

# St. Patrick's Junior School



**Skerries, Co. Dublin**

2021

## School Details

**Address:** St. Patrick's Junior School, Skerries, Co. Dublin.

**Telephone:** 01-8490836      **Fax:** 01-8490836

**Email:** admin@stps.ie      **Website:** www.stps.ie

**Principal:** Máire Ní Chróinín **Deputy Principal:** Lynsey Dungan

**Board of Management Chairperson:** Very Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins

**School Motto:** Mol an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí

*Dear Parents,*

*This booklet contains information about our school. It sets out our aims and indicates our approach towards achieving those aims.*

*The organisation and everyday working of the school are continually reviewed and suggestions from parents are always welcome.*

*The philosophy underlying the Primary School Curriculum stresses the need for partnership between home and school. It states that a child's development will depend largely on the success or failure of the combined efforts of his or her home, Church and school to see that his or her all-round growth is healthy and harmonious. With that in mind, we look forward to your close co-operation and support during your child's time with us.*

*Yours Sincerely,*

*Máire Ní Chróinín*

*Principal*

## **St. Patrick's Junior School, Skerries**

St. Patrick's Junior School is a Catholic co - educational Primary School catering for the formal educational needs of the children from Junior Infants to Second Class. We are fortunate to be able to provide four smaller Junior Infant classes to give our pupils the best possible start in primary school. There are three classes in every other year. We have approximately 340 pupils on roll. We have a staff of eighteen permanent teachers - thirteen class teachers, four additional needs education teachers and the Principal.

### **School Curriculum**

The Curriculum in use is comprised of the following areas:

**Language:** English and Gaeilge

#### **Mathematics**

**Social, Environmental and Scientific Education:** History, Geography and Science

**Arts Education:** Visual Arts, Music and Drama.

#### **Physical Education**

**Social, Personal and Health Education:** Including Relationships and Sexuality Education ("RSE") and Stay Safe Programme (lesson plans may be seen on request).

**Religious Education:** Grow in Love Programme

### **Child Safeguarding**

All members of staff in St.Patrick's JNS, Skerries have been trained in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (Department of Education & Skills).

The school's Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment are on display at Reception and in every classroom as well as on the school website, [www.stps.ie](http://www.stps.ie).

Designated Liaison Person: Ms. Máire Ní Chróinín  
Deputy Designated Liaison Person: Mrs. Lynsey Dungan

## **School Ethos**

### *'Mol an Óige agus Tíocfaidh Sí'*

St. Patrick's School was built in 1978 to replace the old Girls' School on the Dublin Road. It was established as a co-educational Junior School in September 1984.

St. Patrick's Junior School is a welcoming and inclusive community that is holistic, respectful and tolerant of all religious traditions and beliefs. The school community strives to create an atmosphere of love, respect, security and trust. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of each pupil. We work in close collaboration with the family.

The school recognises the dignity and value of each person. This is reflected in the organisation of the school. Our enrolment policy is inclusive of children regardless of religion, language, race, culture or ability. The school's Code of Behaviour 'Discipline for Life' reflects the Christian values of forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope. According to 'Discipline for Life' every day is a new beginning.

Prayer is a regular feature of the school day. It uses the resources provided by Catholic tradition and practice while seeking to be inclusive in its expression. The celebration of the Christian Liturgical Seasons is a part of the rhythm of the school year. All children are offered the opportunity to participate in these celebrations. Catholic pupils are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion in accordance with arrangements in the diocese. This occurs in partnership with the family and the Parish.

We strive to be a centre of excellence where professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment.

## **Board of Management**

The Board of Management is responsible for the running of the school. A new Board of Management is elected every four years. The election generally takes place in late September and the Board takes up office in November.

The patron appoints the Chairperson and one other member to serve on the Board. Two parent nominees are elected from the general body of parents. One teachers' nominee is elected from the teaching staff. The Principal of the school is automatically on the Board. These six members meet and choose two people from the community to complete the Board. The Board is then responsible for the running of the school for its term of office following regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills. The responsibilities of the Board include the appointment of staff, the upkeep and maintenance of the school, the implementation of school policies and the provision of adequate facilities for both pupils and staff.

### **Members of the Current Board**

Very Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins	Chairperson/Patron's Nominee
Mr. Ronnie Griffin	Patron's Nominee
Mrs. Olivia Ferguson	Parents' Nominee
Mr. John C. Murphy	Parents' Nominee
Mr. Michael Branagan	Community Nominee
Mr. Tom Joyce	Community Nominee
Ms. Emma Grimes	Teachers' Nominee
Ms. Máire Ní Chróinín	Principal

## The Parents' Association

Established in 1998, St. Patrick's has a very active and hardworking Parents' Association. Membership of the Association is automatic for all parents and guardians of children in the Junior School. The AGM of the association is held in September each year which enables the enrolment of new committee members and the election of new officers who hold office for a two year period. Broadly speaking the Association aims to improve and enrich the education of the children in the school by working in conjunction with the Principal, Staff and Board of Management. It represents the parents' views and is affiliated to the National Parents' Council. The full constitution and aims of the Parents' Association are available on request.

Over the years the Association has been involved in many projects including: Green School Initiatives, Walking Bus, Spring Clean and Gardening Projects, New Yard Project, Hygiene/Handwashing Awareness Programme, The School Garden, the production of the School Millennium Book and the organisation of talks on various subjects of interest to our parent body.

On an on-going basis the Association, committee and helpers assist the school Principal in the co-ordination of the First Communion Celebration, the annual Book Fair, the Pupil Insurance Scheme, the production of a regular Newsletter and an "End of Year" event focused on the children. Fundraising events are also undertaken to assist in the acquisition of new equipment for the school.

We are extremely proud of our Parents' Association and the committee is reliant upon and grateful for the support and co-operation of all parents, helpers, teachers and the school Principal.

## General School Timetable

8.50am	School opens
8.50am-9.10am	Structured Learning Activities
9.10am	Formal Teaching begins
12.00pm-12.30pm	Lunch Time
1.30pm	Junior/Senior Infants go home
2.30pm	First/Second Classes go home

(please note pick up times are now staggered due to COVID-19 restrictions)

## School Uniform

Pupils are encouraged to wear their uniform with pride. The uniform may be purchased locally.

**Uniform:** Bottle green pinafore or grey trousers, cream or grey shirt, bottle green cardigan or jumper, striped green/cream tie. Flat shoes or boots.

**P.E. Uniform:** School tracksuit, runners. To be worn on PE days only or as otherwise directed by teachers.

**Summer Uniform:** Pinafore or school tracksuit shorts; white polo shirt. Flat sandals or shoes. To be worn in June (weather permitting).

- All children must wear the school tracksuit for P.E.
- No flip-flop/Croc type footwear allowed.
- Waterproof coats must be worn in the yard.
- All long hair must be tied back.
- Ear piercings: no long or hooped earrings - stud type only.
- Please include a change of underwear and socks in a plastic Zip-loc bag. This will be kept in your child's schoolbag in case of any accidents throughout the year.

## Code of Behaviour

In devising the policy, consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. Every effort will be made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in the school. Positive behaviour is rewarded and encouraged by the use of a star book system.

It is important that parents **read, understand and sign** the supplied Code of Behaviour document at enrolment.

## Anti-Bullying Policy and Code

Our Anti-Bullying Policy is in line with the policy published by the Department of Education & Skills.

Our school's Anti-Bullying Code is displayed in each classroom. Junior and Senior Infants focus on item numbers 1-3. First and Second Classes focus on item numbers 1-5.

1. Be kind to everyone.
2. Play together and stay together.
3. Friends mind each other
4. We call repeated unkind actions or words bullying -  
**SAY "NO" TO BULLYING!**
5. Tell someone you trust if you are bullied. Keep telling until someone helps you.

**This is a "Telling" school.**

## Lunchtime/Lunches

The school has a **Healthy Lunch Policy** which is available on the school website [www.stps.ie](http://www.stps.ie). Sandwiches and fruit are nutritious and are more than adequate for the school lunch. Children are encouraged to bring a wide variety of fruit and vegetables. Crisps, popcorn, sweets, bars, chewing gum and yoghurt products are unsuitable for school and not allowed. Cartons of juice or non-spill bottles of water are encouraged. We promote healthy lunches in the best interest of the children and ask for your co-operation in this matter.

## Green School Status

Our **1<sup>st</sup>** flag was awarded for our 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' approach to reducing **Litter and Waste**. Our **2<sup>nd</sup>** flag was awarded for our **Low Energy** campaign and our **3<sup>rd</sup>** was awarded for our **Water Conservation** campaign.

Our **4<sup>th</sup>** Green Flag was awarded for **Travel**. We successfully increased the number of pupils walking, cycling, scooting, car pooling and parking and striding to school. Promoting sustainable travel modes in the school also helps to improve pupils' safety, health and fitness. Our **5<sup>th</sup>** Green Flag was awarded for **Biodiversity**. Our pupils learned a lot about plant and animal habitats in the local area and in the wider world. We have successfully incubated chicks in our classrooms for the last few years.

Our **6<sup>th</sup>** Green Flag was awarded for **Global Citizenship: Litter & Waste**. This flag emphasises the importance to all of us who live on planet earth of reducing, reusing and recycling materials. It also encouraged our pupils to respect and learn about people from other countries and cultures. Our **7<sup>th</sup>** Green Flag was awarded for **Global Citizenship: Low Energy**. This campaign gave us a chance to revise the '**Energy**' theme while looking at issues surrounding energy on a global scale. The most obvious global link to this theme is of course **climate change**, the most serious environmental problem of our time, which is intrinsically linked to our energy use.

Our **8th Green Flag** was awarded for our work on **Global Citizenship: Marine Environment**. This theme helped us to discover how our Green Schools work has positively influenced environments worldwide while learning about the effects of pollution on our oceans and seas.

We are now working towards our **9th Green Flag** for **Global Citizenship and Travel**. Please visit our Instagram page to see more examples of the work we are doing **@stpatsjnschool**.

We are very proud of our Green School status, especially as we are currently the only junior school in Fingal with eight Green Flags. These flags have been earned by the hard work of our pupils, sustained and supported by teachers, the Green School committee and our parent body representing an approach to life that we in St. Patrick's have taken for many years. The core of this approach is respect; for ourselves, for each other and for the environment. With your help we will continue to reap the rewards of that approach.

**Our Motto: "Be Cool! Siúl to School!"**

### **Towards a Paperless School**

As part of our efforts to minimise our impact on the environment we use email and texts where possible to communicate with parents, rather than sending paper notes home. For this reason it is vital that we always have **an up-to-date email address and phone numbers** where you can receive notifications from school. **It is the parent's responsibility to ensure these contact details are always up to date.**

### **Science**

We are equally proud of our '**Award of Science Excellence**' which have already achieved on six occasions. This is as a result of our commitment to hands-on science at all levels.

## Amber Flag

Our school achieved the '**Pieta House Amber Flag**' in 2019 & renewed it in 2020. This flag is proudly displayed over our Amber Flag Notice Board in the halla. This initiative recognises the individual effort of schools to create healthy, inclusive environments that support the mental well-being of students, school staff, and wider school community. The Amber Flag Committee comprises two student 'Kindness Ambassadors' from each of our thirteen classes. See more details on our Instagram page [\*\*@stpatsjnsamberflag\*\*](#). Activities to date include cross-curricular classroom and whole school activities focusing on the themes of 'Kindness to Others', 'Kindness to Self', 'Friendship', 'Emotion Literacy' & 'Growth Mind-Set and Resilience'; 'How to Use the Buddy Bench'; mindfulness/relaxation techniques during the school day; Paws B Mindfulness in Schools Programme; developing positive relationships with others in our wider community; 'Positive Mental Health' talks for parents and school staff and Well-Being Week culminating in a Mental Health Awareness Day.

## Active School

In our school we try to be as active as possible. We encourage the children and staff to be physically active and teach the children about the importance of same. As well as the 1 hour of P.E. taught to the children every week, there are several other active initiatives in the school including:

- **10@10:** whole school does 10 exercises for 10 minutes once a month.
- **Active Homework:** daily component of homework for all children.
- **Active Board:** children's active achievements are displayed.
- **Visiting Coaches:** GAA and Hockey skills are taught regularly.
- **Active Week:** taster session in various sports and 'Sports for All Day'.
- **Movement:** incorporated daily into many classroom activities.

## Emergency Contact

It is important that the school has the name, address and phone number of a person who may be contacted should the parents be unavailable. This person would take responsibility for your child in the event of an emergency closing, sickness, accident, etc. Should this emergency contact change at any time **it is your responsibility to notify the school immediately.**

## Cards and Invitations

It is the policy of this school that birthday/party invitations, Christmas cards, etc. **should not be distributed in school.** This is to avoid individual children feeling excluded and friendless. Please make all such arrangements outside of school time. We ask all parents and guardians to support this policy.

## Health Matters

Children who are unwell should be kept at home until better. Children who have been ill during the night **should not** be sent to school. HSE guidelines state that children should be **excluded from school for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.** Head lice are an ongoing problem in all schools. Parents should examine their child's hair at least twice a week with a fine comb. The class teacher should be informed if your child has head lice so that an advisory note can be issued to the class. Where there is a suspected case of COVID-19, all HSE advice must be followed.

## Absences from School

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, you must let the school know if your child is absent and why. Please do this by email, do not ring the school to notify of absence. Absence forms are available at reception or from the class teacher. Every school has a legal obligation to notify the National Educational Welfare Board if a child has missed a total of 20 days in the school year, even if those absences are explained. Parents will receive a courtesy notification by text when their child reaches 10 days' and 15 days' absence.

## School Website

Our school website [www.stps.ie](http://www.stps.ie) is a useful source of information. The School Calendar, Parents' Association Newsletters, School Policies and Department of Education Inspection Reports pertaining to the school are made available to parents via the website.

## School Holidays

In order to facilitate parents who have children in both schools, all holidays and short breaks coincide with those taken by St. Patrick's Senior School. Parents are notified of these and any other short closures which may occur through the publication of the School Calendar at the start of the school year on the school website. Parents are also reminded of closures via a notice on the school gate a couple of days beforehand.

## The First Day

It is important that you establish a **good routine early**. Check that all items are ready for the morning - uniform, lunch, bag. **Bags must be large enough to hold the largest book/folder and lunch box**. Do all of this in a calm fashion - don't have your child over-excited or anxious going to bed. Give plenty of time in the morning for washing, dressing and eating a good breakfast. It is important that your child arrives at school **on time** as children can find it very intimidating to walk into a class already in progress.

On the big day, if you are feeling upset, don't show it. Leave your child with the teacher and tell your child you will be back at the appropriate time to collect him/her. If your child is upset, trust the teacher. The teacher is very experienced and knows how to comfort an anxious child. It is important that you arrive **on time** to collect your child from school. Children can become upset if they see other children being collected and feel they are being left behind.

## **Settling in to School Life**

In school your child will meet many other children. There will be the familiar faces of friends from their neighbourhood as well as former classmates from pre-school. There will also be new faces.

Due to the increased integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools, there may be children in the class with special needs. There are also likely to be children from other countries and/or cultures in their new class, as Ireland is becoming increasingly multi-cultural.

Your child will take some time to familiarise him/herself with all these new faces but, after a time, you will find that your child will make new friends.

It takes time for children to adapt to school life and routine. Don't expect too much too soon. Talk to them about what happened at school and allow them to respond in their own way.

If you ask "what did you learn today?" you will most likely be told "nothing". Most of the work at infant level is activity based and children are not conscious of "learning" as adults understand it. If, however, you asked "what happened?", "what did you do?", "did you sing?", "did you draw?", you will have more success.

Your child will be tired coming home from school and occasionally may sleep for an hour or so when they come home. It is important to set a routine of a quiet time together and early to bed.

If you feel your child is worried about something school related, contact the class teacher. You will be given an email address where you can contact your child's class teacher at the start of the new year.

## Health and Safety

As supervision is not provided outside of school hours, the Board of Management cannot accept responsibility for children arriving before the official opening time (8.50am) or remaining on the school grounds after closing time (1.30pm/2.30pm).

To comply with the **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005** the Board of Management commissioned a **Risk Assessment** of both the physical environment and various procedures followed in the school. The collection procedures were scrutinised and as a result children will be brought to the main gate every day regardless of the weather. To comply with the school's **COVID-19 infection control protocol**, pupils are collected from parents at the gate each morning by teachers and brought to class under staff supervision. Unfortunately, we cannot allow parents onto school premises at this time.

**Please ensure your child wears clothing appropriate to the weather.**

**Your child will need to bring a rainproof hooded coat to school every day.** Department of Education guidelines recommend that we maximise children's time outdoors during the school day, so they will be outside where possible in all except the worst weather. If they have no hoods/sleeves on their coats they will get quite wet.

Children's egress will be staggered to reduce crowding and the possibility of cross contamination on both sides of the gate. You will receive notice of your child's collection time. Please adhere to this time. Children will not be allowed through the gate until their teacher sees their parent/minder/collector and allows the child out. **Calling the children out of turn is unhelpful. Taking a child whose collector has not yet arrived is not allowed under any circumstances. Please ensure that you and any children with you stand behind the yellow line at the gate,** This allows the children to exit the school safely.

## School Rules

1. All pupils and parents are expected to follow the Code of Behaviour, which parents sign on enrolment, in its entirety. These rules are explained to the children in an age appropriate way, using our DFL motto: “kind hands, kind words, kind actions”.
2. Children may only leave the school during school hours if collected by a parent or legal guardian. If the child is to be collected by **any person other than** a parent or legal guardian **a written request** must be submitted, naming the person who will collect the child.
3. All members of the school community (staff, pupils & parents) must be treated with respect.
4. All property within the school must be treated with respect.
5. All forms of aggressive, threatening or violent play/behaviour are forbidden.
6. No bad language is allowed.
7. School uniform and school tracksuit must be worn on appropriate days.
8. No running allowed on the premises.
9. The school’s healthy lunch policy must be followed.