at the same time.

While we know that school playgrounds can sometimes be uneasy places (we’ve all been there, after all), there’s something that strikes at your heart when it’s your child who’s been involved in any schoolyard squabble.

Some parents try stepping in to help diffuse the situation: surely two rational adults can help their kids work it out, right?

Wrong. Experts say this often blows up in your face, which is why experts really discourage parents from confronting other parents.

***Lessons for life***

“Conflicts occur every day and can be a source of frustration for children and adults alike”, says John Cooper, senior clinical psychologist and author of *‘Getting On With Others’.*

“Children who can stay calm, think of different solutions and think ahead are likely to get on better with other children and adults”.

Counselling psychologist Evelyn Field, who has written *‘Bullybusting’* and the more recent *‘Bully Blocking’* says that teaching a child to develop social and emotional resilience will help him-or-herself “deal with difficult, stressful encounters: managing pushy friends, aggressive bosses, controlling partners and others”.

***Where to start***

John Cooper suggests you start coaching your children in problem-solving skills from the age of four, and then right through to their teen years. He says it’s important not to jump in when our kids are having a problem (unless of course the playground conflict puts them in danger i.e. *is your child in immediate danger?* which is when you need to work with the school to get it sorted out). Instead of intervening in your child’s social dilemmas, help them solve the dilemma by following these five steps:

**Step 1:** ***What is the problem?***

Ask your child to describe the problem. *“Listen carefully, then summarise the main points,”* suggests John.

**Step 2: *How do you feel?***

Get the child to *“recognise their own feelings*”. Then ask them to think how the other child involved in the conflict is feeling.

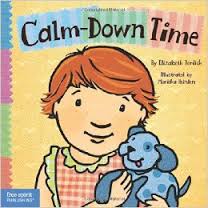
*“Doing this helps them learn that it is not just them who feel(s) aggrieved,”* adds John.

Empathise with your child and offer emotional support advises psychotherapist, Joyce Marter. Show your child that you understand how they’re feeling. For instance, you might say, *“I can see that you are feeling very sad and frustrated”.*

*“This will help your child gain insight into their feelings as well as help them know you understand, which promotes trust and intimacy,”* Marter says. Plus, it helps to diffuse emotions. *“Sometimes kids – and adults – keep expressing their emotions and up the ante until they feel heard”.*

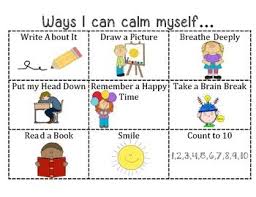
Also, even if your kid’s emotions seem disproportionate to the situation, let them know that their feelings are still a normal response. *“A child’s ability to understand and cope with feelings is less sophisticated than ours as adults and things that may seem little to us may in fact be very big to them,”* Marter says. So you might say, she says: *“It is understandable that you’re feeling sad that you couldn’t play with the others.”*

Showing physical and verbal affection also helps kids feel safe and loved and reminds them that they’re not alone.

**Step 3:** ***Calming down***

*“When we get angry, instead of looking for solutions, we often spend our time going over and over why we are right and the other person is wrong,”* writes John Cooper. Instead, encourage your child to “take three deep breaths and calm down” and count to three.

Help your child learn how to process emotions. For instance, guide them in using deep breathing to soothe their brain and body, Marter says. This involves breathing in through your nose, down to the stomach and then out through the mouth.

Teach them to release their emotions by talking about them, writing, creating art, exercising and playing, she said. Help them practice mindfulness by bringing attention to the present and away from the issue, she said. You can even have them take a sip of water or take a walk together.

Also, help them avoid creating a monster of negative thoughts by focusing on the positive. *“This promotes gratitude and positive thinking and reduces negative thinking patterns that can contribute to depression, anxiety and relationship problems,”* Marter says.

Coach them to put things into perspective, and see the bigger picture, she says. “Coach them to put things into perspective, and see the bigger picture, she said. *“Coach them to ‘be a duck’ and let issues roll of their backs”.*

Finally, humour is a huge help. *“After you’ve validated your kid’s feelings and they have calmed down, you can use humour to help them learn to laugh it off.”*

**Step 4:** ***Alternative solutions***

*“Children are more likely to accept a solution if they – not you – suggested it,”* says John Cooper*. “Stay quiet for a while and see what they come up with. Then you can make suggestions”.*

Explain to them how assertive communication works. For instance, have them use “I” statements rather than “you” statements. According to Marter, instead of saying *“You left me out,”* they can say *“I am upset because I wasn’t included in the game.”*

Teach them to empathize with other kids. For instance, you might ask, *“How do you think that made Mary feel?”* Marter says. Encourage them to take responsibility for their actions. *“Expect them to own up to any of their own negative behaviors and coach them on how to apologize through role-play,”* she says.

Role-play other situations, too, and remind your child that they can only control their own actions and responses – not anyone else’s

**Step 5:** ***The best solution***

Don’t pass judgement, adds John Cooper, but try to get your child to *“think ahead...and judge which solution will bring about the best results for everybody.*

1. **TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS “WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL YOUR CHILD IS BEING EXCLUDED ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND”**

When your child says she’s being excluded by peers at school, it’s important to understand the difference between friends and a clique, says Jennifer Ryan, a psychologist with a special interest in bullying.

A group of friends hang out together, have common interests, like each other’s company, and there’s no power issue going on, explains Ryan. Whereas in a clique, there’s a power or dominance issue occurring.

*“Somebody’s trying to assert themselves as queen bee, someone’s calling the shots – usually one person, sometimes two – about who you can’t play with, who you can’t let in”.*

Many children, especially aged 10 to 12, strive to be part of a group for ranking purposes, says Ryan. *“At this stage, there’s a shift away from what parents think. It becomes more about what peers think, about how they’re ranked.”*

Parents needs to establish with the child what a friend is – how a friend makes you feel, how to behave towards a friend, how they don’t make you do things you’re uncomfortable with.

*“The child then knows someone who’s excluding them isn’t a friend – so we’re not going to work on that relationship. Instead we’re going to move towards somebody who makes us feel good.”*

Connect your child with those who have similar interests – through play dates and after school time activities. *“This is where healthy friendships can form”,* says Ryan.

1. **“HELICOPTER PARENTING”**

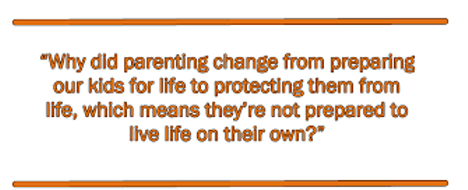
*Taken from www.psych4schools.com.au*

Parents who are overprotective are sometimes referred to as **‘helicopter parents’** as they relentlessly hover over their children, trying to micro-manage their affairs.

The term "helicopter parent" was first used in Dr. Haim Ginott's 1969 book *Parents & Teenagers* by teens who said their parents would hover over them like a helicopter; the term became popular enough to become a dictionary entry in 2011.



**Parents who are overprotective want their children to have a ‘good start in life’ and every opportunity to succeed. They want to protect their children from life’s harsh realities and ensure their children’s happiness. While appearing on the surface to be reasonable aims, constant striving to achieve these types of goals can contribute to increased levels of anxiety for children and their parents.**

In order to become well adjusted, children need to experience the full range of emotions. Parents who want their children to always be happy are doing their children a disservice. Children need the freedom to make mistakes and experience boredom, sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment and hurt. Children need opportunities to learn to cope with life’s minor challenges. Children who ‘have a go’ at sorting out most of their own issues develop a strong internal locus of control, that is they believe they are able to cope with stress and solve their own problems.

The ‘helicopter’ parent however, rushes in to help, rather than allowing their child to have a go at managing a challenging situation themselves. This can lead to children who are unable to cope with even minor issues, as they are never given the opportunity to fail and then learn from their mistakes.

**Why are some parents over protective?**

Societal changes over recent decades, such as smaller sized families, older and more affluent parents and two-income families are linked with many parents making huge ‘emotional investments’ in their children and having greater and for some, unrealistic expectations of them. Parents also tend to become overprotective when they are going through a difficult time themselves.

In addition, parental fear for their children’s safety has increased despite the fact that fatal injury and death rates for Irish children have reduced dramatically each decade since the 1900s. The increase in fear is linked to the increase in our repeated exposure to stories of violence and disasters through 24-hour news channels and the Internet. Seeing and hearing the same stories time after time, increases our perception that it is a very dangerous world. Advertisers and marketers also continue to ‘frighten’ parents with the need to buy products and devices to keep children ‘safe’.

**The impact of over protective parenting on children**:

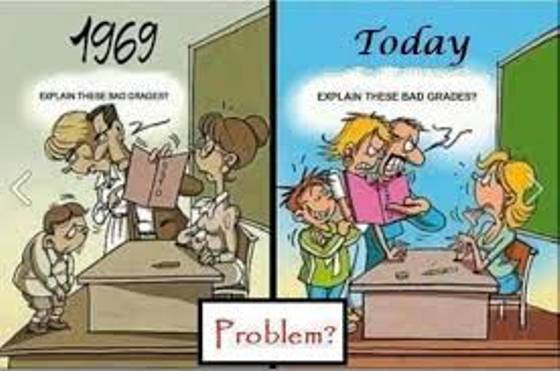
**(1)** Poorly developed problem solving skills. Parents who are constantly intervening to sort out their children’s issues are not allowing their children to take safe risks and learn from their mistakes. As a result these children may not believe they can solve problems independently, reinforcing their inability to face their own issues without help.

**(2)** Learn avoidance as a way of coping. Parental micromanaging means that children do not get to practice solving their own problems, as a result these children are at risk of never learning to cope effectively with minor or major life challenges without parental support. This has serious implications for children as they learn from their parents that the world is a scary place that they have no control over. Furthermore their reliance on others to solve even minor issues leads to low self-esteem, anxiety and depression and other mental health problems.

**(3)** Have difficulty dealing with friendship issues independently. Children’s opportunities to sort out their own friendship issues are greatly reduced by this parenting style. Primary-aged children, who have their friendship issues constantly ‘managed’ by an overprotective parent, are less likely to cope in adolescence and at risk of developing mental health issues.

**(4)** Less chance to develop important social skills through unstructured play.  These parents are less likely to allow their children opportunities for unstructured play, preferring to involve their children in ‘safer’ organized play activities such as sporting groups, music lessons, and other organized activities. Unstructured play time is important in developing child’s self-esteem, as well as important social skills such as turn taking, sharing, co-operation and coping with frustration. Engaging mainly in structured play activities means that adults are constantly mediating, further reducing the child’s opportunity to independently practice and develop these life skills.

**What does the ‘helicopter’ parent look like?**



Some parents can have unrealistic or irrational beliefs about what the school can do for their child, and expect school staff to assist them in protecting their child against both minor and major challenges. Parents who are overprotective are likely to approach the school each time a minor incident occurs. They may seem pushy and often want an immediate solution to their problem, even when there isn’t an easy answer, or they may offer a solution that is irrational, such as banning running at school due to safety concerns.

**Overprotective ‘helicopter’ parents may display some of the following mannerisms or behaviours:**

* frequently initiate approaches to the school
* manage or oversee most of their children's activities
* believe everything their child tells them without further clarification
* readily blame, find fault with a teacher, other school staff or other children
* display general disappointment in what has been decided or offered following a school meeting or conversation with the teacher
* have a stiff facial expression or body posture
* are tearful
* become defensive or use attacking language
* want an answer to what they perceive as ‘the issue’
* have a limited attention span
* repeat questions or statements
* use a high-pitched voice or rapid speech
* confront another child or parent on the school grounds
* make demands or threats to the teacher or the school
* engage other parents by developing their own issues-based parent ‘support’ group through oral communication, email, notes or handouts to parents.

It may be difficult to convince some overprotective parents that their child’s problems do not always need to be addressed or solved by an adult. At times, it may be necessary to point out to some parents that minor childhood disagreements are simply that and ‘tagging’ these disagreements as something major, such as bullying or an assault requiring Gardaí follow-up, is inappropriate.



**Caution regarding a genuine concern by a parent**

All valid parent concerns should be addressed. Such concerns include, but are not limited to, their child’s medical condition, safety, other wellbeing issues, learning difficulties, disorders, family stress or major loss, or parental diagnosis of anxiety or a medical condition.

It is reasonable for parents to expect that perceived learning difficulties and social competency issues such as bullying and other genuine concerns with the child’s safety are followed up and investigated by the school. Schools that have clear discipline and student management, welfare, or special education provision and parenting resources in place are usually well placed to assist.

**Conclusion of this Section**

**Be a good role model.**

“Modelling…healthy emotional expression, coping skills and conflict resolution is the best way to help your kids develop these life tools,” Marter says. In other words, “Monkey see, monkey do,” she says or as the saying goes “Trot mother…trot foal”

“There is a healthy balance between being a neglectful or absent parent and being an intrusive, helicopter parent. We need to give our children roots — education, values, support — and wings — let them grow to become their own people,” Marter says.





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| **Healthy Eating and Exercise in Children – Part 1**   |  | | --- | | **Healthy Eating** |   School age is the perfect time for children to learn about healthy food, bodies and activity, as they start a busy social life, have pocket money and begin to help choose their own lifestyle. Children of this age learn quickly and are also influenced by their friends and popular trends. Children need a wide variety of foods for a well-balanced diet. The amount of physical activity they have in a day will be an important part of how much they need to eat. Some children of this age are still fussy, but, when busy and active, snacking is important to keep energy levels high. A healthy morning snack at break time and one after school are usually needed each day. |  | |  | | --- | |  | |  | |  | |

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Breakfast is important** It is important to encourage breakfast. A good night's sleep followed by food in the morning helps your child to stay active and concentrate at school. It also means your child is less likely to be too hungry during the morning. Be a role model and let your child see you eat breakfast too. A bowl of cereal with milk and fresh or stewed fruit is a great starter for the whole family. | **http://www.fooddudes.ie/images/Musli.jpg** |   **School lunches** While some schools have a canteen, without some help the food your child chooses may be high in cost and energy but low in nutrients. An alternative is a packed lunch from home, which is a great way for your child to learn about healthy food and help with preparation. Lunch box suggestions include:   * Sandwiches or pitta bread with cheese, lean meat, hummus or peanut butter and salad * Cheese slices, crackers with spread and fresh fruit * Washed and cut up raw vegetables or fresh fruits * Frozen water bottle or tetra pack of milk, particularly in hot weather.  |  |  | | --- | --- | | **School lunches - foods to limit** |  |   Highly processed, sugary, fatty and salty foods should only make up a very small part of your child's diet. Foods to limit in everyday school lunches include:   * Processed meats such as salami, pressed chicken and strasbourg * Chips, sweet biscuits, and muesli bars and breakfast bars * Fruit bars and fruit straps * Cordials, sweetened juices and soft drinks   **Treats and peer pressure** Peer pressure to eat particular 'trendy' foods at this age is strong. Let your child eat these kinds of foods occasionally, such as at parties, special events or when the rest of the family enjoys them. It's best to limit the amount of money children are given to spend at school or on the way home. The occasional lolly, bag of chips or takeaway food doesn't do any harm. However, if they are eaten too often you might find that:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | http://www.fooddudes.ie/images/child.jpg | * Not enough nourishing foods are eaten. * Your child is becoming overweight or obese. * You're spending a lot of money - it's much cheaper to provide homemade snacks and lunches. * You're missing a chance to teach your child about healthy eating. |   **Family mealtimes** For schoolchildren, family mealtimes are a chance to share and talk about the day's activities and events. The evening meal together is an important time to do this.  Children of this age may have swings in appetite depending on activity levels, so allow them to choose how much they need to eat while offering a wide variety of healthy foods. Some children only eat small amounts at the evening meal, so make sure that the afternoon snack is nutritious, not just high in energy. Some suggestions of possible snacks include: a sandwich with a glass of milk, cereal and fruit, or a bowl of soup and toast.  Family mealtime suggestions include:   * Allowing talk and sharing of daytime activities. * Avoiding distractions such as the television, radio or the telephone. * Letting your child decide when they are full - don't argue about food. * Allowing children to help with preparing meals and shopping. * Teaching some simple nutrition such as 'milk keeps your bones strong'.   **Drinks** Children should be encouraged to drink plain water. Sweet drinks such as cordials or sweetened fruit juice are not needed for a healthy diet and aren't recommended.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Exercise and activity** |  |   Physical activity is an important part of good health. Try to encourage your child to do something active each day, such as a hobby, play a game or be involved in sport. Some parents may also worry about their child's weight, so, to increase activity, try to:   * Limit the amount of time spent watching television for the whole family. * Do something physical and active together. * Go and watch your child play sports. * Encourage daily activity, not just exercise. * Use the car less - that means everyone!   **Healthy tips for school aged children** Children need a variety of different foods each day.   * Snacks are an important part of a healthy diet for active children. * Make snacks nutritious, not just high in energy. * Plan to share meals as a family. * Enjoy talking and sharing the day's happenings at mealtimes. * Let children tell you when they're full. * Take lunch from home. * Let children help with food preparation and meal planning. * Encourage physical activities for the whole family. * Encourage children to drink plain water.   **Fruit and vegetables** Colourful and crunchy fruit and vegetables can be an enjoyable part of your child's life. Most babies eat fruit and vegetables as one of their first solid foods. After the first year, you may notice your children become fussier as they become more independent eaters. Often this fussiness may include an unwillingness to eat fruit and vegetables.  If children start to eat less fruit and vegetables from time to time, this may worry parents, but usually it causes no harm. It is not possible to force children to eat more fruit and vegetables. The best way is to set a good example for them. If you eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, your children may eventually follow your lead. It may take time, but this is how children learn best. So keep trying.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption** |  | | Fruit and vegetables :   * Are an important group of foods for health. They can help prevent certain diseases such as heart disease and certain cancers. * Contain fibre as well as a whole myriad of beneficial vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, the B vitamins, potassium and magnesium. * Dark green vegetables like spinach and broccoli contain folate and vitamin E, while orange and red vegetables provide carotenes, a form of vitamin A. * Also provide a wide variety of other substances called phytochemicals, flavonoids and phytonutrients which are thought to be protective. * Fruit is fairly low in calories and contains no fat, and is a great choice for a snack between meals. * To get all the goodness you can from fruit and vegetables choose a wide variety of colours and aim for 2 servings of fruit and 3 servings of vegetables every day. |  | |

**Healthy Eating and Exercise in Children – Part 2**

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| |  | | --- | | **Lunchbox Ideas, Tips and Suggestions** |   Raw fruit and vegetables are a great to include in lunchboxes, make them easy to eat by cutting them into small pieces, shapes, peeling off the skin etc. and don’t forget to use the food dudes fruit and vegetable containers which are given to children for this purpose!  Children love to dip! Prepare vegetables for example carrots, grapes, cucumber, strawberries, and a healthy dip such as low fat yogurt or sour cream. Use the food dudes containers for the vegetables or a small sealable container for the dip. |  |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Try preparing a healthy trial mix for example, mix nuts, crunchy whole grain cereals, dried fruit such as raisins, apricots and prunes. Mix in a small sealable container; this can also be used as a snack at home for children to nibble on between meals. Encourage children to eat fruit and vegetables as snacks at home as well as at school. Snacks can be healthy and do not have to be ‘junk food’.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | smoothie | Pre-packed fruit bowls (unsweetened) are not nutritionally inferior as they are packed in their own juices which retain most nutrients and fibre. Children may like these as they are easy to peel, colourful and the fruit is bite sized. You may also try to make your own homemade fruit bowl in a small plastic sealable container with the child’s favourite fruits as a treat. This idea may also be used to introduce new fruits. |   Additionally fruits from a can (unsweetened) are good to use if the fruits for example are out of season such as pineapples, peaches, pears, apricot, mango and berries, fruits from a can may be just as nutritious as their fresh counterparts. They may be eaten individually or mixed into a fruit salad. Keep the can in cool storage until ready to use, drain the canned fruit well so that the juice wont leak over other food and place in a small sealable container with a spoon.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Sandwiches don’t have to be boring! They should always have vegetables included such as grated carrot, cucumber, tomato, lettuce, finely chopped red, yellow and green peppers, onions. Choose interesting breads for sandwiches and rolls e.g. pita bread, whole meal bread, bagels, whole grain crackers and rice cakes. | smoothie |   For the winter months homemade soups could be a great idea in a flask for those cold wet days! Soups packed with vegetables are a healthy option to boost the immune system while also proving a source of heat.   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | smoothieIntroduce a new fruit or vegetable each week, one at a time and in small measurable amounts and don’t forget that if they don’t like it the first time,  keep presenting it to them as it takes an average of four tastings of a new food in order for a child to develop a liking for it. |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | Fruit smoothies are a good way to provide a variety of fruit for example mix strawberries, mango, small banana and an orange that’s squeezed. Simply put into a blender and mix together to the required solution.  Fresh fruit as well as frozen fruit may be used depending on seasonality. |  |   smoothieSalads are a good way to provide a variety of vegetables, ask your child for his/her favourites and then add something new for variety. Try vegetables for example carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, lettuce and button mushrooms. Pack salads in a separate container and keep them cold until ready to go to school in order to keep vegetables crisp and tasty at lunchtime.  **Fruit juice 'drinks':** pure fruit juice contains 100 per cent fruit juice as you would expect. However a 'fruit juice drink' can contain as little as 6 per cent juice. Many so-called 'juice drinks' are really only juice-flavoured sugary water and contain more water and sugar than actual fruit juice. They many also include artificial flavourings, sweeteners and colourings. Therefore if you are going to give your child a fruit juice drink, ensure that it contains 100% fruit juice. This may be counted as a portion of fruit.  Set an example by including fruit and vegetables in your own meals, children love to imitate and you as parents act as role models, fruit and vegetable consumption should be encouraged at home as well as at school.   |  | | --- | | **Tips for some individual fruits & vegetables -*different ways to provide variety!*** |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | apple | carrot | banana |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | ***Apples:*** these can be presented whole or cored, cut into quarters, slices or rings, on their own or in a fruit salad. (Lemon juice stops browning). | ***Grapes:***  a perfect fruit for lunch boxes (when in season) pack a bunch into a container or mix into a fruit salad, provide colour and mix red and green. | ***Bananas:*** pack unpeeled, choose bananas that are just ripe, not too soft or green. Look in your supermarket for small lunch box size bananas and also apples. | | ***Celery:*** cut into slices, sticks and dip into e.g. yogurt or mix into a salad. | ***Cucumber:***  great for sandwiches and salads. Slice into ribbons (may be more palatable) or cut into slices and add to sandwiches or slice and add to a vegetable salad. | ***Carrot:***  cut into sticks or slice on the angle for salads. Grate carrots, or use a vegetable peeler to make ribbons for sandwiches, pita pockets or rolls. Slice into batons and mix with cucumber sticks for a crunchy finger salad. | | http://www.fooddudes.ie/images/clear.gif | | ***Fruit and vegetables don’t have to be boring and bland, present them in different ways and provide a variety so that your child can discover not only the health benefits of including them within the diet but the fun that can be had in preparing them with your child, get them involved in the process!*** |  | | |  | | --- | | **Lunch of the month!** |  |  |  | | --- | --- | | smoothie | * Wholemeal bread sandwich filled with ham and cheese, tomato, lettuce and cut into triangles * Fruit yogurt * Small packet of raisins * Milk or fruit juice | |  | | |

**Children and the importance of Exercise**

When most adults think about exercise, they imagine working out in the gym, running on a treadmill, or lifting weights.

But for kids, exercise means playing and being physically active. Kids exercise when they have gym class at school, during recess, at dance class or soccer practice, while riding bikes, or when playing tag.

****

**The Many Benefits of Exercise**

Everyone can benefit from regular exercise. Kids who are active will:

* have stronger [muscles and bones](http://m.kidshealth.org/en/parents/bones-muscles-joints.html)
* have a leaner body because exercise helps control body fat
* be less likely to become [overweight](http://m.kidshealth.org/en/parents/overweight-obesity.html)
* decrease the risk of developing [type 2 diabetes](http://m.kidshealth.org/en/parents/type2.html)
* lower [blood pressure](http://m.kidshealth.org/en/parents/hypertension.html) and blood cholesterol levels
* have a better outlook on life
* Besides enjoying the health benefits of regular exercise, kids who are physically fit sleep better.
* They're also better able to handle physical and emotional challenges — from running to catch a bus to studying for a test.

**The Three Elements of Fitness**

If you've ever watched kids on a playground, you've seen the three elements of fitness in action when they:

* run away from the kid who's "it" (**endurance**)
* cross the monkey bars (**strength**)
* bend down to tie their shoes (**flexibility**)
* Parents should encourage their kids to do a variety of activities so that they can work on all three elements.

**Endurance** develops when kids regularly get aerobic activity. During aerobic exercise, the heart beats faster and a person breathes harder. When done regularly and for extended periods of time, aerobic activity strengthens the heart and improves the body's ability to deliver oxygen to all its cells.

Aerobic exercise can be fun for both adults and kids. Examples of aerobic activities include:

*basketball*

*bicycling*

*ice skating*

*inline skating*

*soccer*

*swimming*

*tennis*

*walking*

*jogging*

*running*

Improving **strength** doesn't have to mean [lifting weights](http://m.kidshealth.org/en/parents/strength-training.html). Although some kids benefit from weightlifting, it should be done under the supervision of an experienced adult. Most kids don't need a weight-training program to be strong. Push-ups, stomach crunches, pull-ups, and other exercises help tone and strengthen muscles. Kids also use strength activities during play when they climb, do a handstand, or wrestle.

Stretching exercises help improve **flexibility**, allowing muscles and joints to bend and move easily through their full range of motion. Kids get chances every day to stretch when reach for a toy just out of reach, practice a split, or do a cartwheel.

**The Sedentary Problem**

Being overweight or obese in childhood has become a serious problem. Many things add to this epidemic, but a big part of it is that kids are becoming more sedentary. In other words, they're sitting around a lot more than they used to.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 8- to 18-year-olds watch about 4½ hours of [television](http://m.kidshealth.org/en/parents/tv-affects-child.html) a day over 7½ hours on all screen media combined (TV, videos, and DVDs, computer and video games). Too much screen time and not enough physical activity add to the problem of childhood obesity.



One of the best ways to get kids to be more active is to limit the amount of time spent in sedentary activities, especially watching TV, playing video games and using social media. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends parents:

* discourage screen time in kids under age 2
* limit screen time in kids older than 2 to less than 1-2 hours a day of entertainment programming

**How Much Exercise Is Enough?**

Parents should make sure that their kids get enough exercise. So, how much is enough? Kids and teens should get 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) offers these activity guidelines for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Minimum Daily Activity** | **Comments** |
| Infant | No specific requirements | Physical activity should encourage motor development |
| Toddler | 1½ hours | 30 minutes planned physical activity **AND** 60 minutes unstructured physical activity (free play) |
| Preschooler | 2 hours | 60 minutes planned physical activity **AND** 60 minutes unstructured physical activity (free play) |
| School age | 1 hour or more | Break up into bouts of 15 minutes or more |

Infants and young children should not be inactive for prolonged periods of time — no more than 1 hour unless they're sleeping. And school-age children should not be inactive for periods longer than 2 hours.



**Raising Fit Kids**

Combining regular physical activity with a healthy diet is the key to a healthy lifestyle.

Here are some tips for raising fit kids:

* Help your kids participate in a variety of age-appropriate activities.
* Establish a regular schedule for physical activity.
* Incorporate activity into daily routines, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
* Embrace a healthier lifestyle yourself, so you'll be a positive role model for your family.
* Keep it fun, so you can count on your kids to come back for more.

**Cyber Bullying**

**Not to be read first without first consulting the schools full Anti-Bullying Policy available on the school website**

**ATTENTION!**

**Parents and Pupils are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat.**



**This is for a reason!!**

**To Break the Law Is Only Asking For Trouble!!!**

**How You as a Parent/Guardian Can Support Your Child – playing your part!**

**(A) Support Re Cyber Bullying**

**(B) Support Re Other Types of Bullying**

**(C) What If Your Child Is Bullying?**

**(A) Support Re Cyber Bullying:**

We endorse the advice given from the **Irish *'Sticks and Stones'*Anti-Bullying Programme**.

A representative, Patricia Kennedy, wrote the following words in the Irish Daily Mail on October 31, 2012:

"**Cyberbullying is NOT 24/7; it's only 24/7 if a child is allowed access to their phone or the internet.**Don't let your own ignorance get in the way of common sense. A simple rule is 'no phones after bedtime.' Have a drawer in the kitchen that all phones are left in.

... Try turning off the wifi when you are going to bed to make sure there are no 3am online arguments. The anti-bullying initiative I represent, Sticks and Stones, work with children from all backgrounds, from designated disadvantaged schools to fee-paying schools, and **we are constantly surprised at the level of innocence that most children have in relation to the 'friends' they make online.**

They don't think there are any dangers involved in chatting with strangers online, and they don't think there are any repercussions involved for them regarding what they post.

... In our anti-bullying workshops, children tell us one of the reasons they don't 'tell' about bullying is that parents 'overreact'. Don't be that parent.

**If your child tells you that they are being bullied** — don't lose your temper; above all don't threaten to take their phone or internet access away — you're just guaranteeing they'll never tell you anything again.

Remain calm and ask questions — who, what, why, where, when. Get the facts, write it down, keep the text/phone messages or take a screen shot from the computer so you are informed when you approach the internet or phone provider, or Gardaí.

Talk to your children; let them know they can talk to you; keep the channels of communication open.

We endorse the advice given by the **USA’s Federal Department of Health**:

“**Be Aware of What Your Kids are doing online**

Talk with your kids about cyber-bullying and other online issues regularly.

Know the sites your kids visit and their online activities. Ask where they’re going, what they’re doing, and who they’re doing it with.

Tell your kids that as a responsible parent you may review their online communications if you think there is reason for concern. Installing parental control filtering software or monitoring programs are one option for monitoring your child’s online behaviour, but do not rely solely on these tools.

Have a sense of what they do online and in texts. Learn about the sites they like. Try out the devices they use.

Ask for their passwords, but tell them you’ll only use them in case of emergency.

Ask to “friend” or “follow” your kids on social media sites or ask another trusted adult to do so.

Encourage your kids to tell you immediately if they, or someone they know, is being cyber-bullied. Explain that you will not take away their computers or mobile phones if they confide in you about a problem they are having.

**Establish Rules about Technology Use**

Establish rules about appropriate use of computers, mobile phones, and other technology. For example, be clear about what sites they can visit and what they are permitted to do when they’re online. Show them how to be safe online.

Help them be smart about what they post or say. Tell them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others. Once something is posted, it is out of their control whether someone else will forward it.

Encourage kids to think about who they want to see the information and pictures they post online. Should complete strangers see it? Real friends only? Friends of friends? Think about how people who aren’t friends could use it.

Tell kids to keep their passwords safe and not share them with friends. Sharing passwords can compromise their control over their online identities and activities.”

**(B) Support Re Other Types of Bullying**

Teaching a child to say “NO” in a good assertive tone of voice will help deal with many situations. A child’s self image and body language may send out messages to potential bullies.

Parents should approach their child’s teacher by appointment if the bullying is school related. It is important for you to understand that bullying in school can be difficult for teachers to detect because of the large numbers of children involved. Teachers will appreciate bullying being brought to light. School bullying requires that parents and teachers work together for a resolution.

Sometimes parental advice to a child is to “hit back” at the bully if the abuse is physical. This is not always realistic as it requires a huge amount of courage and indeed sometimes makes the situation worse.

Children should not be encouraged to engage in violent behaviour. Teaching children to be more assertive and to tell is far more positive and effective.

It is important to be realistic; it will not be possible for a single child to assert his/her rights if attacked by a group. Children should be advised to get away and tell in situations such as this.

Keep an account of incidents to help you assess how serious the problem is. Many children with a little help overcome this problem very quickly.

**(C) What If Your Child Is Bullying?**

1. Don’t panic. This may be a temporary response to something else in the child’s life e.g. a new baby, a death in the family, a difficult home problem etc. Give your child an opportunity to talk about anything that could be upsetting him/her.
2. Don’t punish bullying by being a bully yourself. Hitting and verbal attack will make the situation worse. Talk to your child and try to find out if there is a problem. Explain how the victim felt. Try to get the child to understand the victim’s point of view. This would need to be done over time.
3. Bullies often suffer low self esteem. Use every opportunity you can to praise good, considerate, helpful behaviour. Don’t only look for negatives.
4. Talk to your child’s teacher and find out more about your child’s school behaviour. Enlist the teacher’s help in dealing with this. It is important that you both take the same approach.
5. If the situation is serious you may need to ask the school or G.P. to refer your child to a child guidance clinic for help.

**Health and Safety Notices (Subject to change in light of infectious disease)**

**Please note the following important points:**

**Our Insurance Company has requested that the following information be passed to parents:**

*The school will be opened to receive pupils at the hour of* ***9.10am. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time****. Classes will commence each day at 9.20am.* ***No pupils should arrive later than 9.20am****. Parents who wish to have their children escorted home after school should make their own arrangements to have them met at the school gate and the person escorting them should be at the school gate no later than 2pm for infants, 3pm for all other classes as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after that time.*

Parents are responsible for the supervision of their children until they are handed over to the care of the school between 9.10am – 9.20am.

Access to the school yard at 9.10am on a dry morning and access to the school building at 9.10am on a wet morning is to facilitate parents who physically cannot be there to supervise their children due to other commitments (e.g. work or dropping older siblings to secondary school etc.) or their children may get the school bus.

*Based on a Court Case Law in the year 2000 it was found to be reasonably expected that children will be on school premises for up to 10 minutes before school, therefore the School’s Board of Management has responsibility for those children who have been handed over to the schools care. In the eyes of the law when a parent hands their child over to the school from 9.10am, the school assumes what is called ‘in loco parentis’ i.e. the role of parent.*

However all primary teachers in Ireland (including Principals) are not required by their contract to provide supervision outside of their official working day (which in the case of Scoil Bhríde is 9.20am – 3pm). However although not obliged to, the principal and staff in Scoil Bhríde have very kindly agreed to supervise from 9.10am to 9.20am. We are very grateful for their generosity.

**Wet Morning Time Routines and Supervision**

* **On a wet morning** children must enter the school premises through the **Green Yard Gate** **between 9.10am and 9.20am** as they normally do on a dry day and proceed to their class through the normal door they use on a dry day.
* On wet mornings please time your arrival between 9.10am and 9.20am as our insurance company and legal group have advised that no pupils should be given access to the school building prior to 9.10am as no supervision is provided; **therefore the doors of the school building will remain locked till 9.10am.**
* If you are dropping your child to the school yourself please ***give a hug, say goodbye and leave!*** If parents stay around they are giving their child, especially smaller children, great temptation to run out of the yard to be with them rather than mixing with their friends. It is also unfair to supervising staff trying their best to supervise over 200 children. Believe us, all children will settle more quickly, mix and play with friends!!
* If you drop your child to the school and stay around (you may feel the yard is too busy for your child) you are free to keep your child with you outside the green gate till the bell goes. When the bell goes your child then just has to walk in to the yard and line up.
* Lastly if you stay around please be mindful of pathways and car drop off zones. In terms of health and safety these must be kept clear. So again our advice would be, when dropping your child to the school, give a hug, say goodbye and leave! Believe us when we say, all children will settle more quickly, mix and play with friends!!
* The above routines are being put in place with your child’s Health and Safety in mind and we look forward to your full co-operation.
* The school day commences at 9.20am for all pupils. It finishes at 3.00pm for senior pupils and at 2.00pm for junior and senior infants
* Parents of infants are welcome to accompany their children into the children’s play yard for the first two weeks of school to allow them settle in. **From the third week** however we ask all parents/guardians to allow their child enter through the fence gate unaccompanied at the morning drop of time. As principal I will be there seeking that this request is carried out. This will allow us to monitor with ease any unwanted and unsupervised adult access to your child. If you wish to remain outside the new yard gate with your child till the bell goes that is fine too. Thanks for your co-operation.
* *When there is no adverse weather in the morning (e.g. rain), as far as is reasonably possible the Principal and another teacher supervise the playground for the ten minutes preceding admission time each day. If the blue playground is frozen over the infant classes are supervised by a teacher inside of the school building for the ten minutes preceding admission time each day. This is done without prejudice, as the school does not officially take responsibility for children before admission time at 9.20a.m.*
* *When there is adverse weather in the morning (e.g. rain), as far as is reasonably possible the Principal and all teaching staff present supervise the inside of the school building for the ten minutes preceding admission time each day. This is done without prejudice, as the school does not officially take responsibility for children before admission time at 9.20a.m.*
* *Whether there is adverse weather or no adverse weather, no pupil is allowed access to the school building prior to 9.10am as there is no supervision before this time.*
* At dismissal time in the evening the Principal supervises the outside of the school to see children safely off the premises. No supervision is provided outside the school gate.
* **“Classes will end each day at 2pm for infant classes and 3pm for 1st to 6th class. Parents who wish to have their children escorted home should make their own arrangements to have them met at the school gate and the person to escort them should be at the school not later than 2pm in the case of infants and 3pm in the case of 1st to 6th class, as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after that time.”**
* Once a pupil enters the school building, the teachers are in loco parentis and thus primarily responsible for the child’s health, safety and welfare. Parents and guardians, however, must take specific responsibility for their other children (non-pupils e.g. toddlers etc.), especially young children, accompanying them in the school and its environs. For this reason non-pupils are not allowed in the school yard from 9.10am as it is not the responsibility of school staff or pupils (even if siblings) to supervise them. In the interests of health and safety, child protection and school insurance, responsibility for other children (non-pupils e.g. toddlers etc.), especially young children must occur outside the school building and school yard from the third week.
* Children crossing the road in the morning should only do so with the School Warden. **For everyone’s safety, please co-operate with the School Warden** and be especially mindful of where you park. There is a set down area only **(note set down = ‘drop and go!’)** within the school grounds, which you are welcome to use each morning. Please be mindful of children crossing at the pedestrian crossings either side of the set down area.
* We operate a healthy eating policy within the school and actively encourage healthy eating among our pupils. Lunch breaks are at 11.00am and 12.30pm. In addition to this, we have a ‘fruit break’ each morning at 10.20am. This coincides with the daily roll call and your child may bring a small piece of fruit e.g. a peeled orange, grapes, raw carrot sticks etc. to eat at this time. Friday is a designated ‘treat day’ when your child is permitted to bring a treat in their lunchbox. It is not intended, however, that lunch on Friday consists of only treats.
* **Pedestrians must keep the paths beside car ‘drop of zones’ clear in the morning** to allow room for children and parents to open car doors. Standing in this area can delay traffic trying to drop and go so please keep these path areas clear.
* Please ensure that we have up to date telephone numbers, particularly mobile numbers, as we will continue to use ‘Textaparent’ for short messages. In case of an emergency, please ensure that, in addition to your contact details, we have details of someone to contact if you are unavailable.
* **As we have children in our school with food allergies, (nut allergies in particular) our school is a NUT FREE ZONE. It is vitally important that your child is not sent to school with nuts of any kind or products containing nuts e.g. Nutella and other chocolate spreads, hazelnut chocolate, peanut butter or products where peanuts or nuts of any kind are listed in the ingredients. We also ask you to impress upon your child the importance of not purchasing treats containing nuts en route to school and of not sharing food while in school. This especially applies to Friday treats.**
* Ideally all pupils should come to school organized and prepared with a packed healthy lunch however in exceptional circumstances this may not always be possible. To facilitate lunches being ‘dropped in’ and to cut down on interruptions to teaching and learning time in the classroom a lunch basket is located just beside the office slide window inside the school’s front door. Please use the labels/pen provided to write your child’s name and class on the lunch and then place it in the basket. Children will be sent up to collect their lunches before break times.
* **‘Book rental’ books will only be ordered for and issued to your child when the book rental fee is paid in full.**
* Please remember to read all communication that comes home. Every Wednesday your eldest child in the school will receive the school’s weekly newsletter to bring home. Please visit our school website (www.nurneyns.com) to keep yourself updated on all current school information.
* We are obliged, by law, to inform the National Education Welfare Board of any child who has been absent for 20 days during the school year. Consequently, after each absence, we must have a signed and dated note explaining the absence. Children leaving the school premises during the day must be signed out by an adult. There is a book for this purpose just inside the main door. A detailed attendance report is given to each family at the end of the year.

**Scoil Bhríde Nurney does not have a sick bay facility**

For supervision and insurance reasons, the school cannot facilitate ill children staying in at break times or from 9.10am. Scoil Bhríde does not have the adult capacity to supervise ill children staying in a break times or from 9.10am. Under health and safety guidelines, pupils cannot stay in during break times or from 9.10am unsupervised.

However the school office/principal’s office/library may be used at the discretion of the most senior member of staff to facilitate (for insurance, health and safety and child welfare reasons) pupils staying in at break times or from 9.10am that have a recent medically signed off/approved condition (e.g. broken limbs, stitching, cold urticaria). Any such request must be put in writing to the school’s Board of Management using the letter in **Appendix 2** of our school supervision policy.

**Responsibility of Parents/ Guardians – When children should be kept at home**

***It is the policy of Scoil Bhríde Nurney that children who have short term illnesses, such as colds and influenza, should not be in school.***

**If your child is sick they should remain at home. If a child is well enough to come to school then they will be expected/told to go outside at break times or from 9.10am.**

In the case of your child not having a medically signed off/approved condition and you wish to have your child stay in a break times or from 9.10am your two options are to remove your child from the school for the duration of the breaks and place them under your care or sit with your child in the school on each of the breaks.

**School Attendance - What every parent needs to know**

* What should I do if my child cannot go to school?

*You must tell the school that your child cannot attend and say why. Write a short note to the school to explain why your child was out of school and send it in with your child when they go back to school.*

* What will the school do if my child misses a lot of school?

*The school must tell the statutory Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency if your child has missed 20 days or more in the school year, or if it is concerned that your child is missing too much school.*

* Can I take my child on holidays during term time?

*Taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on. As a result, they may fall behind with school work and lose confidence in their abilities. We strongly advise parents do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time.*

* If someone other than parents/guardians are collecting the child from school it is up to parents/guardians to inform the school with plenty of notice by note or phone call.
* Please label your child’s school jumper, tracksuit top and coat and if you have not already done so. It will save considerable time and money. School ties are available in the office – 3euro per tie.
* A form regarding Pupil’s personal accident Insurance will be sent to you soon. This is a purely optional scheme, which we administer, for anyone wishing to avail of it.
* If you wish to pay for anything during the year, you can do so by paying online, or by cheque (payable to Nurney N.S.) or by cash. If paying by cheque or cash please put your payment in a sealed envelope and write your child’s name, class and what the payment is for on the front.
* Parent/teacher meetings will take place in late November / early December. Appointments will issue 2 – 3 weeks in advance. In the meantime, should you wish to see your child’s teacher, our School Secretary, will be happy to arrange an appointment for you.
* School closures for this school year are outlined on our school website [www.nurneyns.com](http://www.nurneyns.com) and in the parents display board located just beside the school front door. **Please note:** *This year’s school calendar could be subject to change in the event of a closure for an exceptional cause, but that, as a general rule any unforeseen closure would be compensated for later in the school year.*

**Thanks for your close attention to these points. For more information please go to** [**www.nurneyns.com**](http://www.nurneyns.com)

**Scoil Bhríde**

**Code of Behaviour**

A school’s job is the delivery of the National Primary School Curriculum. Teaching children to behave is a parent’s responsibility. Schools are here to teach the curriculum not punish. When conflict or poor behaviour happens it’s a ‘teaching moment’. We as teachers can ‘teach something’ from it, because that is what we do. We are teachers not punishers.

Parents are responsible for their children’s behaviour at school. Parent’s responsibility does not end at the school gate. Teachers need to receive support from parents to assist them in maintaining high standards of teaching and learning in the school. Parents play a key role in ensuring their children are well-behaved at school and that they support the school when action is taken. It is vital that both parents and pupils fully understand their responsibilities. Classroom and playground rules exist to ensure that pupils can learn in a safe and ordered environment.

School rules are important to follow because they enable classes and the playground to run smoothly so that everyone can learn and benefit from what the teacher has to offer. When pupils follow school rules, everyone, from the teachers to the pupils, can achieve their goals in both the classroom and the playground.

If schools didn’t institute rules and pupils didn’t follow them, the classroom and playground environment would be chaotic. They are instituted in the workplace, so pupils should learn to follow rules before they get to adulthood and need to abide by them to make a living.

Rules in the classroom and playground typically pertain to following a teachers directions/instructions and respecting classmates. These types of rules are easily translated into the professional world and respect, and following directions/instructions are valuable skills to learn.

In any community discipline means a willingness to share the environment peacefully. The aim of the code is to create proper environment in which pupils can through developing self-discipline feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. Discipline means each person recognises and acknowledges the rights of others.

Our school’s code of behaviour is based on a behavioural and social contract system using values, rules and consequences as the main components of an effective school/classroom/playground plan for discipline.

The Ethos Statement of the school focuses on the Christian values of respect and care for others and this informs the school’s approval to standards of behaviour and breaches of those standards.

The code of Behaviour for Scoil Bhríde is based on the following principles.

* The child is the chief agent in his/her education
* Teachers and Parents are partners in education.
* Scoil Bhríde is a Catholic school with a Christian ethos.
* Scoil Bhríde is a community and the members of that community will always try to recognise the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accept and respect these differences.
* A conscious effort is made to build up pupil’s self esteem and confidence and to develop all their talents.
* Scoil Bhríde believes in the uniqueness and individual worth of every child.
* All children are equal regardless of gender, ability, creed or social background.
* Every effort will be made to ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a reasonable, fair and consistent manner
* Scoil Bhríde is part of the wider community and welcomes links between the school and the community.

**BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

The Board of Management has a role to play in promoting good standards of behaviour in the school as it has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school. The Board of Management must run the school according to the regulations laid down by the Department of Education in its “Rules for National Schools” and circulars.

**GOOD BEHAVIOUR AND THE DEVELOPING CHILD**

The aims of primary education as laid down by the Department of Education are as follows:

* To enable the child to live a full life as a child.
* To equip him/her to avail him/herself of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and useful life as an adult in society.

These are broad aims, encompassing not only the acquisition of academic skills and knowledge, but also the complex range of social skills, attitudes and beliefs. A pupil’s self confidence and his attitude of social responsibility to others are essential parts of this personality. These traits can be developed best when the child is raised and taught in environments where good behaviour is expected of him/her.

Schools encourage the development of good behaviour for a second set of reasons. A happy and well-disciplined school is desirable as it enables all learning activities to run smoothly without tension and strain on pupils and teachers alike. Children learn by copying the behaviour of individuals in their environment so good behaviour sets an example to younger children, while older children take a more mature and well-behaved manner if they know they are setting this example.

**DEVELOPING GOOD BEHAVIOUR: A PARTNERSHIP**

Promoting good behaviour is the main aim of this code. School management and staff actively foster a school ethos, policies and practices that help to promote positive behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour.

Good behaviour develops best in a community of self-respect and mutual concern. The school itself should be such a community and it must do all it can to foster good behaviour. However, schools are simply a part of a wider community and they cannot develop good behaviour in isolation. The primary responsibility for the development of good behaviour rests with parents in the home, where children spend most of their time.

**PARENTS THE PRIMARY EDUCATORS**

Parents are the first primary educators of their children. They play a crucial part in shaping their children’s personalities and attitudes, and they continue to have a powerful influence over them throughout their school years. Teachers have an important role as partners in this process, but partnership can only become real if parents accept that they have a duty not only to send children to school but also to encourage them to behave well when they get there.

**ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

Parents are required to notify the school following a child’s absence using the form provided, and clearly stating the reason for the absence.  The school will inform the NEWB when absences total 20 days overall.  However the school has the right to notify the NEWB where a pupil is not attending regularly.

**TEACHERS**

Teachers exert a powerful influence on the development of the children in their care both by providing a role model for pupils and by the effective implementation of the school’s behaviour policy within their own classrooms and in communal areas during breaks, lunch times, school tours and outings.

**PUPILS**

Pupils learn at school from the formal lessons taught to them and from the way in which the school is run and the relationships between people in it. Pupils will live up, or down, to teacher and parent’s expectations so if we are to encourage good behaviour children must identify with standards expected and accept these as valuable norms.  Clearly pupils differ as individuals and standards of behaviour expected may vary somewhat depending on age, temperament, ability and background

**STRATEGIES TO AFFIRM AND PROMOTE GOOD BEHAVIOUR**

The day-to-day excellence of school management and classroom teaching will enable most pupils to behave in ways that support their own learning and development.  Teachers and other school staff also need a range of strategies for promoting good behaviour at class and school level.

The school management and teachers acknowledge that pupils are more likely to behave well when:

* they are given responsibility in the school and are involved in the development   of the code of behaviour
* they understand why the code is important and their part in making it work
* they can see that the code works in a fair way
* there are standards that set high expectations for student behaviour
* the standards are clear, consistent and widely understood
* parents support the school by encouraging good learning behaviour
* there are good relationships between teachers, parents and students and a     happy school atmosphere
* adults model the behaviour that is expected from students

Other strategies to encourage and promote good behaviour include:

* positive everyday interactions between teachers and students
* good school and class routines
* clear boundaries and rules for the students
* helping students themselves to recognise and affirm good learning behaviour
* recognising and giving positive feedback about behaviour
* exploring with students how people should treat each other
* involving students in the preparation of the school and classroom rules.

In promoting, good behaviour among the pupils there is an emphasis on rewards, praise and encouragement. The staff endeavours to praise and encourage good work and behaviour both in the classroom and in the playground.  Each individual teacher will devise his/her own system of rewards within the classroom. These may include stickers, golden time, motivation charts, wall of excellence, pupil of the day, notes home, homework passes. Other whole school awards include the ‘Well Done’ Award (given out by the Principal and teachers), Assembly awards and the line-up award.

If at any time, you ever have any concern or query regarding your child’s behaviour at our school, then please contact the Class Teacher in the first instance. The Principal will also be happy to meet with you should the need arise following an appointment made through the secretary. However, all meetings between parents and the principal regarding the Schools Code of behaviour should be in the presence of the deputy principal also when possible.

**RESPONDING TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR**

If unacceptable behaviour occurs then teachers and parents must cooperate to encourage the pupil to understand the consequences of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing that behaviour. Sanctions are used in order to try to achieve this. The purpose of a sanction is to bring about a change in behaviour by:

* helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable
* helping them to recognise the effect of their actions and their behaviour on others
* helping students (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their behaviour and that all choices have consequences
* helping them to learn to take responsibility for their behaviour

A sanction may also:

* reinforce the boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
* signal to other students and to staff that their wellbeing is being protected

In instances of more serious breaches of school standards, sanctions may be needed to:

* prevent serious disruption of teaching and learning
* keep the student, or other students or adults, safe

Scoil Bhríde endorses the approach of **Restorative Practice (Justice)** (for more information please refer to the schools *“Restorative Approaches Information Leaflet for Parents and Pupils”* and the school’s *“Restorative Justice Policy”*) which international and Irish research finds to be a far more effective learning social skills model for building and re-building relationships in school amongst children.

Restorative Practice is part of everything we do at Scoil Bhríde Nurney. It is a philosophy that guides the way we act in all our dealings. The aim of Restorative Practice is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. It is about a fair process, allowing everyone the opportunity to freely express their emotions. It is about always encouraging wrongdoers to take responsibility for harming others.

It can be used anywhere and adapted for use at home.

*‘Working with each other to resolve conflicts.’*

You can use restorative questions to talk through any problems or arguments that occur. It is important for the adult to stay calm and influence the mood of everyone present. Questions should be asked to everyone involved so that a discussion is developed and the questions will encourage everyone to think about their feelings, the feelings of others and ways to move forward.

*Sharing Feelings*

It is a good idea to check in with each other every day. This is as simple as sitting down together and everyone having the opportunity to express how they feel and talk about their day. You could ask questions like...

*How are you feeling?*

*What was the best part of your day?*

*What made you happy today?*

Remember...everyone should be involved if possible and everyone should have the chance to express how they feel or give comments.

* Restorative Justice is ……… a philosophy that views harm and crime as violations of people and relationships, i.e. who have you harmed? Aim is to reintegrate
* Traditional discipline way is ……. A violation against the state. Someone is found guilty of a crime and is punished by law. Parallel in schools.....about rules and regulations i.e. what rule have you broken? What is the sanction for breaking that rule?
* Restorative Justice demands that we think about what happens to the victim, and how the victim’s needs might be met in the aftermath of the crime/wrongdoing.
* Punishment alone for the offender offers little in the genuine way of accountability; does little to meet a victim’s needs and does little to address the causes of the wrongdoing.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Punitive | Restorative |
| * Think of self * Minimises harm * Becomes the victim * Blames others * Excluded from the process * Marginalised | * Think of others * Recognises extent of harm caused * Accountable * Accepts responsibility * Included in process * Integrated |

Good relationships need to be at the heart of everything in school if effective teaching and learning are to take place.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Using this approach here are the process questions the school uses:** | |
| **When challenging behaviour:** | **To help those affected:** |
| * What happened? * What were you thinking of at the time? * What have you thought about since? * Who has been affected by what you have done? * In what way have they been affected? * What do you think you need to do to make things right? | * What did you think when you realized what had happened? * What impact has this incident had on you and others? * What has been the hardest thing for you? * What do you think needs to happen to make things right? |

**PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Sanctions may be needed to help a pupil with special needs to learn about appropriate behaviour and skills, as in the case of any pupil. However teachers will take particular care that they help the pupil with special needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable.  The school and classroom practices that support good learning behaviour are valid for all pupils, including those with identified special needs. All pupils are expected to follow the school’s code of behaviour.

Class teachers and specialist personnel (such as the Learning Support Teacher, Resource Teacher & Special Needs Assistant) will check that standards and rules are communicated in a way that pupils with special educational needs can understand.  This understanding will be checked from time to time, especially where a pupil with special needs is acting in a way that would usually be seen as being in breach of the rules. If a pupil with special needs requires withdrawal from the classroom and supervision by a resource teacher, the time given by the resource teacher will be taken from his or her allocated resource hours. Teachers may need support in understanding how best to help a pupil with special educational needs to conform to the behavioural standards and expectations of the school.  For some pupils, visual prompts or pictures may be needed.  Some pupils may need opportunities to practise observing the rules with feedback on their progress.

Initially the teacher will use simple sanctions within the classroom such as:

* verbal reprimand
* removal from the group (in class)
* withdrawal of privileges
* withdrawal from the particular lesson or peer group
* carrying out a useful task in the school
* detention

**COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS**

* Parents of incoming students are provided with a copy of the Code of Behaviour.
* Communicating with parents is central to maintaining a positive approach to dealing with children.
* Code of Behaviour is available on the school website
* Link is provided to anti bullying websites from school website
* A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are being reviewed regularly.
* Parents are encouraged to talk in confidence to the class teacher about any significant developments in a child’s life, in the past or present, which may affect the child’s behaviour or any other concerns that may arise.

The following methods of communication are to be used within the school:

* Informal/formal parent/teacher communication;
* Through children’s homework journal;
* Letters/notes from school to home and from home to school;
* Newsletters/school web-site.

**SCHOOL RULES**

School rules are kept to a minimum and are devised to be positive in nature and with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

1. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. No teasing or name calling or foul language. Follow the golden rules (*(we are gentle, we are kind and helpful, we listen, we are honest, we work hard, we look after property, we tell teacher)*

2. No fighting (kicking, teasing or rough play). Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself

3. Walk slowly and quietly when indoors in all parts of the school.

4. Line up immediately when the bell rings and stand quietly in line.

5. Keep our school clean and tidy

6. Take good care of school property and other people’s property.

7. Always do what the teachers ask you to do (follow teachers’ directions) and always tell the truth. Always tell the teacher when you have a problem.

8. Always wear your school uniform to school

9. No pupils in corridor without permission during break.

10. Stay in school grounds during school hours

11. Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school

## SCHOOL TIME TABLE

School opens to receive pupils 9.10.a.m.

Pupils assemble in line 9.20.a.m.

School closes

Infants 2.00.p.m.

Other Classes 3.00.p.m.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR BEHAVIOUR**

All pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner both towards themselves and others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other pupils and adults at all times. Respect must be shown for the property of the individual and of the school at all times.

Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises and grounds.

If misbehaviour occurs at lunch time or at any other time when another teacher is in charge, the teacher may impose a sanction and inform the class teacher of same.

## BEHAVIOUR IN CLASS

Courtesy and respect for others is the basis for classroom behaviour.

Pupils will respect the right of others to learn in a secure safe atmosphere. A high level of attentiveness and particular is required of all pupils in class.

Pupils will co-operate with instructions given by the teacher.

Pupils will complete assigned homework which may be oral/written, memorisation or other tasks. Written work will be in a neat and presentable form.

Pupils will bring to school each day the books, copies, pens; pencils etc. necessary to do their work properly, Pupils will take proper care of these items.

Pupils will take responsibility for maintaining a tidy desk, classroom shoe boxes etc.

On ‘Wet Days pupils will remain in classrooms. Games etc. will be provided, if possible a DVD/TV. Senior pupils will assist in the Junior classes. During this time pupils will behave in an appropriate manner to ensure their own safety and the safety of others

## BEHAVIOUR IN PLAYGROUND

Pupils should recognise the rights of all children in the playground.

Any behaviour which endangers oneself or others is not permitted.

Any behaviour which interferes with other children is not permitted.

Pupils must remain within the playground boundaries during breaks.

Pupils must stay off the grass in wet weather.

Pupils must play in their own designated area i.e. Junior or Senior Yard.

Pupils must obey the bell immediately

Pupils must line up in an orderly manner, be quiet and wait to be collected by the teacher

Pupils must ask the people on yard duty for permission to enter school to go to the toilet.

**PRAISE**

Praise, which helps to build self-esteem is a key part of our Code of Behaviour. Positive reinforcement leads to a better self-discipline and we place greater emphasis on rewards and incentive than on sanctions. Praise may be given by means of any one of the following.

1. A quiet word or gesture to show approval
2. A comment in a pupils exercise book
3. A word of praise in front of a group or class
4. A visit to another class, teacher or the Principal for commendation
5. A system of merit marks
6. A mention in school newsletter
7. Delegate some special responsibility or privilege.
8. A mention to parent, written or verbal communication
9. Children who undertake special duties will be rewarded.

**UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Three levels of misbehaviour are recognised: **Minor, Serious and Gross**.

All everyday instances of a minor nature are dealt with by the class teacher, or the supervising teacher at break-times. In cases of repeated serious misbehaviour or single instances of gross misbehaviour parents will be involved at an early stage and invited to meet the teacher and/or the principal to discuss their child’s behaviour.

Examples of minor misbehaviour include:

* *Bringing electronic equipment or mobile-phones to school*
* *Not wearing appropriate uniform; bringing in chewing-gum*
* *Not following instructions.*

Examples of serious misbehaviour include:

* *Behaviour that is hurtful (including bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation)*
* *Behaviour that interferes with teaching and learning*
* *Threats or physical hurt to another person*
* *Damage to property*
* *Theft*
* *Bringing dangerous equipment to school*
* *Leaving school/school activities without permission.*

Examples of gross misbehaviour include:

* *Assault on a teacher or pupil*
* *Serious Theft*
* *Serious Damage to property*
* *Serious bullying*
* *Carrying drugs, alcohol, cigarettes*

**SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CHECKLIST**

1. Fighting\*
2. Bad language
3. Defiance of teacher instruction and not following teacher’s directions\*
4. Abuse/vandalism of school property\*
5. Vandalism of staff member’s property\*
6. Vandalism of another student’s property
7. Interference with/Violation of the person (clothing, inappropriate touch, etc.)\*\*
8. Leaving/entering the school grounds in an inappropriate manner
9. Leaving the school/yard without permission
10. Verbal abuse/threats to staff members\*
11. Verbal abuse/threats to another student
12. Smoking\*
13. Possession of dangerous items e.g. knives, blades, aerosols, glue, matches, lighters
14. Persistent classroom disruption\*
15. Homework not done (three times in one week)
16. Stealing
17. Refusal to do sanction work\*
18. Not telling the teacher of a problem and dealing with the problem in an inappropriate way that contravenes the school’s code of behaviour
19. Poor punctuality
20. Not wearing uniform
21. Not pulling down hoodies on yard to aid identification when requested to do so by a teacher
22. Bullying (See Anti-Bullying Policy)
23. Back answering\*
24. Throwing objects
25. Spitting
26. Lying to staff members
27. Mitching
28. Physical threats to staff\*
29. Physical threats to other students\*
30. Intimidation of another pupil\*
31. Misbehaviour or inappropriate conduct in a school toilet\* (e.g. vandalism, standing on toilet seats, throwing water, wet paper and towels, peeping/spying on others)
32. Selling goods on school property without school authorisation
33. Entering school grounds after school hours with malicious intent
34. Nuisance calls to staff or inappropriate comments about staff on social media\*
35. Chewing gum
36. Absent. (no note)
37. Throwing tantrums
38. Extortion
39. Persistent infringement of school rules\*
40. Identity-based comments. (Racist/ethnic, Homophobic, SEN/Disability, Membership of the Traveller Community*)\**
41. Biting\* (depending on age)
42. Physical assault of another student\*
43. Breaches of Mobile Phone Policy\*
44. Not keeping hands, feet and objects to yourself
45. Name calling and teasing
46. Not following the Golden Rules (e.g. *(we are gentle, we are kind and helpful, we listen, we are honest, we work hard, we look after property, we tell the teacher)*
47. See [Appendix 2]

\* THESE INCIDENTS MAY MERIT IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION.

\*\*THESE INCIDENTS MERIT IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION.

Bullying is repeated aggression – physical, verbal or emotional - conducted by an individual or group against another or others.

PHYSICAL: includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, etc.

VERBAL: name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.

EMOTIONAL: threats or persistent hurtful remarks regarding sensitive areas e.g. appearance, dress, progress, colour, culture and disability. Isolating or shunning a child. Threats to extort money or possessions, “Cyber/text” bullying.

The school takes particular care to intervene early in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Issues in relation to Bullying are explored continually during SPHE lessons and using Circle Time, Drama etc.

*Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed with a teacher, all staff members are more than willing to facilitate a meeting, made through the proper channels i.e. a phone call to the office, or a note to the class teacher to arrange a convenient time for both parties. The first person to be informed should be the class teacher.*

This arrangement ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified, meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned, cannot be described as bullying.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline – outlined in our Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour.

*In the case where a parent reports a bullying incident, the school reserves the right to inform the relevant parties of the identity of the person making the complaint, when this is deemed necessary.*

**SANCTIONS**

The purpose of sanctions is to promote positive behaviour and to discourage misbehaviour.

In imposing a sanction, it is the misbehaviour which is unacceptable and not the sanction.

Sanctions are, as far as possible, relevant or related to the misbehaviour, having due regard to age and emotional development of the child. Curriculum subjects such as Art & Craft, P.E, will not be withdrawn form a child, except where his/her behaviour in such a class is a source of danger or disruption to others.

**When misbehaviour occurs the following is a list of possible sanctions strategies used.**

* Detention – for serious/persistent breaches of the yard rules
* Loss of privilege/practical task, whichever is deemed appropriate, decided by a staff member with a view to correcting or redressing an unacceptable deed on the part of the student
* Restricted timetable
* Suspension
* Expulsion
* Breaktime Detention.
* The pupil is made aware of the fact that his/her behaviour is unacceptable
* The child may receive a verbal reprimand from the teacher.
* The teacher may discuss misbehaviour with pupil.
* The seating arrangement in class may be changed.
* Pupils/groups of pupils who misbehave/are prone to misbehaviour/cause disruption may be separated from their peers within the classroom, in another classroom or in the play area.
* A child may be temporarily separated from class group or given a ‘Time Out session’
* A child may be sent to the wall or to a classroom for ‘Time Out’
* A child may be recommended by the Principal to be sent home from school in the case of a serious incident of misbehaviour.
* Incomplete homework will have to be completed
* Badly presented homework will have to be re-done.
* Extra work or repetition of unsatisfactory work
* A pupil may be referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal
* Note/Telephone Call/Letter to parents/guardians
* A note or a comment may be written on a child’s homework to be signed by parents/guardians.
* A pupil may be given a written assignment re his inappropriate behaviour to be signed by parents/guardians.
* If a pupil’s behaviour is a source of danger/ disruption to himself of others he may be removed from the activity in which he is involved

Serious incidents of misbehaviour in general will be investigated by the Class teacher, Deputy Principal (or Principal if deemed appropriate). These staff members have the authority to conduct such investigations prior to contacting parents. However, prior to investigation, if deemed appropriate, staff may decide to flag an issue as ‘under investigation’ to parents either verbally or in written format. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible in written format following such investigations.

After serious or continuous incidents of misbehaviour have been investigated, the details of this investigation shall be presented to the Deputy Principal or Principal who will consider the evidence and determine the appropriate action on the part of the School. This staff member may re-interview the alleged perpetrator(s), witness(es) or victim(s) as they see fit.

For this reason, the Principal in general shall not investigate disciplinary incidents, but remains as the final arbiter, if required, to pass judgement in cases of serious misbehaviour, based on the evidence that is presented to him/her.

This final judgement shall be written into a report type format and sent to all parties concerned.

## DETENTION

If a child has difficulty accepting that the school expects him/her to obey the school rules, the teacher or principal, may in order to reinforce the seriousness of that expectation detain a child during lunch times at a place where the child may be supervised. Before detention begins children may eat lunch, use toilet.

Children may be sent to detention for a set period (11.00 – 11.15, 12.30 – 1.00p.m)

Work given in detention will be signed by parents and returned to the teacher

Serious incidents will be recorded in the Code of Behaviour Incident Report Folder located in the Principal’s office filing cabinet.

* If a child continues to breach the Code of Behaviour and does not respond to admonishment the Principal will seek an appointment with the child’s parents.
* The Principal and parents discuss the child’s behaviour and explore possible reasons for it. The parents will be expected to undertake to support the school in expecting the child to abide by the Code of Behaviour.
* If a parent is unwilling or unable to support the schools expectation of the child and if the child’s behaviour has not improved the principal has the option of informing the parents by letter that he intends recommending to the Chairperson of the Board of Management that the child be suspended from the school for a period not exceeding 3 school days
* It will be open to the Board of Management or the Chairman on its behalf to accept the principal’s recommendation and the parents of the child will be informed by letter of the term and date of the suspension.

In the case of an incident of gross misbehaviour the Board of Management gives authority to the Chairperson or Principal to sanction a suspension to a maximum of 3 days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. The decision to suspend a pupil will be given in written format and posted.

A decision of the Board of Management is necessary to authorise a further period of suspension up to a maximum of 10 school days.

Parents may meet the Board of Management prior to the authorisation of this second period of suspension.

Suspension will be in accordance with the rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000

If your child is suspended/has completed the suspension or expelled as a result of their involvement in an incident(s) at school, the decision regarding the disciplinary action of suspension by the Principal may be appealed to the Board of Management within a reasonable period of time of being informed of the decision, having regard for the educational and safety needs of all parties concerned, to remove the record of suspension.

In accordance with Section 29 of the Education Act (1998), parents/guardians have the right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, within a reasonable period of time from the date that the parent/guardian was informed of the decision and following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school.

In consultation with the Principal and having arranged through the Bishop an alternative place in a primary school, the Board of Management has the option of expelling a pupil for serious breaches of the Code of Behaviour in accordance with rule 130 (6) for National Schools and as amended in Circular 7/88

If parents are unhappy with the way in which a particular incident has been handled the complaints procedure outlined in the school’s Complaints Policy may be used.

**If an issue is brought to the Principal’s attention the following steps may be followed:**

**Step 1.** The misdemeanour will be recorded by the Principal on the ‘Discipline Clipboard’. The parents/guardians of the student may be informed by way of a note in the student’s journal (if deemed serious enough). An appropriate sanction may be imposed at this point (e.g. a verbal reminder of the school rules or time out from the school playground)

**Any student who remains of the ‘Discipline Clipboard’ for a period of four consecutive weeks will return to 0.**

**Step 2.** The misdemeanour will be recorded by the Principal on the ‘DisciplineClipboard’. The parents/guardians of the student may be informed by way of a note in the student’s journal (if deemed serious enough). An appropriate sanction may be imposed at this point (e.g. time out from the school playground)

**Any student who remains of the ‘Discipline Clipboard’ for a period of four consecutive weeks will return to 1.**

**Step 3.** The misdemeanour will be recorded by the Principal on the ‘DisciplineClipboard’. The parents/guardians of the student will be informed by way of a note in the student’s journal. An appropriate sanction may be imposed at this point (e.g. time out from the school playground)

**Any student who remains of the ‘Discipline Clipboard’ for a period of four consecutive weeks will return to 2.**

**Step 4.** The misdemeanour will be recorded by the Principal on the ‘DisciplineClipboard’. The parents/guardians of the student will be informed by way of a posted letter. The sanction imposed at this point will be detention.

**Any student who remains of the ‘Discipline Clipboard’ for a period of four consecutive weeks will return to 3.**

**Step 5.** The misdemeanour will be recorded by the Principal on the ‘DisciplineClipboard’. The parents/guardians of the student will be given, by way of a posted letter, a description of the accumulated behaviour and informed that the sanction imposed at this point will be detention.

**Any student who remains of the ‘Discipline Clipboard’ for a period of four consecutive weeks will return to 4.**

**Step 6.** The misdemeanour will be recorded by the principal on the ‘Discipline Clipboard’. The parents/guardians of the student will be given, by way of a posted letter, a description of the accumulated behaviour and informed that the sanction imposed at this point will be detention. The parents/guardians of the student will also be requested to attend a meeting with the Principal regarding their child’s misbehaviour. This will constitute a ‘final warning’ for the student. The consequences of any further breaches of the school ‘code of behaviour’ will be explained to the student in the presence of his/her parents/guardians.

**Any student who remains out of the discipline folder for a period of**

**four consecutive weeks will return to Step 5.**

**Step 7.** A further incident being recorded by the principal on the ‘Discipline Clipboard,’ results in the parents/guardians of the student meeting with the Principal/Board of Management. **Suspension** will be enforced at this point. A letter to this effect will issue to the parents/guardians of the pupil. In the event that a parent is unable to attend at the school, a letter will be issued to the pupil and a copy will be forwarded by post to the student’s parents/guardians.

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE: SOME INCIDENTS MAY MERIT IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION. PLEASE SEE THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CHECKLIST RFERRED TO EARLIER**

**SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY**

The Board, Staff and Parents Association have determined that the School Uniform is a fundamental part of the school identity and underscores all areas of school life. The policy has been updated in light of COVID-19. The following arrangement offers a range of choice while trying to minimise cost and allow for laundry days for families and ease of use for younger pupils all in an attempt to limit the spread of infectious disease.

The following **School Uniform** will be worn by all **1st class to 6th class pupils** on

**Tuesdays and Thursdays** effective from September 2021:

1. **School Wine Jumper *(with school crest)***: available to purchase from local suppliers
2. **School Tie:** available to purchase from the school
3. **Grey shirt:** Parents can choose where to purchase
4. **Grey trousers / skirt / pinafore:** Parents can choose where to purchase.
5. **Appropriate footwear (e.g. black shoes etc.):** Parents can choose where to purchase.

The following **School Tracksuit** will be worn by all **1st class to 6th class pupils** on

**Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays** effective from September 2021**:**

1. **Plain Navy tracksuit bottom (no stripes or markings):** Parents can choose where to purchase.
2. **Royal blue hoodie *(with gold school crest):***available to purchase from local suppliers
3. **Grey polo shirt:** Parents can choose where to purchase.
4. **Appropriate sports footwear**: (Velcro fastening is best for younger children). Parents can choose where to purchase.

The following **School Tracksuit** will be worn by all **Junior and Senior Infant pupils** on **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays** effective from September 2021:

1. **Plain Navy tracksuit bottom (no stripes or markings):** Parents can choose where to purchase.
2. **Royal blue hoodie *(with gold school crest):***available to purchase from local suppliers
3. **Grey polo shirt:** Parents can choose where to purchase.
4. **Appropriate sports footwear**: (Velcro fastening is best for younger children). Parents can choose where to purchase.

All items of uniform must be labelled in case they get lost or mixed up.

If you have bought School Jumpers for the infant classes and want to get full use out of them by all means please do so. That is not a problem.

All items of uniform must be labelled.

The Reasoning behind the School Uniform:

1. Makes all pupils equal while creating a clear school identity.
2. Represents a visible commitment to the rules and policies of Scoil Bhríde Nurney
3. Establishes a code of dress appropriate to the image the school wishes to present.
4. Reinforces a pride among the pupils in their school, particularly when representing the school on sporting or extra-curricular activities
5. Reduces expense to parents of regularly having to purchase clothes for their children – often at the dictate of fashion.
6. Pupils can clearly be distinguished from people who are not members of our school community thus making the school a safer environment for all (e.g. school-based tours, school and community celebration days etc.)

**PLEASE NOTE: Pupils will sometimes get their school uniform/tracksuit dirty in school whether in class or in the Sports Hall or out on yard or out on the school field. This is part of school life and is unavoidable.**

**Uniform Enforcement Policy and Procedures:**

To properly enforce the Uniform Policy, the school is again dependent on the support of you, the parents and guardians. Pupils are expected to adhere to the full school uniform as defined in the School Code of Behaviour. The School uniform reflects the sense of belonging to the school community and parity of esteem in which each individual is held. It must therefore be neat and correctly worn at all times, including going to, within (in this case with no extras e.g. (over)coats, blazers, jackets, hats, scarves, gloves etc.) and returning from school. It is neither possible nor practical for the school to operate exceptions to this policy, though we acknowledge that there will occasionally be genuine reasons why your child may arrive in school not wearing full uniform. The school may offer replacement school uniform items to pupils presenting out of uniform.

**Enforcement Procedures are as follows:**

* Pupils who have a genuine reason for being out of uniform should bring a letter signed by a parent/guardian to the teacher. This must be done first thing in the morning before 11am.
* At random times during the week a uniform inspection will be carried out by the school. Whole classes and pupils presenting in full and proper school uniform, for the correct day, will be recognised and rewarded.
* Anyone not in full and proper school uniform will be asked for a letter/note explaining why. If there is no letter/note, a verbal reprimand will be given and the pupil’s name, class, issue and date will be logged in a uniform book.
* If the issue presents itself again the pupil will be given a letter about school uniform to bring home [Appendix 1]
* If the issue presents itself again without rectification, the pupil will be given time-out at break time.
* If the issue presents itself a third time without rectification, another letter will be sent to parents and the pupil will be placed on detention.

**Persistent disregard for the school’s uniform policy will be addressed through the school’s Code of Behaviour and the Board of Management will deal with pupils refusing to co-operate with the policy.**

**Jewellery Policy**

As parents and educators, we are all very conscious of the importance of our children’s health, hygiene, safety and happiness. The following policy regarding the wearing of jewellery etc. has been devised to minimise the risk of accident, injury or infection during school activities.

As a general ‘rule of thumb’ items or styles that are either an unnecessary distraction or a potential danger to oneself / another child, should not be worn to school. If you need to discuss any of the above please contact the school principal.

**Items/styles that may be worn:**

* Watches (not on swimming days – to avoid loss or damage)
* Plain stud earrings – one per ear (to be removed by pupil and stored by pupil during sport activities)
* Simple hair ties, clips or bands
* Any item required to highlight a certain medical condition e.g. medic alert bracelets

**Items/styles that may not be worn:**

* Rings of any description
* Necklaces, ‘chokers’
* Pendants, crosses & chains
* Elaborate hair decorations with sharp points
* Hair dye
* Bracelets
* Body piercing
* Earrings – other than plain studs
* Body art / tattoos
* Hair art/engraving
* False nails
* Heelies
* Any item not mentioned above that may be a distraction to learning

\*Exceptions will be made for students engaged in staged performances on behalf of the school where any of the above items are so required for the duration of the staged performance(s).

The successful implementation of this policy is an important step in promoting a safe school environment for all children. All families and pupils are asked to co-operate with its implementation. This policy will be reviewed as required.

**THEFT OF PROPERTY**

Children should not bring toys/property to school.

In the event of property being lost, mislaid or stolen all reasonable effort will be made to locate the missing property

If a child is found to have taken other people’s property they will have to return the property and/or make due recompense as well as whatever other sanctions which may be imposed.

All items of uniform must be labelled.

**MEDICAL**

The teacher with each change of class and the Principal should be informed if your child has any medical complaint e.g. asthma, hay fever or any other problem which may affect him/her in school. Teachers DO NOT administer medication without Board of Management approval.

**HEALTH & HYGEINE**

1. Please refer to [Appendix 2]
2. Pupils should be clean and neat.
3. Attention should be paid especially to cleanliness of hair
4. Pupils are encouraged to bring nutritious healthy lunches.

**ATTENDANCE**

1. School commences at 9.20 a.m. and finishes at 2.00p.m. for Infants 3.00p.m. for all other pupils
2. Pupils will stay with class group on school premises/grounds during school day. Pupils wishing to leave for any reason during the school day must produce written request by parents or guardians
3. When a pupil has been absent a note must be brought to the class teacher upon his/her return as described in our Attendance Policy.
4. If both parents are absent from home or are at work arrangements should be made for someone to look after children in the event of their being sent home unexpectedly – due to some unforeseen circumstances e.g. illness of pupil. Details re alternative address/Telephone number should be supplied and continuously updated
5. Children in infant classes should be collected from the gate at 2.00p.m.
6. For the safety of your child a note should be given to teacher if someone other than the usual person is collecting your child
7. If any child has to leave school early parents are expected to collect the child from the classroom. Children may not be picked up from the gate during school hours.
8. The Board of Management will not be responsible for children before 9.10a.m. or after 3.00p.m. The school management cannot accept responsibility for children arriving before official opening of the school or remaining in the school grounds after school. Except where pupils are engaged in any extra-curricular activity organised by the school and approved by the Board of Management. Pupils involved in such activities are expected to behave in accordance with the school behaviour policy during these times.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Board of Management’s Responsibilities.**

* Provide a comfortable, safe environment
* Support the Principal and staff in implementing the Code.
* Ratify the Code.

**Principal’s Responsibilities**

* Promote a positive climate in the school.
* Ensure that the Code of Behaviour is implemented in a fair and consistent manner.
* Arrange for review of the Code, as required.

**Teacher’s Responsibilities**

Support and implement the school’s Code of Behaviour

* Create a safe working environment for each pupil.
* Recognise and affirm good work.
* Prepare primary curriculum school work and correct primary curriculum work done by pupils. It is not part of a primary teachers job/contract to prepare pupils for post-primary entrance exams. School Policy does not allow any teacher to give grinds on school premises without prior Board of management approval. It is not part of a primary teachers job/contract to prepare extra work (or correct it) for pupils going on holidays. A primary teacher may prepare, if their professional discretion deems it appropriate, two weeks only of work in advance for any pupil due to medical treatments. A primary teacher’s job is to deliver the primary school curriculum as laid down by the department of education and skills.
* Recognise and provide for individual talents and differences among pupils.
* Be courteous, consistent and fair.
* Keep opportunities for disruptive behaviour to a minimum.
* Deal appropriately with misbehaviour.
* Record instances of serious misbehaviour or repeated instances of misbehaviour in Incident Book.
* Provide support for colleagues.

**Pupil’s Responsibilities**

* Attend school regularly and punctually.
* Listen to their teachers and act on instructions/advice.
* Show respect for all members of the school community.
* Respect all school property and the property of other pupils.
* Avoid behaving in any way which would endanger others.
* Avoid all nasty remarks, swearing and name-calling.
* Include other pupils in games and activities.
* Bring correct materials/books to school.
* Follow school and class rules.
* Any out of class activity e.g. are part of normal school days activity

**Parent’s/Guardian’s Responsibilities**

* Ensure their children attend school and are punctual
* Equip pupils with appropriate school materials, sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform
* Ensure that pupils are dressed for all weathers (e.g. proper raincoat, hat, gloves. scarf etc.)
* Be courteous towards pupils and staff
* Make an appointment to meet with a teacher/the Principal through the office
* Respect school property and encourage their children to do the same
* Label pupils coats and other personal property
* Strictly supervise pre-school children, when in the school.
* As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety and the Child Protection of all staff and students, parents are not to approach or reprimand another person’s child on the school premises.

**PARENTS AND THE CODE**

1. Parents can encourage good behaviour at school by promoting a positive image of the school and by discussing the school rules and the need for them.
2. Discuss with your child how to behave in an appropriate manner at school to ensure their own safety and the safety of others
3. Appointments: Parents may not call casually to the classroom door or to the Principal’s office to discuss any issue regarding their child. They must make an appointment through the office. The teachers in the school and the Principal are always willing to meet with parents by appointment at a mutually convenient time to discuss concerns or difficulties. All meetings between parents and the principal regarding the Schools Code of behaviour should be in the presence of the deputy principal also when possible.
4. If you are asked to come to the school to discuss a problem remember that the teacher or principal wants to discuss the problem not apportion blame or make judgements.
5. There will always be times when you totally disagree with something a teacher does or says. If this happens, please check that you have the correct version of events and then discuss the problem with the teacher or Principal.
6. Please do not undermine the authority of the school by criticising a teacher in front of pupils but come to the school to discuss the problem.
7. Try to listen to your child and talk about what is happening in school and let them know that you are interested and aware.
8. Be on alert for any change in mood or behaviour, it can sometimes indicate that a child is worried or under pressure. If teachers become aware of changes in mood or behaviour, parents will be informed.
9. If a child is complaining of pains and there is no obvious reason this may be also indicate some worries or pressures.
10. If you want to come to the school to discuss your child you are not running with ‘stories’ you are simplyexercising your rights as a parent. Please remember that children can be best served if teachers and parents work together and stay in touch.
11. A note is required for absences, failure to do homework, not wearing uniform etc.
12. Read with your child. It is of immense value they are never too old.
13. Good hygiene is encouraged. If a child is sick they need to be kept at home. Head lice is a recurring problem. Prevention requires constant vigilance.
14. It is essential that the school has up to date phone numbers contact numbers for parents/guardians.

**Addendum to Code of Behaviour**

**Rationale:**

We aim to maintain a happy, healthy, and safe learning environment in which children are encouraged to have respect for themselves and each other. To assist us in this, we have a robust code of behaviour, primarily focused on promoting positive behaviour.

Scoil Bhríde Nurney is proud to have a very respectful and considerate school community. It is important that provision be made to discourage behaviours that are now, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, considered inappropriate or dangerous.

**Update:**

All members of the school community are expected to:

* Follow instructions on hygiene, such as hand washing and sanitising
* Use elbow or a tissue to cover mouth & nose when sneezing or coughing
* Dispose of tissues properly
* Avoid touching mouth, nose and eyes with hands
* Inform the Principal if experiencing symptoms of coronavirus

Additional Pupils’ Responsibilities:

* Follow altered procedure for arrival and departure
* Follow instructions around bubbles, pods both in class and during breaks
* Stay in seat as much as possible (raising hand to seek attention)
* Only share equipment by direction of staff
* Keep their work area neat and tidy
* Not share drinking bottles, food, etc
* Use toilets one-at-a-time, ensuring hands are washed properly (20seconds, with soap) and dried before returning to their place

Additional Parents/Guardians’ Responsibilities:

* Follow altered procedure for arrival and departure
* Support the school by reinforcing guidance around hand hygiene, personal distancing, and respiratory etiquette
* Stay outside of the school building except where they have made an appointment by phone or email to meet staff
* Keep pupils who are unwell at home, informing the school by email/phone of the type of illness being experienced, until a full recovery is made

Additional Staff Responsibilities:

* Encourage and practice personal distancing
* Keep work area clean & tidy
* Ensure pupils practice hand hygiene at appropriate times (before eating/when entering classroom/after toileting/after using shared equipment/etc)

The following behaviours will be considered as misdemeanours under the code (whether minor, serious, or gross will be determined contextually), due to their potential impact on the physical and psychological well-being of members of the school community:

* Deliberately ignoring guidance on:
  + personal space and distancing
  + hand hygiene
  + respiratory etiquette (e.g. failing to cover mouth/nose when coughing/sneezing, not properly disposing of used tissues, etc)
  + zones at playtime for pods/bubbles
* Coughing or spitting at or towards any other person
* Any deliberate action, which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour
* Any accidental action, persisted in after correction, which may endanger the safety and wellbeing of others through physical proximity or respiratory behaviour

**Parental Complaints Procedure**

**Not to be read first without first consulting the schools full Complaints Policy available on the school website**

**Rationale**

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde has adopted the Complaints Procedure, agreed by the teachers’ union and management bodies, which provides a mechanism for dealing with parental complaints against a teacher as set out in Section 28 of the Education Act 1998.

**Relationship to School Ethos**

The school promotes positive home – school contacts and endeavours to enhance the self-esteem of everyone within the school community. The policy contributes towards those ideals.

**Aims/Objectives**

* To foster fruitful and trusting relationships between school and parents
* To afford parents an opportunity to express opinions/grievances through the framework of a defined procedure
* To minimize the opportunity for conflict by providing parents an opportunity to liaise with the class teacher.

**Introduction**

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

* matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education & Science
* frivolous or vexatious and which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school
* Complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

**Stage 1**

* 1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
  2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the Princpal Teacher with a view to resolving it.
  3. If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it

**Stage 2**

* 1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
  2. The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

**Stage 3**

* 1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
     1. Supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
     2. Arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

**Stage 4**

* 1. If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b)
  2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.
  3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
  4. The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
  5. The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in supprt of the complaint;
  6. The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
  7. The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of the case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend ay any such meeting;
  8. The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b)

**Stage 5**

5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.

5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.

In this policy ‘days’ means school days.

###### 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. **Learning will not happen unless the teacher has quiet and discipline from all children.**

**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 your child’s at a time when you both can have a little peace and quiet.

Please remember teacher is available by a mutually convenient time after 2pm/3pm if you have an ongoing concern. It is **ALWAYS** best to come in and see your child’s teacher in person as the teacher is in *“loco parentis”* throughout the school day. Parents may not call casually to the classroom door or to the Principal’s office to discuss any issue regarding their child. They must make an appointment through the office. The teachers in the school and the Principal are always willing to meet with parents by appointment to discuss concerns or difficulties.

Finally, be assured, we here at Scoil Bhríde, will do everything we can to ensure transition to “big school” is a positive experience and that your child will enjoy happy years here, secure and confident in the company of good friends in a safe, structured environment and ultimately achieve their own potential both academically and socially.

**Easy Does It...**

There are lots of ideas and suggestions in this little book as to how you can help your child. **We are not advocating that you do ALL of these with them in a systematic way.** But if you find from time to time that they enjoy a fun approach to certain aspects of learning then we would say – give it a go – but remember **don’t overdo it.**

**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 sí”**