

St. Patrick's Junior School



Skerries, Co. Dublin

2024

School Details

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

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Email: admin@stps.ie

Website: www.stps.ie

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín

Deputy Principal: Lynsey Dungan

Chairperson, Board of Management: 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. This year we have three Junior Infant classes, three Senior Infant classes, three First classes and three Second classes. We are also opening our first autism class this year. We have approximately 300 pupils on roll. We have a staff of eighteen permanent teachers - twelve class teachers, three additional educational needs teachers, one special class teacher and the Principal.

School Curriculum

The Primary School Curriculum, in use in all primary schools, 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 2023 (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.

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 Learning' reflects the Christian values of forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope. According to 'Discipline for Learning' 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
Ms. Lyndsey Hennigan	Parents' Nominee
Mr. Brian Corrigan	Parents' Nominee
Ms. Orlagh Bowers	Community Nominee
Ms. Olivia Ferguson	Community Nominee
Ms. Mags Daly	Teachers' Nominee
Ms. Máire Ní Chróinín	Principal

The Parents' Association

Established in 1998, St. Patrick's JNS 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 slightly staggered for health & safety reasons)

School Uniform

Pupils are encouraged to wear their uniform with pride. The uniform may be purchased locally. Alternatively, generic versions of polo shirts, shirts, trousers, pinafores, jumpers and cardigans may be purchased and the school crest (available locally from PhilAnn's) sewn on to the cardigan or jumper.

Uniform: Bottle green pinafore or grey trousers, cream or grey shirt, bottle green cardigan or jumper, green/cream striped 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). Polo shirts must be plain white – no slogans/writing should be visible.

- **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 in your child's schoolbag to be kept there in case of any toilet 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 or similar reward 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. 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. Children will bring waste/used packaging from their lunches home in their lunch box every day.

Green School Status

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

Our **4th** Green Flag was awarded for **Travel**. We successfully increased the number of pupils walking, cycling, scooting, carpooling and parking and striding to school. Promoting sustainable travel modes in the school also helps to improve pupils' safety, health and fitness. Our **5th** 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.

Our **6th** 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 **7th** 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.

Our **9th Green Flag** was awarded for **Global Citizenship and Travel**. We renewed our focus on energy & water use and sustainable methods of travel to and from school. Pupils monitored energy use and took part in scooter and bike workshops. Pupils also did a walking challenge, completing laps of the yard to virtually "travel" to monuments and towns around Ireland.

We have just been awarded our **10th** Green Flag, for **Global biodiversity and Food**. This looks at the requirement to feed our global population while maintaining biodiversity. Pupils have learned about bees and pollination and have planted peas (we had a “Nobel Peas Prize” for the best pea pot design). We did Incredible Edibles, Picker Pals and hosted visits from Tidy Towns Skerries. We are also learning about composting and have started a compost bin in the school. Please visit our Instagram page to see more examples of the work we are doing: **@stpatsjnsgreenschool**.

We are very proud of our Green School status, especially as we are currently one of very few junior primary schools in Fingal with ten 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. They represent 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 new Green School Code:

“From the smallest bee to the biggest tree, protect earth’s biodiversity”

Amber Flag

Our school achieved the ‘Pieta House Amber Flag’ in 2019. It 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 wellbeing of students, school staff, and the wider school community. The Amber Flag Committee comprises two student “kindness ambassadors” from each of our classes. Other 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, transition talks for pupils in preparation for the move to the Senior National School, ‘Positive Mental Health’ talks for parents and school staff and Well-Being Week culminating in a Mental Health Awareness Day. See more details on our Instagram page: **@stpatsjnsamberflag**.

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.
We arrange for other coaches to do four or six week blocs when possible/appropriate.
- **Active Week:** taster session in various sports and 'Sports for All Day'.
- **Movement:** incorporated daily into many classroom activities.

Science

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

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.**

Databiz Eolas App

The Databiz Eolas App allows the school to communicate with parents and allows you to access your child's end of year reports and their attendance record. You can record the reasons for a child's absence directly into the school system reducing the need for notes. The app is free to download and use.

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. **It is vital that we always have up to date phone numbers for this purpose.**

Collection from School:

You will be asked at the beginning of the year to provide a list of people who are authorised to collect your child from school, and who we are authorised to contact in an emergency if parents are not answering calls. If there is any temporary or permanent change to these arrangements (your child is being collected by another parent for a play date, or you change child minders/after school clubs) you need to let the school know beforehand via email. In an absolute emergency, where a child will be collected by a different person, the parent needs to ring the school to let us know about this. If we are not made aware of these changes there may be a delay while we contact parents to authorise collection by the new person.

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. Cards and invitations being distributed in school will be collected up and returned to the sender at the end of the school day.

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 a general advisory note can be issued to the class. Where there is a case of COVID-19, all current 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 to the email address** which will be provided to you at the start of the school year; do not ring the school to notify of absence. Please provide a reason for **every** absence as otherwise it will be marked as "unexplained". Every school has a legal obligation to notify the Túsla Education Support Service (TESS) if a child has missed a total of 20 days in the school year, even if those absences are accounted for. **As a courtesy**, parents will automatically receive a notification via the App or by text when their child reaches 10, 15 and 18 days' absence. A final text will issue if a child reaches 20 days' absence notifying our intention to report the absences to TESS.

School Website

Our school website **www.stps.ie** is a useful source of information. Parents' Association Newsletters, School Policies and Department of Education Inspection Reports pertaining to the school are made available to parents via the website. The School Calendar is also made available on 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 email and 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 into 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 additional needs into main-stream schools, there may be children in the class with additional 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. At the start of each school year, you will be given an email address where you can contact your child's class teacher. If you feel your child is worried about something school related, you can contact the class teacher at that email address. The teacher will respond during working hours.

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 procedures followed when moving around the school with children. For the health & safety of all and regardless of the weather, pupils are collected from parents at the gate each morning by teachers and brought to class under staff supervision. Children will be brought to the gate at pick up time every day by their teacher and collected by their parents/minders there.

Children's egress will be staggered slightly for health and safety reasons. 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,** as this allows the children to exit the school safely.

Please ensure your child wears clothing appropriate to the weather.

Your child will need to bring a rainproof hooded coat to school every day.

We try to maximise children's time outdoors during the school day, so they will be outside where possible in all except the worst weather. If their coat has no hood or no sleeves they will get quite wet. If a child is refusing to wear a coat, bring it along anyway and give it to them or the teacher on reaching the gate. Then it will be available at break time if necessary.

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 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 notification** must be submitted via email to both the class email address and the main school address (admin@stps.ie), 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.