

PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST DAY IN JUNIOR INFANTS

- Tell him/her about school beforehand, casually, and talk about it as a happy place where there will be a big welcome for him/her and he/she will meet new friends.
- Don't use school or a teacher as a threat *"If you behave like that for a teacher she'll murder you"* though said light-heartedly can make some children very apprehensive.
- Make sure he/she has his/her new uniform and his/her new bag These help him/her identify more readily with the school and other children.

It would help greatly if your child is able to:

- * Button and unbutton his/her coat
- * Put on and off his/her own shoes
- * Use the toilet without help
- * Encourage personal hygiene. Your child should know to flush the toilet and wash his/her hands without having to be told.
- * Use a handkerchief when necessary
- * Share toys and playthings with others and take turns
- * Tidy up and put away his/her play things
- * Remain contentedly for a few hours in the home of a relation, friend or neighbour.

The First Day

Your child will be met by the teacher and the other children and will be shown his/her chair. Hopefully he/she will be absorbed in his new surroundings. So having assured him you will be back to collect him, wish him good-bye and **make your getaway without delay.**

Handling the Upset Child

In spite of 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. She is experienced and resourceful and is used to coping with all kinds of starting-off problems.

- **Try not to show outward signs of your own distress.** Sometimes the parents are more upset than the child and are the main cause of his/her anxiety.
- 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.

You must be firm from the start. Even if a child is upset you must insist that he/she stay for a short time– even 10 minutes.



St Joseph's Primary School

Macroom, Co. Cork



After School Homework Club

A Homework Club takes place in the school on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 2.40 to 3.40pm for pupils from First to Sixth Class. Homework club is run and supervised by our teaching staff

Learning Support and Special Educational Needs

St. Joseph's supports the prevention of learning difficulties and early intervention where difficulties are detected. Parents/guardians are consulted about all such recommendations.

Learning Support may be provided in small group, on individual basis within a class or on a withdrawal basis. Extra support is also provided for children whose first language is not English.

Should your child have Special Educational Needs s/he may qualify for daily withdrawal from mainstream class for extra help with our Special Needs Resource teachers. Some children, for safety and care reasons, require extra support in school. We are fortunate to have Special Needs Assistants who help support the teacher in catering for the needs of these children. The role of our SNAs is reviewed annually

Social Skills

Teaching social skills is an integral part of a school curriculum. To facilitate this and to help their peers, children may be withdrawn to resource room for small group activities.

Reading Recovery

The Reading Recovery programme is available in our school. It is proving very successful in helping pupils who are experiencing difficulties with reading.

Lift Off to Literacy

We also have the literacy initiative "Lift Off to Literacy". It is an intensive programme of Reading and Writing. Over the course a session pupils engage in a number of "stations" where activities are tailor made to the pupil's level of competency. The aim of Literacy Lift-Off is to make pupils constructive learners. It teaches them 'how' to problem-solve independently.

Homework

Parents are encouraged to establish a set routine and time for the child to do his/her homework, in a quiet place free from distractions. Parents are asked to supervise children's homework, checking and signing the homework journal on completion. Help and encourage the child but do not do the homework for him/her. Please forward a note to the teacher or place a note in your child's homework folder/journal if homework has not been completed due to unforeseen circumstances.

Oral homework/reading is just as important as written homework.

Allotted time that teachers expect the average child in each class to spend at homework is as follows:

Junior Infants	10 – 15 minutes
Senior Infants	15 – 25 minutes
First and Second	No more than 30 minutes
Third and Fourth	30 – 45 minutes
Fifth Class	45 minutes – 1 hour
Sixth Class	1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes (max.)

If your child is spending more time than they should at homework and he/she is doing their work in a quiet place free from distractions please contact the class teacher at the earliest opportunity.

Homework is given Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends; however, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

Extra Activities

Sport—hurling and football coaching	After school coaching – Power hour	Super Troopers Programme– home physical activity programme
School choir	School recorder band	Instrumental training – recorder
Green school programme	FÍS Film Project	Quizzes

A Thuismitheoirí a Chairde,

This booklet gives you easy access to important information about the school. You may download a copy of any/all of the policies from www.stjosephsprimarymacroom.com If there is anything else you would like to know, please contact the school on 026 41847.

Le gach dea ghuí,

Sr Brigid O'Connell and Staff.

OUR VISION

Each person through positive learning experiences will be stimulated to achieve his/her full potential, face life confidently, find fulfilment and be respectful in an ever-changing world.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Primary School, Macroom is a Catholic school, therefore it is inclusive and enrolls children of other faiths and none and respects their beliefs and practices. The school is under the patronage of the Bishop of Cloyne and the trusteeship of the Bishop of Cloyne. The school was founded in 1868 by the Sisters of Mercy.

A Christian ethos permeates the school day and the life of the school. There is a spirit of prayer in the school not just imposed on the children, but it is seen to be a value for the teachers. Children of all faiths are encouraged to pray to God as they are taught by their parents, to do so at home. Children of no faith are encouraged to respect prayer time and to use the quiet time for reflection. Teachers, with support from parents, are involved in the Catholic faith development of Catholic children, who are prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation. Children from all faith traditions and none are therefore welcome to participate in the religious programme that our school provides. The school cannot undertake to educate children of other faiths in their own faith, nor can it provide supervision during the religious education period apart from within the class. The school has an obligation to nurture the spiritual and moral development of all its children. Children of other faiths and no faith are facilitated to work on their moral and spiritual development during religion time, Mass and catholic celebrations.

SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management

The Board of Management has legal responsibility for the overall running of the school. It serves for a term of four years and a new Board was formed in November 2015. The members of the current board are:

Patron's Representatives	Mr Stephen O'Connor (Chairperson) Fr Eamonn McCarthy
Principal and Teachers' Representative	Sr Brigid O'Connell, Mrs. Helena O'Callaghan
Parents' Representatives	Mr. Jack Purcell, Mrs. Sylvia Sexton
Community Representatives	Mrs Margaret O'Riordan Mr. Martin Neville

School Principal and Staff

The number of teachers in a school is determined by the Department of Education & Skills. The allocation of a new teacher depends on the actual enrolment of a school on the preceding 30th September.

Special Education Needs Teachers

The numbers of teachers on the SEN Team (Special Education Needs) depends on the General Allocation by the Department of Education & Skills and the number of children deemed by the SENO (Special Education Needs Organiser) to qualify for special needs resources

Parents Association

Membership of the Parents Association is open to all parents/ guardians of all pupils enrolled. It promotes the interests of the pupils in co-operation with the BOM, Principal and Staff. Parents as a group have a wide range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for pupils.

For more information contact Ruth Cronin at 087 7938585

numeracy. Emphasis is placed on identifying children with learning difficulties early and putting an effective intervention programme in place, in consultation with parents.

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)

In the 1999 curriculum Relationships Sexuality Education (RSE) was included in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The content of the schools SPHE programme includes a wide range of topics such as healthy eating, alcohol, drugs, environmental issues, safety and social responsibility as well as RSE. RSE will be taught in accordance with the Department's directives and within the Philosophy framework of the school. The teaching methods used in the school are child centred and reflect the age and stage development of each child. If parents are concerned about the more sensitive issues are being taught, they are requested to submit this in writing to the Principal. Efforts will be made by the school, using the resources it has, to accommodate these children by providing supervision within another classroom.

Subjects taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class

Drama,	Mathematics	Science
Languages (English, Irish)	Music	Social Personal and Health Education
Geography	P.E	Visual Arts.
History	Religion	

Facilities

Computer Lab with 28 computers and Data projector

Interactive White Boards and laptops/PCs in all classrooms

Ipads are used for station teaching

Digital video recorders and digital cameras for use by all children.

Assembly Hall used for games and Physical education . We also have our school shows here. Access to Secondary School Gym and Sport facilities

Notes are needed

1. When it is necessary for a pupil in Junior and Senior Infants to leave school early, a note on a **Standard form Note from Parents** stating who will collect the child, must be sent to the class teacher. These notes will be given to the children by their Class Teacher. Parents/ guardians are asked to call personally to the school reception to collect the child and sign the 'Sign-Out' book.
2. In the event of a pupil being absent through illness or for any other reason, the class teacher should be informed **on the standard form Explanation for Absence** on the pupil's return to school. If it is anticipated that the absence will be of a lengthy duration, the class teacher should be informed by note as soon as possible

Phone Numbers

Please ensure that your child's teacher has an up-to-date address and phone number which can be written in the homework journal. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school in writing of any changes in name, address or telephone. We also need two further contact numbers for emergencies. We will then be able to contact you immediately if your child is sick

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's promotes a Catholic ethos and the Alive O Religious programme is followed classes from Third to Sixth. A new religion programme Grow in Love is used in classes from junior Infants to Second Class. Parents/guardians of other denominations who do not wish their children to participate in Religious studies may request in writing an exemption. These children are given an alternative task or activity and usually remain within the classroom.

Parents have a key role to play in the religious formation of their children. They are asked to follow the Grow in Love and Alive O Religion programme from the child's book, and to help with the Religion workbook when it is sent home.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The What, Why and How of Children's Learning in Primary School is a DVD for parents about the Primary School Curriculum. It can be accessed at www.ncca.ie The DVD provides information for parents about what children learn in school, why they learn with the curriculum and how they learn through different teaching methodologies. In St Joseph's Primary School efforts are made to ensure children taste success regularly. There is a focus on quality learning for all. High standards are achieved in literacy and

ROUTINES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

School Times

1. School begins at 9.00a.m. It is important that the children develop the habit of being punctual for school. Children who come to school before 9.00a.m. wait in the School Hall, in their class line. Their teacher will collect them at 8.55a.m. In the interests of safety and the fostering of independence children are encouraged to say 'Good bye' to their parents / guardians when they join the line. For safety reasons children are not allowed run around the Hall at this time. The school gate opens at 8.45am
2. There is a short break at 10.50a.m. Lunch break is from 12.30 p.m. to 1.00 p.m.
3. To ease Junior Infant children into the school routine we have a policy that Junior Infants go home early for the first fortnight.
4. Junior and Senior Infant Classes go home at 1.40 p.m. Infants are not allowed to go home on their own. Whoever collects your child from school must be at the school-gate before dismissal time.

The pupils in the other classes go home at 2.40 p.m.
5. **Be sure to collect your child on time at home time.** Children can become very upset if they feel they are **forgotten**.
If at any time the collecting routine has to be changed ensure you tell the child and the teacher. Please inform the school if there is any change in mobile contact numbers
6. The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for the children's property.

Attendance

Each child, to whom the School Attendance Act applies (that is, those between the ages of 6 and 16) is obliged by law to attend school every day unless there is a reasonable excuse for not attending. .If your child is absent for any reason, a written note/the standard note of absence signed by a parent/guardian is required on your child's return to school. If you envisage your child being absent for a number of days a telephone call or written note to explain the child's absence is important. Parents are reminded that

under the Welfare Act 2000 the school authorities are obliged to report absences in excess of twenty days.

Roll class

Roll call is at 10 am a pupil will be marked either present or absent at the time of roll call and there will be no provision for adjusting the Roll Book where a pupil subsequently does not complete the full school day or arrives after the roll call.

If your child is sick

A pupil who shows signs of illness should be kept at home. Requests from parents to allow their child to stay inside during break times cannot be accepted. A child who is too sick to play with his peers or go outside during break times should not be in school. The school is unable to provide adequate extra supervision inside the school, during break times. However, arrangements will be made in exceptional circumstances, when a child needs to stay inside.

Situations do arise when a child appears well in the morning and then gets sick during the day. Parents/guardians will be contacted. If the school is unable to make contact with parents/guardians a decision will be made as to whether the child needs medical assistance. If deemed necessary the child's family doctor will be contacted. If not the child will be made as comfortable as possible until a parent/guardian is contacted.

Accidents

Accidents occur despite supervision. Minor accidents are treated at school. In the event of a more serious accident or a child becoming very ill, every possible effort will be made to contact the pupil's parents or the persons delegated to take responsibility for that child. Please ensure that alternative contact consent has been received and that they live **locally**.

The school will not accept responsibility for any medical expenses incurred

Parking outside the school

Your help is needed to ensure the safety of all children coming to school. Please follow the following directions.

- Please do not park at the entrance to the staff car park

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time they are entitled to. When possible the Principal will teach the class until the class teacher returns.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc. this can be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions down to a minimum.

Parents can make an appointment to meet a teacher at a time that is convenient to both teacher and parent.

Parent/ teacher meetings for pupils are held during the year, you will be notified of these.

A meeting is held in May/June of each year with parents of the new Junior Infant pupils.

In addition to the above forms of home/school links, the following means of communication are also utilised:

- Notes in the pupil's homework notebook (from 1st—6th Class)
- Newsletters are issued during the year – giving details of events and activities
- School happenings are also on the school website and school blog
- 'Text-a-Parent' text messages are sent to parent mobile phone.
- School reports are issued prior at the end of the school year.
- Details of school holidays or early school closures are always communicated **in writing**.
- School Discipline Policy, Anti Bullying Policy, Custody policy, Access to Records policy are included with this booklet.
- School policies are available on the school website www.stjosephsprimarymacroom.com

Mobile phones

If a mobile phone is brought to school, it has to be handed up at a central location in the morning and may be collected at home time. It can be collected at home time. The Board of Management will not take responsibility for any loss or damage to the phone while in school.

Helping less well off children

There is a tradition in the school of helping the children in the developing world, Our pupils have always been good in this regard and they love to help children who are less well off. We like to encourage this value in all our pupils.

Procedures for Reporting allegations of Child Abuse

The Board of Management of St Joseph's Primary School follows the procedures as outlined in the *Children First: National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2011*. These procedures are listed in our School Plan. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) appointed by the BOM is Sr. Brigid O'Connell. The deputy DLP is Mrs. Kathleen O'Driscoll. If any parent is concerned about a pupil in the school they should in the first instance contact the DLP.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However, parents are welcome to speak to the Principal at *any time*. In case of prior appointments for the Principal it would be wise to ring the school in advance (026 41847). However, meetings with class teacher at class doors to discuss a child's concern/ progress is discouraged on a number of grounds:

1. A teacher cannot adequately supervise her class while at the same time speaking to a parent.
2. It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are standing close by. It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door.

- At opening and closing times, please be aware that cars will be entering and exiting the car park, if you are walking to or from the school.
- One can only use the roundabout as a drop off. Cars must move forward in turn and no reversing is allowed.
- Leave your child at the set down point, where they can cross at the zebra crossing.
- No parking on the roundabout is permitted at any time.
- Please do not park at the entrance of houses in neighbouring estates. We ask parents to drive with great caution and to allow for the unexpected errors that children of school-age can make. At assembly and dismissal times, parents and other visitors to school are asked to avoid parking on or near the pedestrian crossing outside the school, as it is dangerous for children using the crossing.

Access to School

In as far as it is possible with the practical layout of the school premises, anyone entering the school premises is required to identify themselves to the Principal or secretary on entering the school. The main entrance is at the side of the building. The main door is security locked. Access is by electronic bell audio link and this is situated in the general office and principal's and is only operational from this area. Please note office times are as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday Open: 9.30-11.30am
Closed: 11.00-11.30am Open: 11.30-1.00 Closed: 1.00-1.30 Open: 1.30pm to 2.20pm Office Closed: 2.20pm

School Uniform

The school uniform is worn on all school days other than on days of PE lessons.

Girls

Grey pinafore, blue blouse, royal blue cardigan/ jumper, navy tie, white/grey/navy stocking/tights, black shoes, blue jacket.
Navy tracksuit with runners for PE.

Boys

Grey pants, grey shirt, green pullover with school crest, green striped tie
black shoes, blue jacket
Navy tracksuit with runners for PE.
School tracksuits with matching blue t-shirts and runners are worn at P.E.

The uniform is available in local draper shops. For Physical Education, runners are compulsory and it is recommended that the pupils wear the school tracksuit.

No jewellery is allowed except for stud earrings in the lobe of the ear and watches. Make up is not allowed.

School Books

Junior Infant parents will receive a book list in May/June detailing the books and other items your child will need for the year. The books are available in school and are kept in school and will be given to the child as they need them.

A limited amount of money is made available to the school for the purchase of books for children where circumstances merit this assistance being given. Please contact the Principal or Deputy–Principal if there is a problem with regard to the purchase of books.

A Book Rental Scheme operates in the school for some text books which are rented for the school year.

Mark all belongings

Please ensure that all personal property likely to be removed i.e. coats, hats, gloves, jumpers, school books, copies, lunch boxes etc. are ***clearly labelled with your child's name*** as many children possess similar items. We encourage putting a small keyring on the zip of the school coat so that it can be identified easily

Hygiene

Personal hygiene is very important. All pupils are required to maintain their hair in a neat and clean condition. Parents are required to check their child's hair regularly otherwise head lice can become a problem in school. Pupils are to wash their hands after using the toilet. Food should never be brought into the toilet areas. Every pupil should have their own hand towel.

Litter is to be put into the bins provided. Students should feel responsible for their school-home; they should take care of it and keep it as clean and neat as possible. Concern for the environment is part of the formation of ecological awareness.

Health Promoting School—Healthy Lunch policy

St. Joseph's is a Health promoting School. Our aim is to ensure children eat a healthy, well-balanced lunch, thus promoting a healthy lifestyle. By

encouraging healthy eating patterns we educate children for later life. Every Friday we have Fruity Friday where every child is encouraged to bring a piece of fruit for lunch. Some useful tips on Food for Young Children look up http://stjosephsprimarymacroom.com/files/food_for_young_children.pdf

Pupils are encouraged to walk to school on Wednesdays—WOW, if weather permits.

EU Milk Scheme

Growing children should get approximately one pint of milk a day, or its equivalent as cheese, yoghurt or milk pudding. This ensures that they get enough calcium, which is essential for healthy bones and teeth.

At the start of each school term milk order forms will be sent out. The milk is delivered in 189ml cartons with straws.

Health/Medication

Children are not allowed to bring any medicines to school, prescription or non prescription. Please discuss this with your child's class teacher /principal to arrange administration of same. Parents are asked to inform the school in writing if their child suffers from any allergies, long term and if their child is on medication. No teacher can be required to administer medicine or drugs to a pupil. A teacher who, with the consent of the BOM, does take on the responsibility for administering medicines takes on a heavy duty of care. Asthmatic children who need to bring an inhaler to school are expected to be able to self-administer. The staff of the school cannot be responsible for negligent use of inhalers.

There is a facility for parents to take out insurance to cover medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident at school (or 24 hour cover) Details of this scheme are circulated to parents.

Invitations/ Cards

It is school policy that invitations to birthday parties, Christmas cards etc. are not distributed in the school premises, out of consideration for non-receivers