



Mercy Convent Primary, Naas

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*'Tell me, and I forget,
Teach me, and I remember,
Involve me, and I learn.'*
Benjamin Franklin

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Part 1:

Our Warmest Welcome to Mercy Convent Primary, Nás na Ríogh

Dear Parents,

We look forward to welcoming your child to the first day of eight very happy and fulfilling years with us. We aim to foster the social, academic, spiritual wellness and physical development of the children. We cherish the self-esteem and individuality of each child, emphasising their many and varying gifts.

Our welcome booklet is divided into two parts. The first part aims to give you some hints and tips on how to ensure that your child gets the best possible start in primary school. The second part contains school information that you may find useful now and in the future.

Starting primary school is an exciting time and the start of a special journey for each and every one of our children; over the coming school year we look forward to working with you to make it the most wonderful rewarding experience.

Mr Cathal Ruane
Principal

Mr Brian Corkery
Deputy Principal

Message from the Junior Infant Teaching Staff



Hello everyone,

We're the Junior Infant Class teachers in the Mercy Convent; we are really looking forward to meeting you in September.

We have heard from your playschool teachers and parents that you are all fantastic. Next year we are going to have great fun at school. We will listen to wonderful stories, sing songs, dance, play and learn to read. Have a wonderful summer and we will see you all soon.

The Junior Infant Team

Have a look at our classrooms!



Preparing your child for Junior Infants



As we all know, a positive start can be crucial to a positive outcome. It is so important to create a positive progressive attitude towards school and lifelong education. Real engagement will really assist your child to become involved in learning; doing something you enjoy is never work.

Suggestions as to what we may do to help our children prepare for school:

- Read books and stories about starting school.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and express his/her ideas and feelings about starting school.
- Play 'school' at home – have fun trying on the uniform and packing a school bag and lunchbox.
- Talk about how your child will get to and from school – take a drive or walk past the school to help your child familiarise himself/ herself with the building.
- Encourage and practise independent toileting. Remind your child to flush the toilet and to wash and dry his/her hands properly.
- Encourage and practise independent dressing. Let your son/daughter dress himself/ herself and put on his/her own shoes and coat.
- Encourage and practise opening and closing his/her new lunchbox, drinks bottle and schoolbag.
- Please ensure the school bag can accommodate an A4 folder. School bags with wheels are not permitted.

Should you feel that your child is becoming anxious, don't over emphasise the starting school chat and be mindful of just how much of life will be the same.

School books and belongings: Please label your child's coat, jumper, PE top, lunchbox, bottle and all belongings with their name – it will help if he/she can identify his/her belongings. Remember everyone has the exact same school jumper and PE top.

First day of School



Our first day at school is a special milestone for both parents and child; although, how many of us actually remember our first day?

Whilst you may be going through a mixture of emotions please try not to pass on any anxieties. Most children settle into school quickly but do not be concerned if it takes a little longer - we are here to help and we have lots of experiences successfully managing positive outcomes.

- Please have everything ready the night before. Keep everything calm and happy that morning, arrive on time – but not too early.
- Your child will be welcomed into the classroom by their class teacher at the main reception of the school building.
- When it is time for you to leave, assure them you will be back later, say goodbye and leave – don't worry if your child becomes upset – all will be fine. We will be there to help with the transition.
- Each child will be given a name badge to wear and there will be toys and activities on the tables to play with; they will be busy.
- The teacher will show each child the location of the toilet and where to hang their coats.
- All books and stationery will be ready, labelled and waiting for your child on the first day of school.
- We will spend some time playing and getting to know his/her new classmates; reading stories and singing songs.
- Our small break is at 10.45am. We eat our lunch in the class before we go out. If it is raining, we will sit in the class room and play. There will always be a teacher on the playground to supervise.
- Collection at home-time is outside the school building. Home-time is usually 12:15pm for the first two weeks but we will confirm that for you in mid-August. Our usual school day is 09:00 to 13:40 for infants.



Helping your child prepare for Literacy and Numeracy

Some suggested activities you may wish to try:

- Phonological awareness, (an understanding of sounds) is an important skill that we explore before we start formal letter sounds. You can help your child by identifying rhyming words in books – mat/bat/cat etc.
- Play games like 'I spy'.
- Sing and read nursery rhymes at home.
- Reading to your child cultivates an interest in reading and hopefully in life-long learning.
- Talk to your child and listen to their answers – talk about the weather, days of the week, visits to the park, favourite food etc. All of these actions will help develop language.
- Play board games.
- You can help your child become familiar with simple mathematical concepts at home - encouraging him/her to sort items – socks, cutlery, crayons etc.
- Talk and explore different shapes and colours.
- Explore the size of objects.
- Match objects that are the same size.
- Language is key to all learning – oral language skills are vital.
- Talk and read to your child about a wide variety of topics.



Play



- Play is a very important part of a child's development.
- It helps the children to learn new, exciting skills and gives them opportunities to discover and learn for themselves.
- Play is given high priority in the infants' classroom and the children rotate play areas to allow them to explore different aspects of play.
- Play helps to develop speech and language. It helps the children learn new vocabulary from each other in the comfortable setting of play.
- It can also improve fine motor skills and social skills in the classroom.

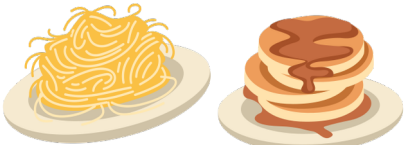


This checklist will give you some tips to help prepare for school – don't worry if your child can't do all the skills – it's just a guide.

Getting Ready for School Checklist

I can...	I can...	I can...
recognise my name ☐	hold my pencil carefully ☐	put on my socks ☐
write the first letter ☐	draw a face ☐	find my shoes ☐
	colour in carefully ☐	put on my shoes ☐
	name the colours I use ☐	fasten my shoes ☐
		

I can...	I can...	I can...
recognise some numbers ☐	sing simple rhymes ☐	find my coat ☐
	sing and clap to a song ☐	put my arms into my coat ☐
	tap a beat ☐	zip up my coat ☐
	move to music ☐	fasten buttons on my clothes ☐
		

I can...	I can...	I can...
	tidy away my toys ☐	say please when I ask ☐
taste different foods ☐	clear away things I've used ☐	say thank you when I get something ☐
wash my hands before and after meals ☐	put my clothes away ☐	ask to go to the toilet ☐
	help at home ☐	take turns talking in a group ☐
		

I can...	I can...	I can...
wash my hands ☐	walk up and down stairs using the handrail ☐	cut 'snips' into paper ☐
dry my hands ☐	hold hands on the street ☐	
go to the toilet when I need to ☐	take turns when playing ☐	
wipe/clean myself when I've been to the toilet ☐	share toys with a friend ☐	
		

Part 2 : General Information about Our School

Mercy Convent Primary is a Catholic School under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin. As a Catholic school we aim to fulfil the aspirations of Catholic Education, through the:

- provision of a caring learning environment which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil's full educational potential.
- commitment to making sure that your child is happy, and we aim to do this through working in close partnership with you.
- a welcoming and inclusive community that is respectful and tolerant of all religious traditions and beliefs.
- provision of the opportunity to worship through prayer and the celebration of the liturgy and the Sacraments.



The School Day

Infants:	09:00 – 13:40
1st – 6th Class:	09:00 – 14:40
Assembly Time:	09:00 – 09:10

The school gate opens at 9:00am. Pupils may enter the school grounds at this time and proceed directly to their designated entry door. Their teacher will be waiting for them in their classroom. Children in Junior and Senior Infants can use the reception door in the morning. The main school gate is supervised and no pupil will be permitted to leave once inside.

Infant parents can come as far as the reception door in the morning when dropping their child. A member of staff will be there to greet the child.

Infant parents may collect their children from a designated collection point within the school grounds. **For health and safety reasons, parents are kindly asked not to bring dogs or other pets onto the school premises.**

Children have two breaks each day: a short break at 10:45am for 15 minutes and a longer break from 12:35pm to 1:00pm. Typically, pupils eat their snacks/ hot lunch in the classroom before going outside to play.

Punctuality

The children must develop the habit of being punctual for school. Teachers will record lateness, and it is unsettling for everyone. Children who arrive after 9:15am will be marked as late.

Pupil Collection

The school needs to be notified preferably by email or the Aladdin app if a child needs to leave school early. No child may leave school without a parent or guardian during school times. If someone other than a parent is collecting a child, please notify the school using the Aladdin app. All parents who collect their child early from school will have to sign them out at the Office. There can be no collections in the final 15 minutes of the school day as this is a busy time.

Bus Companies

Parents need to be aware that the school is not responsible for this transport; the relationship is direct, solely between the bus company and the parents.

Healthy Lunch Policy

To encourage healthy eating habits from an early age and improve our pupils' overall nutrition and concentration, Mercy Convent Primary promotes and implements a Healthy Eating Policy in our school. Parents are requested to provide a healthy lunch each day for their child. In consideration of children who have nut allergies, parents are asked not to include such products in their child's lunch, e.g. peanut butter, Nutella spread etc. We ask that parents give their children water to drink. The following foods are not permitted; this is not an exhaustive list and may be altered or added to by the teacher or Principal.

✗ Fizzy Drinks
✗ Crisps
✗ Chewing gum
✗ Frubes (in infant classes)
✗ Chocolate

✗ Sweets
✗ Lollipops
✗ Nuts
✗ Biscuits
✗ Cakes

Please only give your child something you feel that they can manage to eat quickly within break times.

Please provide your child with a lunch box/drinks bottle that they can open and close themselves.

Glass bottles are not permitted.

PLEASE



**NO PEANUTS
OR
NUT PRODUCTS**

Hot School Meals Programme

Since April 2024 our school has participated in the Hot School Meals Programme which was introduced and fully funded by the State; there is no charge for this new initiative. Your child can choose to avail of a hot, nutritious lunch up to five days a week should they so wish but there is no obligation to do so. Once your child begins the full school day, he/ she can avail of this

Birthdays and Party Invitations

In line with our Healthy Eating Policy, children are not allowed to bring 'goodies' to school to celebrate birthdays. Their special day will be celebrated in other ways such as singing 'Happy Birthday'. Children's birthdays are announced at our weekly assembly. We do not allow birthday invitations or treats to be given out in school or on the school grounds, to avoid causing upset to those not invited, or to avoid putting pressure on families. Please adhere to this rule at all times, and no exceptions will be made.

Toys

We would ask that toys and special possessions are not brought to school as any loss or damage can be very upsetting for pupils.

Attendance

Please make sure your child is in school every day. The Education Welfare Act requires children to be in school every day unless there is a reasonable explanation for not attending. Pupil absences should be explained on our Aladdin app. The Education Welfare Act states that the relevant authorities will be informed of pupils who have been absent for twenty days or more (this includes illness, holidays outside school holidays etc.) A child showing signs of illness should be kept at home.

School Uniform

Parents will be issued a document with all uniform information and pictures. Suppliers will also be noted.

Tracksuits may only be worn on P.E. days. Shorts are permitted during the summer months. Parents are notified about the summer uniform through Aladdin.

Please note: We are currently exploring options to update our P.E. tracksuit and this will be communicated with you shortly.



Care of Hair

Parents are asked to check their child's hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice. If there is an outbreak of head lice in a class, all parents of pupils in that class are informed by note and asked to take immediate action to treat the infestation. Girls with long hair should have it tied back.

School Rules and Values



1. Pupils leave and enter the school building in an orderly fashion.
2. A pupil must not behave in any way which endangers themselves or others. Rough play comes into this category.
3. Any form of threatening behaviour is unacceptable.
4. Any instructions or direction given by the supervising teacher or Special Needs Assistant are to be complied with.
5. Pupils line up in an orderly manner at the end of breaks.
6. Pupils are not allowed to run on the corridors.
7. Pupils may not re-enter the school building without the express permission of a teacher.
8. If due to inclement weather, the pupils are allowed to remain indoors, they must remain seated.
9. All pupils are expected to treat staff and their fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times.
10. Pupils must respect all school property and keep the school environment clean and litter-free.

Standards of Behaviour

1. Wear the formal school uniform except on PE day(s).
2. Wear black footwear with formal uniform.
3. Stud earrings are the only items of jewellery allowed to be worn.
4. Artificial nails or varnish are not allowed.
5. Fake tan and make up are not allowed.
6. Hair must be tied up and kept neat and tidy.
7. Mobile phones and internet enabled watches are not allowed.
8. Walk when inside the school building.
9. We are a NUT FREE school.
10. We encourage healthy eating.

News and Events

Here in the Mercy Convent we value and celebrate coming together as a school community to mark special occasions in the school calendar. As an Active School each year we organise a Santa dash, Easter Parade and our annual Fun Run Fundraiser. Other annual events include Science Week, Maths Week, Kindness/Friendship Week and our Active Schools initiative. We share these snippets of school life on our school's social media page and school website.



What is Aladdin?



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

- Ensuring contact information is up to date.
- Keeping parents informed of their child's attendance.
- Enabling parents to view their child's report card.
- Communications of reasons for absence and to send attendance if their child will be arriving late / leaving early.
- Allow parents to give permission for events such as school tours Aladdin aids in strengthening our home-school partnership, efficiently and effectively.

e-Payments

Going forward, when money is due for any school activity that is relevant to your child, you **will receive an email message** containing your **payment access link**. This will bring you to a parent payment page which will contain all payments requested for all siblings in a family. There is only one link per family ensuring you have the option to pay all amounts due for all your children in one transaction. Once you have completed your payment, you will be issued with a reference number. You will also receive an email receipt which will contain details of the transaction and reference number.

Keep up to date with school news and events:



Mercy Convent Primary School - Naas



@MercyConventPS



www.mercyconvent.ie



[mercyconventprimary](https://www.instagram.com/mercyconventprimary)

