



Abbeyleix South National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Mainistir Laoise Theas



Parent Information Booklet

A-Z

Our School Ethos

Abbeyleix South National School is a Church of Ireland Parish School under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory. Our school is a vibrant, friendly, exciting and happy place of learning.

The staff of our school aims to create an atmosphere where all pupils are equally valued and respected. We endeavour to establish and maintain high standards of behaviour, discipline and achievement.

Our pupils experience a sense of caring belonging and are encouraged to reach their full potential. We believe that education is about developing the whole person, giving them life-long skills and preparing them to participate as good citizens in an ever-changing society. Of paramount importance is the happiness of each child under our care.

This booklet has been designed to provide you with an overview of who we are, what we believe in and how we work together to create a safe, inclusive and engaging learning environment. Whether you are joining us for the first time or are already part of school family, we hope you find this information helpful and reassuring.

The A – Z of our School

Attendance/Absences:

The school day is from 9.20 am to 2.00 pm for Junior and Senior Infants and 9.20 am to 3.00 pm for First Class to Sixth Classes.

Please note: Junior Infants pupils finish school at 12.30 pm for approximately seven days.

Please park on the church avenue, if you walk your child into school.

On the school avenue only turn at the far end only, see 'Turning Point'. Do not block the turning point, or obstruct it in any way. Drive slowly at all times.

School arrival:

For term 1, Junior and Senior Infant parent(s)/guardian(s) may walk their child/children up to the classroom door and say 'goodbye' there.

However, to help foster greater independence in our infant pupils, we kindly ask that you drop your child off at the designated patio area in the mornings from January onwards. Please do not accompany them up onto the patio door.

This small step supports their confidence and encourages them to take responsibility for their morning routine in a safe and familiar environment.

Late arrival:

If your child arrives late to school please do not disturb the class, sign your child in at the school reception. Get your child into the habit of being in good time for school from the beginning. If your child is late he/she misses important social interaction time.

Home Time:

Junior and Senior Infant pupils will leave school via the main entrance of the school. Parents/minders may wait nearby and the teacher will send your child out to you at 2.00 pm. At home time pupils from 1st class to 6th class are requested to walk with the teachers on duty to the school avenue. From there pupils may make their way safely to their transport or walk with their collector to the church avenue.

Early Departure:

If your child is leaving school early you must notify the class teacher via Aladdin Connect or by email and sign them out at the door.

Absences:

If your child is absent please inform the class teacher via Aladdin Connect or by email. If your child is absent for 20 days or more we are obliged to notify the NEWB (National Education Welfare Board). The school may also notify the officer, if in the opinion of the principal, a pupil is not attending school regularly.

Behaviour and Books:**Behaviour:**

Our school Code of Behaviour helps the school community to promote the school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. Close co-operation with parents is important. Our Code of Behaviour helps foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported. Our Policy was prepared in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Welfare Board. Our Code of Behaviour may be viewed on our school website – www.abbeyleixsouthns.ie

Books:

Buying schoolbooks and classroom resources can be a costly expense for parents/guardians. For the past two years the Department of Education has provided schools with funding to buy schoolbooks workbooks and copybooks for children in primary and special schools. Year 3 of the Primary Schoolbooks Scheme will continue from September 2025.

The Primary Schoolbooks Scheme is a funding scheme where the Department of Education provides funding to recognised primary and special schools in the Free Education Scheme to purchase schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks. The scheme provides schoolbooks and resources on loan to pupils at the start of the school year. This means that parents of primary students will not pay towards the cost of schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks.

The school will provide your child(ren) with the schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks covered by the scheme. It is important that your child looks after the books carefully because they belong to the school. At the end of the school year your child returns the books to the school in good condition. They must also be returned if your child leaves the school.

Parents/guardians should remind their children that the schoolbooks are on loan from the school. Pupils need to take good care of their schoolbooks and keep them in good condition during the year so that they can be re-used by other pupils.

Schools will provide you with a list of items that are not covered under the scheme that must be purchased for your child/children. These items may include folders, pencils, markers, colours, glue etc.

Curriculum and Communication:

The Primary School Curriculum

Language Gaeilge English
Mathematics
Social, environmental and scientific education History Geography Science
Arts Education Visual Arts Music Drama
Physical Education
Social, personal and health education
Religious Education

Please see NCCA document for parent(s)/guardian(s): Helping my child in Junior and Senior Infants. https://ncca.ie/media/4084/helping_your_child_in_junior_and_senior_infants.pdf

Please see our **Parents' Corner** tab on the school website, abbeyleixsouthns.ie

Additional Curricular Information:

Aistear:

The Aistear programme is completed in Junior and Senior Infants. The aim of Aistear is to help every child to grow and develop as a competent and confident learner. Aistear is the Irish word for journey. As the name implies, education is a lifelong journey that can take many different routes.

Please view Information for Parents at:

https://ncca.ie/media/1127/informationleaflet_on_aistear_for_parents_.pdf



Religion:

The Follow Me Religious Programme is utilised in the school. This programme was developed by the Church of Ireland together with the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Education.

The aims of the Follow Me programme are to enable children:

- to develop a knowledge and understanding of beliefs, worship and witness of the Christian faith, and in particular of the Church of Ireland and other principal reformed traditions;
- to explore the biblical witness to God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- to develop their own religious beliefs, values and practices through a process of personal search and discovery;
- to develop an awareness of and sensitivity towards those of other faiths and none.

There are seven strands in the Follow Me programme:

- Celebrations, festival, ceremonies and customs
- Sacred writings, stories and key figures
- Beliefs
- Sacred places, worship and symbols
- Moral values and attitudes
- Personal Search – The natural world, relationships and moral values, ultimate questions
- Awareness of those of other faiths and none

We have very close links with St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Abbeyleix and senior pupils take part in services during the year.

S.P.H.E – Stay Safe Programme:



We follow the personal safety education programme called 'Stay Safe' as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. This programme will be run in its entirety in each of these year levels so that our students will access the programme every second year and it will be tailored to their age and curriculum level.

The aim of the Stay Safe programme is to teach children personal safety skills so they can look after themselves in situations which could be upsetting or dangerous. It deals initially with common situations which most children will experience at some stage or other, e.g.

getting lost or being bullied.

The programme also teaches children the safety skills necessary to protect themselves from physical or sexual abuse and it emphasises the importance of telling a trusted adult about any problems they have.

Co-operation between parents and teachers is essential to the success of this programme. It is important that parents/guardians are aware of the content of the Stay Safe lessons and are able to discuss the lessons with their children.

Your child may bring home worksheets which will inform you on the topics being covered in class and how you can reinforce the messages at home.

You can familiarise yourself with the content of the “Stay Safe” Programme at:

[https://www.staysafe.ie/PDFs/Parents/Stay-Safe-Parent's-Guide-\(Print\).pdf](https://www.staysafe.ie/PDFs/Parents/Stay-Safe-Parent's-Guide-(Print).pdf)

Physical Education:

Swimming Tuition:

Swimming lessons take place in the Autumn Term in Portlaoise Swimming Pool for pupils in First Class to Sixth Class. These lessons are part of the Physical Education curriculum and all pupils are expected to attend. If you wish to assist your child with changing you must be Garda Vetted to enter the changing rooms. You will be informed about the vetting process prior to the swimming classes.

Communication via Aladdin Connect:

The school utilises the Aladdin Schools software service for administrative purposes. Aladdin Connect will give you secure access to messages from the school and to details of your child's attendance, test results, report cards etc. via secure login through the App.

Aladdin Connect is a fantastic way to enhance a school's communication with parents. It enables parents to stay connected and informed about their child's education.

You can rest reassured that Aladdin Schools uses state-of-the-art security to safeguard information entered by the school and data is stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish and European data protection laws.

You will receive a text/email message containing your registration link.

For further assistance please go to <https://aladdin.ie/files/pdf/ParentSignUp.pdf> to see the Parent Connect signup process. There will be one link per parent. Please do not forward this text/email or share this link as this is a unique registration link for each parent for your child/children in this school.

Please note: If there are any personal concerns, or legal provisions in place regarding giving access to Connect to any parent/guardian of your child please contact the school in confidence to discuss or restrict access as required.

We hope that you enjoy using Aladdin Connect. For more information please visit https://www.aladdin.ie/connect_app_faqs.html

Arranging a meeting:

We kindly remind all parent(s)/guardian(s) that while we always welcome communication and value your involvement in your child's education, we ask that you please arrange a formal meeting (via Aladdin) if you wish to discuss any matters with any of our teaching staff.

In the mornings, as you can imagine, there is a great deal of activity as we prepare for the school day, and it is not always possible to engage in conversations at the door. To ensure that we can give you the attention and time that you deserve, we would be grateful if you could contact the school office to arrange a suitable time for a meeting.

We want to make sure that every conversation is meaningful and uninterrupted, and setting up an appointment helps us manage our time more effectively while continuing to focus on the needs of all our students.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this matter. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Dates:

The school calendar is issued each June. Parents are informed as soon as possible if amendments to the calendar are necessary. Please read school newsletters for Dates To Remember.

Here are some of the main events which have taken place in the past during the school year. These events are subject to change.

Parents' Association AGM	Ascension Day Service
Harvest Festival Servicer	Active School Week
Hallowe'en Disco	Education School Tours
Nativity Play	Diocesan Children's Festival Service
Family Movie Night	Sports Day
Ash Wednesday Service	School Fair
Swimming Lessons	Family Fun Day
Family Table Quiz	End of Year Service

Eating and Allergies:

Breaks are from 10.45 to 10.55 am and 12.45 to 1.15 pm. Please send your child to school with a realistic lunch each day.

Bradbury's Irish School Meals supply our school with a hot food scheme. This service is fully funded by the Department for Social Protection. Your child will receive a unique username and password label in September.

Packed Lunches: We ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start. We have a Healthy Eating Policy in school. Also, please only give you child something your feel he/she can easily manage to eat. eg open.

Fizzy drinks are not permitted. Your child may keep a water bottle on his/her table during the day.

First Steps in Reading/Writing:

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 their first reader. We 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.

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. Your child will complete many pre-writing exercises as well as fine motor exercises to ensure that little hands are ready for writing. Please ensure that your child has the correct pencils as indicated on the class booklist.

Great Choices:

Our goal is for all children to make good choices each day. We reward good behaviour in a variety of ways including rewards and privileges in the classroom.

The class teacher will be in close communication with parents if there is an issue with a child's behaviour.

Homework:

Homework is a way of giving your child small amounts of responsibility.

Infant pupils will bring home a homework folder with an outline of the homework for the week. Please return this folder on a Friday.

Please note Junior Infants pupils receive homework after the Hallowe'en break.

We ask parents to establish a good homework routine. Set aside a quiet regular time and ensure that homework is completed fully and neatly.

Please inform the teacher if your child is having any issues in completing his/her homework exercises.

A Homework Policy is in use in the school.

Homework is set on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays only.

Suggested Homework Times: Infants (10-20 minutes), First Class (20-30 minutes), Second Class (30-40 minutes), Third Class (40-50 minutes), Fourth Class (50-60 minutes) Fifth and Sixth Classes (1 hour plus)

Headlice:

Please check your child's hair regularly for head lice.

Children with long hair must have their hair tied back.

If your child has headlice, please inform the class teacher and ensure that your child has been treated in order to get rid of the head lice.

You will be informed if a report of head lice has been made.

Independence and Illnesses:

We will do everything in our power to make your child a successful pupil. At first, school may be overwhelming for him/her, but as the year goes on he/she will gain a tremendous confidence. Please give your child room to be independent.

It would help greatly if your child is able to:

- Button/zip and unbutton/unzip his/her coat unaided
- Put on jumper/sweatshirt unaided
- Use the toilet without assistance – flush and wash hands
- Know how to blow his/her nose
- Tidy up unaided when requested
- Open lunch bag, lunch box, bottle, yogurts etc.
- Peel orange unaided.

Preparing for 'The Big Day':

Your child's first day of school is a day to remember for the rest of his/her life. You can help to make it a really happy one for your child. 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. Check the school blog under Junior and Senior Infants and you will see all the wonderful activities that Infant pupils get up to.

The Big Day:

When you arrive at the classroom door, be as casual as you can. Your child will meet his/her teacher and other children and he/she will be shown to his/her seat.

Hopefully he/she will be absorbed in his/her surroundings. So having assured him/her that you will be back to collect them, wish them goodbye and make a getaway without delay.

The Upset Child:

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

A Word of Advice:

Trust the teacher. He/She is experienced and resourceful and is used to coping with all kinds of starting-off problems. Try not to show any outward signs of your own distress.

When you have reassured your child, leave as fast as possible. The teacher can distract and humour him/her more easily when you are not around. Usually a child will calm down and settle within two minutes of the parent leaving. The teacher will make you aware if this is not the case.

You must be firm at the start. Even if a child is upset you must insist that they stay for a short time-even ten minutes.

Illnesses:

Children who are sick should not be sent to school. Please inform the school on the first day of absence. Please let us know if your child has an infectious disease as soon as possible. This applies especially to Gastric Disorders and Chicken Pox. A child with a temperature or a child who has vomited through the night or early in the morning should not be in school.

Jobs Board:

Part of the independence and responsibility is built through the classroom jobs board. Each week your child will have a specific job to help the classroom run smoothly, e.g. Calendar Helper, Teacher assistant, Line leader, Light Monitor etc.

Keep on Moving and Get Active:

Each Thursday your child will not have written homework, he/she will complete Active Homework. We are an active school and have been awarded a number of Active School Flags. We look forward to Active School week every year, enjoy our weekly PE. Classes (teacher will let you know when P.E takes place, so appropriate footwear etc. may be worn to school) and Sports Day.

Laptops and Technology:

Pupils from First Class to Sixth Class have access to a laptop on a daily basis in the school. Pupils use the laptops for research work, projects and PowerPoint Presentations and typing poetry, stories etc. in Word.

Medicines/Medical Examinations and Medical Emergencies:

Medicines:

Teachers are not permitted to administer medicine to any pupils unless the pupil is on long term medication. A letter must be written by the Parents to the Board of Management who will grant this request.

The following forms are available in the office:

Request for Administration of Medication – Information and Consent form

Administration of Medicines in Schools – Indemnity

Medical Examinations:

The H.S.E operates a school's programme which includes:

Junior Infants:

A vaccination for each pupil, against the childhood illnesses Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (Whooping Cough), Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Meningitis C.

No examination ever takes place without prior written consent of parents.

Senior Infants:

A basic medical examination for each pupil, to include an eyesight and hearing test.

Medical Emergencies:

In the event of an accident/child becoming ill, every possible effort will be made to contact the pupil's parents or the person delegated to take responsibility for the pupil. A Personal Accident Insurance Scheme which covers all pupils for school activities has been put in place by the Board of Management.

Newsletter:

You will receive a School Newsletter regularly to let you know what's been going on in the school and in each classroom. Senior pupils have an input into this School Newsletter.

Office:

In our office you may find Hazel Wellwood or Breda Phelan, our secretaries. Please visit the office to sign in your child if you arrive to school after 9.20 am. If you will be checking your child out early, please leave a note on Aladdin Connect that morning and sign him/her out at the office.

Parents' Association:

We are fortunate to have an active Parents' Association which promotes the welfare and general interest of the school. Election to The Parents' Association committee takes place at the annual AGM in September/October.

Photographer:

During the summer term the photographer visits the school to take photos to include Junior Infants, Third Class and Sixth Class. This may include class photo, individual or family photo.

Questions:

If you have questions you can contact us at school at **057 8731920**, email: **office@abbeyleixsouthns.ie** or leave message on Aladdin Connect. Please also visit our website abbeyleixsouthns.ie to keep up to date on what's happening in your child's classroom. Check out the school blog on the website.

Reports and Parent Teacher Meetings:

Report cards will be sent home in June. Parent Teacher Meetings are scheduled for November, but this is subject to change.

School Staff:

We are a six teacher school.

Four Mainstream Classroom Teachers

Two Special Education Team Teachers (S.E.T)

Three Full Time Special Needs Assistants (S.N.A.)

One part time Special Needs Assistant (S.N.A.)

Two Office Staff

Principal: Joanne Jackson

Deputy Principal: Geraldine Whiteford

Assistant Principal: Orla Mythen

Teaching Staff: Wendy Costelloe, Honora Bergin and Laura Kerr

Transport – Bus Eireann:

Apply online: www.buseireann.ie

Pupils 4.8km from school are eligible for School Transport.

“U” are your child’s first and most important teacher:

You are setting an example each and every day for you child. They will become what we teach and model for them.

Voluntary Contribution:

We receive grants from the Department of Education and Science which do not cover our running costs. We top up these grants with contributions from parents. We are very grateful for these contributions which help make it possible to run such a busy school.

Voluntary Contributions help to cover the costs of:	
Maintenance of School Building	Increased Cleaning
Electricity Costs	Wireless Internet
Water	EasyPC
Grass Cutting	Laptops
Insurance	Alarm Systems
CCTV Maintenance	Security Cameras
Interactive Whiteboards	Heating Costs

Wellingtons/Waterproof Shoes:

The class teacher may ask all pupils to bring in wellie boots for wet break times.

Xx: eXciting

Junior Infants is going to be a fun and exciting year!

Be sure to take the time to talk with your child about school! Ask lots of questions, they love to share.

Yd: YAY! Birthdays

Birthdays are so important to little ones. We love celebrating birthdays in school. However, we ask pupils not to bring invitations/cake etc. into school to hand out.

Zz: ZZZZzzzz – Sleep

We are very busy during our school day, so it is important that your child gets plenty of rest so he/she is ready to learn earn!

