

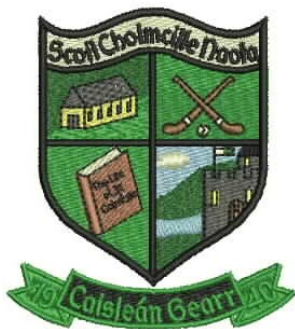
Castlegar N.S.

Information Booklet for Parents of Junior Infants 2016-2017

Scoil Náisiúnta Cholmcille Naofa
Castlegar National School
School Rd.
Castlegar
Galway

Tel:091-757362

E-mail: castlegarns@gmail.com
Website: www.castlegarns.ie



Castlegar NS
Welcome Message for Parents and Children
 Dear Parents/ Guardians

We extend a warm welcome to you and your child to Castlegar NS. It is our aim that your child will be extremely happy in our school and will achieve his/her full potential by being happy, sociable and respectful in our school's pleasant and stimulating learning environment. There is a strong sense of community and a high level of co-operation between staff, pupils, parents and visitors.

Castlegar National School has a Catholic Ethos as outlined in the Catholic School's Schedule displayed in the school foyer. A spirit of prayer promotes an atmosphere of kindness, appreciation and forgiveness. As outlined in our Enrolment Form, we follow the Alive-O programme (Veritas) for Religious Education.

There is top quality teaching and learning, where a complement of basic skills are fostered, including linguistic, mathematical, scientific, artistic, physical and social with a technological orientation across the whole curriculum. It is one which maximises individual potential and ensures students of all ability levels are well equipped to meet the challenges of education, work and life.



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Fáilte romhat agus roimh do pháiste chuig Scoil Naisiunta Cholmcille Naofa. We want your child to settle quickly into a happy, productive school life. We hope this booklet offers you an insight into what we do and how you can support your child's learning through that vital Home School partnership. Many of the activities you will already be doing as good parents and carers.

Starting school will be the first big change in the life of your child. Up to this he/she has felt safe and secure with you in the home and family but now is facing the wider world of classroom and school. This may seem a daunting prospect but most children adapt very quickly to their new environment.

It is 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.

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 a desire to know more.

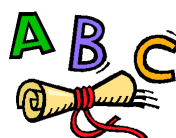
With these aims in mind we have put together this little booklet as a general guide for parents. It deals briefly with the period before your child comes to school and the introductory stage in Junior Infants.

We have a wonderful staff and you can be assured of our full co-operation and commitment at all times.

Should you have any query or concerns at any time please feel free to come and talk to us.

Le gach dea ghuí,

Aoife Winston
Príomhoide





How Can I Prepare My Son/Daughter for School?

Talk to them. Listen to them

Talk to them as much as possible about what they did, what you are doing, what they watched, whom they met and so on. When talking use names, numbers, mention colours, shapes, sizes etc. Talk about things being big, small, full, empty, over, under, behind, between, first, last, middle etc. Try to extend their vocabulary and their ability to express themselves. Introduce them to simple nursery rhymes.

Please don't feel that you must try to begin reading and writing with your child-playing and talking are much more important right now. Knowing the alphabet or counting to 100 does not guarantee success in school! A happy, confident, vocal child who can concentrate and listen will find Junior Infants interesting and exciting.



Read Stories to Them

This is vital and should continue until they are fluent readers and beyond (if they'll let you!). Let them turn pages for you. Run your finger under the words while reading to help them see that we read from left to right. Talk about the pictures, ask questions relating to the story, check their understanding, 'what will happen next?' and so on.

Encourage colouring, drawing and painting

These activities will help to develop descriptive language, naming and describing as well as their fine motor skills. Cutting, water play, using play dough and making jigsaws are also very useful activities.

Ask Your Son/Daughter to Complete Simple Tasks

Let them set the table, count the knives and forks. Let them help you with everyday tasks, sort the laundry, shop with you, cook with you!



Encourage Your Child to be Independent

Show them how to put on and take off their coat and shoes, fasten their own buttons and zips. Velcro-fastened shoes are easiest; toggles may be simpler than zips or buttons.

Help them to practise fastening new garments at home. Give them lunch boxes and drinks that they can open independently. Encourage them to tidy up after themselves and ensure that they can look after themselves in the bathroom.

Always be Positive About School

School is generally a positive experience for children nowadays (whatever your experience of school may have been!) Don't use school or their teacher as a threat!

Uniform

Navy trousers, navy jumper with school crest, plain blue polo shirt, navy tights or socks.
P.E. gear - plain navy tracksuit pants (no visible logos or stripes), navy sweatshirt with school crest, plain blue polo shirt.

Children should take pride in their uniform. Neat dress is essential at all times and the use of make-up, jewellery (other than hand watch and stud earrings) are not permitted.

The Schoolwear Centre Liosbaun Industrial Estate <http://www.theschoolwearcentre.ie/> - 091 755515.

My School Jumper www.myschooljumper.ie and 086-2466984 Unit 25 Glenrock Business Park, Ballybane Industrial Estate, Galway. This company will also provide and sew on the school crest to a plain navy jumper for €5.

***Please label/mark your child's name on all of their school clothes before they start school.**



◇ **Label Everything!**

Please label everything clearly with your child's name and check occasionally that their name hasn't washed off over time.

◇ **No Toys in School**

Your son/daughter may want to bring a toy into school. This will be discouraged as the toys tend to distract other children. The toy could get lost, stolen or broken causing upset. Occasionally, children may be asked to bring in something as an aid to phonics, nature or Maths for example. These objects will be displayed in an appropriate place and returned when the lesson is finished.



◇ **Old T-shirt/Shirt**

Your child will need a large old t-shirt (teenage or adult size) that they can easily pull over their heads to protect their uniform during Art lessons. This will be kept in school.

◇ **Home/School Links**

Check your son/daughter's bag every day for homework, notes or just to see what they are doing in school; this can act as a key to talk to them about their day.

◇ **Healthy Lunches**

We have a healthy eating policy at Castlegar NS. The children are not permitted to have sweets, biscuits, chocolate, crisps, lollipops or chewing gum.

Children can opt to avail of healthy school lunches provided to us by The Treat Café Claregalway.



◇ **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. Please see our healthy eating policy for further details .

School Bags

Please ensure that your son/daughter can open and close the schoolbag easily. We would recommend that you would avoid schoolbags on wheels if at all possible as they constitute a trip hazard in the wrong hands. Please ensure that your child's school bag is big enough to fit an A4 folder.

Booster Injections

It is recommended that all parents contact their own G.P. with a view to obtaining the pre-booster injection, which is normally given to children between the age of four and five.

Communication

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 her at a time when you both can have a little peace and quiet. Please ring the school at **091 757362**.

E-Mail: castlegarns@gmail.com to make an appointment.

In September you will be asked to fill out a contact sheet, listing contact details and alternative phone numbers in case of emergency.



Getting Ready for Learning

Number Awareness

- Concentrate on 1:1 counting e.g. Can you find four spoons? How many sausages are there on your plate?
 - Talk about quantities, e.g. 5 is bigger than 2.
 - Try to get your child to visualise numbers and understand, for example, that 4 is 4 and not 1,2,3,4.
 - Play dominoes or simple board games, e.g. snakes and ladders.
 - Out and about, look at house numbers, or count the number of red cars you see.
- Maths is everywhere and at this age, with almost no mealtime can be turned into a maths game



Get Ready to Read

- To assist your child in developing a life-long love of reading:
 - Let your child see you reading often. Let your child see that it is both useful and fun.
 - Draw attention to words in the street, on TV, on cereal packets etc.
 - Encourage your child to look at pictures in magazines and to talk about them.
 - Speak to your child and listen to what he/she says. If your child doesn't have the oral vocabulary, he/she cannot be expected to understand the written words.
 - Get your child to listen to you. Listening is an acquired skill and it is easier learnt on-to-one than in the classroom where there is one adult and 30 children.
 - Provide books in the home and make quiet time for sharing a book with him/her.
 - Teach your child simple songs and rhymes to develop your child's memory.
 - Keep it FUN! Don't prolong the reading when he/she has lost interest - short enjoyable experiences are best.
 - Pay attention to the mechanics of reading, e.g. holding the book, and turning the page. Let your finger go under the words as you read from left to right.
 - Your child's main interest will be in the pictures - allow time to examine them and comment on them. Ask 'What happens next?'
- Play simple games, like I Spy to encourage recognition of letter sounds and Spot the Difference to aid observation and therefore future reading skills.

Get Ready to Write

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

You Can Help...

He/she must develop the ability to get the hand and eye working together. This is very important. Get them manipulating toys like:

- (a) Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc.
- (b) Plasticene (Marla) to make their own shapes
- (c) A colouring book and thick crayons
- (d) Sheets of paper that they can cut up with a safe scissors.

When he/she begins to use a pencil make sure that he/she holds it correctly at the start. It will be difficult to change him/her later.

Don't discourage left-handedness. If that is his/her definite natural inclination, don't attempt to change it.

Write his/her name for him and let him trace the letters with his/her finger.

Encourage a good grip on his/her crayon or pencil -

As your child begins to write, encourage good letter formation from the start.



The First Day

Start with a good breakfast. Come to the class on time on the day. Give a hug, say good-bye, and give an assurance that you will collect him/her at the proper time. **Then leave!** (even though your heart may be breaking....). Almost all children are busy and happy within minutes of their parents leaving.

For the first week your child will have a short day (08.5am to 12.00pm) so give a small healthy lunch.

Children are usually very tired when they start school first, so please help them by making sure they go to bed early. After the second week of September the children will be in school for the full infant day i.e. 08.50a.m. - 1.30 p.m. At 1.30 p.m., the children will be escorted to the gate.

Be sure to **collect your child on time**. Children can become very upset if they feel they are forgotten.

Please come **inside** the school gate to collect your child.

Keep out of view until the children are released.

If at any time the collecting routine has to be changed ensure you tell the child and the teacher through a phone call to the teacher. Emergencies can also arise so a phone call to the school will ease anxiety.

The First Year

Starting school is a milestone in the life of your child. You can help to make this transaction easier for your child by providing safe opportunities for him/her to spend time away from you and with other children in order to learn how to share and take turns. Your child will have an opportunity to visit the classroom/school for a half day in June and will thus be familiar with the school setting.

All children are different: In school we encourage each child to do his/her best through individual, group and whole class activities. All children learn at a different pace. Just as children walk and talk at different stages, they also read and write when they are ready.

Help Your Child to be Independent by Training him/her:

- * To use the toilet, wash and dry hands without help.
- * To put on and take off his/her coat and do and undo buttons and zips.
- * To open and close schoolbags, lunch boxes and drink containers.
- * To use a tissue/handkerchief when needed.
- * To recognise his/her own belongings.



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.

Please and read the Information Booklet. It tells you all about school life in Castlegar NS. If there is something you are not sure of or just don't understand please contact us.

