

Welcome to St. Philomena's N.S.



*We look forward to you joining us in
September and hope your years here will be
very happy, fruitful and memorable.*

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Introduction

The aim of St. Philomena's National School is to provide a Christian, caring, learning environment, which facilitates the nurturing of each pupil's full educational potential. The achievement of this aim informs all of the planning processes and activities which occur in our school. Teachers and parents are partners in the children's education, with co-operation and communication between home and school being vital ingredients in the educational process. We share the same aim i.e. the well-being of the children in our care. This prospectus has been produced with the express purpose of sharing information with parents concerning school policies, rules and routines. St. Philomena's operates in accordance with the Education Act 1998 and the Rules for National Schools as determined by the Department of Education and Science.

We, the Board of Management of St. Philomena's National School, hope that each child will have a very enjoyable time in this school and that the information provided will prove to be of major benefit.

School Charter

St. Philomena's N.S. is a Roman Catholic School established with the Minister for Education and aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil, intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual, including a loving relationship with God and with other people. The school models and promotes a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Catholic School provides Religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Catholic Church and promotes the formation of pupils in the Catholic Faith.

Religious Education:

- As a Catholic school there will be daily Religious Education lessons ; R.E. related activities e.g. school Masses, visits to church, visits from religious persons, incidental references, choir, prayers etc. that are all part of our Catholic ethos.
- Given the lack of extra resources in St. Philomena's N.S. and that it is a Catholic school, **non-Catholic children will have to remain for safety reasons with their class at all times, including religion class, visits to Church etc.**
- However, there is no compulsion on non-Catholic children to take part in Religious education in school.

Mission Statement

St. Philomena's National School promotes Gospel values in a Christian learning community, where children can grow in knowledge and understanding and in the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values.

We are fully committed to offering excellence in education by:

- Promoting the highest possible achievement for our pupils;
- Encouraging children to grow within the Catholic faith;
- Establishing the foundations for lifelong learning;
- Welcoming input from parents to complement the skills and experience of our professional teaching staff.
- Ensuring that our school is central to the parish, reaching out to embrace the wider community;

Uniting all staff, parents and B.O.M. in our aim to be a leading school in the Diocese of Meath; Our aim is that all children should leave St. Philomena's with the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy, an enthusiasm for learning, and many happy memories.

Information about the School

The School Address: Convent Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.
Telephone Number: 057- 932 1983.
E-Mail: info@stphilomenasns.com
Website: www.stphilomenasns.ie

Staff

Principal Teacher	Ms. Bridget Clear
Deputy Principal	Ms. Geraldine Gaffey
Post Holder	Mrs. Aisling Kenny
Post Holder	Mrs. Michelle O'Meara
Teacher	Mrs. Brenda Heaslip
	Mrs. Brenda McDonnell
	Ms. Grainne Higgins
	Ms. Aoife Marron
	Mr. Mark Murphy

Secretary	Yvonne Bracken
Cleaner	Regina Brennan
Caretaker	Kevin Martin

Home School Liaison Coordinator	Mrs. Margaret Buckley
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Board of Management

Chairperson	Marie White
Secretary	Bridget Clear
Treasurer	Bernadette Kerry
Teachers' Nominee	Geraldine Gaffey
Parents' Nominees	Joe Moran
	Fiona Delaney
Community Nominees	Willie Cronly
	Brenda Colgan

Parents' Association

Chairperson	Debbie Sewell
Secretary	Mary Leavy
Treasurer	Jo Bergin Dwyer



SCHOOL PROCEDURES

School starts at 9.20 a.m. The school yard door is open at 9.10 a.m.

All children enter the yard through the side timber door. There will be one teacher supervising the yard.

HOWEVER IT MUST BE NOTED BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS THAT THE TEACHERS AND THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR PUPILS BEFORE 9.10 A.M. OR AFTER 3.00.P.M.

9.20a.m. Pupils assemble in the school yard for class.

3.00 p.m. At 3.00 p.m. pupils are expected to leave the school grounds in an orderly and prompt manner

Punctuality

All pupils are expected to arrive at school in time for class each morning and so acquire a good habit of punctuality. The side yard door is closed at approximately 9.20 a.m. each morning. Children who are late enter through the main front porch door and sign the late book.

Attendance/Absence

- Children are requested to aim for full attendance during the year.
- Each child to whom the School Attendance Act applies (those between the ages of 6 and 15) is obliged *by law* to attend school every day on which the school is in operation.
- **The school authorities are obliged to notify the National Education Welfare Board when a child is absent for 20 days** or more in any school year, even where the child's parents/guardians have provided an explanation for the absence.
- If your child is late for school or has to leave early you are obliged *by law* (under the Education Welfare Act 2000) to notify the school. To accommodate this we have "**Explanation for Absence**" and "**Note to/from Parent/Guardian**" at back of diary.
- If for any reason a child has to leave school during school hours, parents/guardians are asked to call to the Secretary's office to collect their child and then to sign their child out in the "Sign Out" book in the hall.

Dress Code

Uniform items are available locally.

Children must wear the complete school uniform every day

- **P.E. days:** navy tracksuit bottoms, school navy jumper with crest, polo shirt with school name.
 - **All other days:** plaid skirt, navy school trousers white shirt, blue tie, navy jumper with crest, navy socks/tights
 - Black or dark school shoes must be worn. (high-heels, wedge soles etc. are not suitable for safety reasons). Remember St. Philomena's has two flights of stairs.
 - **Runners** are allowed **only on P.E. days**.
- Pupils are not allowed to wear jewellery during P.E. All other times, a watch and/or one pair of stud earrings in earlobes only, are acceptable.
 - Make up and nail varnish are not permitted.
 - Clearly label all clothing and personal belongings. *The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for loss of children's property.*

We will be very strict that the uniform is worn properly as it represents the standards set by our school.

Classroom Rules

Rules give children a sense of security and belonging.

- Each teacher devises a set of classroom rules with her/his individual class. These rules will be phrased positively.
- In the classroom, every child is expected to be attentive and to engage in the learning process. The rights of every child to be educated shall be respected by all.

General School Rules: (See Code of Behaviour)

In caring for themselves and others pupils should

- Be respectful of themselves, others and their school...
- Be kind, be safe, be on time, and be positive.
- Treat staff and fellow pupils with respect, good manners and courtesy and never use bad language.
- Follow the direction of teachers and other adults charged with their care.
- Be truthful and honest at all times.
- Come dressed for all aspects of school life and take pride in their appearance.
- Keep school bag, books and copies in good order.
- Keep the school tidy/litter free.
- Present written work neatly, accurately, in accordance with the teacher's instructions.
- Bring a nutritious lunch if not availing of free lunches.
- Never bring glass bottles, crisps, chewing gum, sweets or any junk foods on the school premises.
- Bring home in their lunch boxes/bags - any waste, food or/and packaging from lunches or snacks

Safety / Health / Hygiene

Children are supervised from 9.10 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. in the classrooms and in the yard.

However, it must be noted that teachers occasionally may have to leave their classrooms (i.e. to phone parents/guardians of a sick child/aid sick child etc.)

Rule while teacher is out of the classroom:

Every child must remain seated in her own place until the teacher returns. Nobody is allowed to play with a ruler, scissors, pen etc. in the teachers' absence.

- On wet days, the children must stay in at break times. The teachers on yard duty supervise the various classrooms/ corridors. It is imperative that children obey the "stay seated" rule.
- On fine days, the children take their break times in the yard. No child is left in the classroom. Written, dated notification in school diary to the class teacher is required if your child is to remain inside at breaks. If a child becomes sick, she stays in the "first-aid" cloakroom during break times while waiting to be brought home.
- Warm water is provided in all the bathroom wash-hand basins.
- In the case of fire, St. Philomena's has a modern fire alarm system. No child is allowed to interfere with same.
- In the interest of safety, the children must walk in single file at all times.
- St. Philomena's is a three storey building. The children must ascend and descend the stairs in single file, one step at a time, always leaving a free step in front.

- Running, jumping, overtaking and/or messing on the stairs will be treated as “**Serious Misbehaviour**”
- Accidents occur despite supervision. Minor accidents are treated in school as per the School Accident/Injury Policy.
- If your child is sick at night or/and in the morning, please keep them at home until they are fully better, as there is no facility for supervision of individual pupils.
- If an incident/accident happens in the yard, the child must inform a teacher on yard duty immediately.

Accident/emergency

1. Parent/guardian will be contacted by phone if their child becomes ill or is injured during school hours. Each family **MUST** provide the school with phone number, home and/or mobile, at which one of the parents or a guardian is contactable. ***Please notify the school of any change of address or phone number.***
2. The parent/guardian is then requested to collect the child immediately. If the parent/guardian fails to arrive or cannot be contacted the school cannot take any further responsibility.

Teachers are not insured to administer medication to children. If vital medication is needed throughout the school day, this must be brought to the attention of the Principal so that administration arrangements can be discussed.

Hygiene is an extremely important aspect of the development of your child/ren.

- Pupils should be aware of personal cleanliness
- Hair should be kept off the face and out of eyes.
- Please check your child’s hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice.
- Please check that your child’s fingernails are short and clean, to protect themselves and others from accidental scratches.
- Aerosols and talcum powder cans are strictly forbidden in gear bags for PE, swimming or any organized indoor or outdoor activity.

Nutrition

As we all recognise that hungry children cannot learn, the first step towards addressing this issue is ensuring that all pupils begin the school day with a nutritious breakfast at home.

Our school promotes healthy eating habits. Fizzy drinks, crisps, sweets and all junk foods are banned.

Children must bring a nutritious lunch if not availing of **Glanmore free lunches**.

(www.glanmorefoods.ie) The menu for these will be given to each pupil in September.

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Homework: (See homework policy)

- We strongly encourage parents to take an active interest in their child's homework and to ensure that the allocated homework is done properly and fully each evening.
- Homework is vital to the learning process and to your child's success.
- Homework should be distraction- free as far as possible.
- Oral work is as important as written work.
- Homework should be signed nightly.
- **Reading is an essential part of homework which must not be neglected.**

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework

- ❖ Third class up to 30 minutes
- ❖ Fourth class up to 45 minutes
- ❖ Fifth classup to 1 hour
- ❖ Sixth class.....1 hour

If for some reason all the homework is not completed/learned on a given day it should be completed on an alternative day and a written explanation should be sent by the parent/guardian to the class teacher.

Mobile Phones:

- The use of mobile phones in school is not allowed.
- If for genuine reasons a parent/guardian gives their child permission to bring a mobile to school (on an occasion where that is the only means of communication available to the parent and child) the following conditions will apply:
 - The mobile must be given to the class teacher with the parents/guardians written request.
 - The phone must be turned off on the school premises.
 - The teacher will return it to the pupil at the end of the school day and the phone will not be turned on until the pupil leaves the school premises.
 - The school accepts no responsibility whatsoever for any loss or damage to phones.

If a pupil fails to adhere to the above conditions her mobile will be confiscated and it will be kept in the Principal's office until collected by a parent.

Green Schools

Green-Schools, known internationally as Eco-Schools, is an international environmental education programme, environmental management system and awards scheme that promotes and acknowledges long-term, whole school action for the environment

For the last number of years the teachers and pupils of St.Philomena's have been working towards creating environmental awareness among all in our school community.

- In May 2011 our hard work was acknowledged and we were awarded our first green flag for 'Litter and Waste Management' from An Taisce.
- In May 2013 we were awarded our second green flag for 'Energy Conservation'
- In May 2015 we were awarded our third green flag for 'Water Conservation/Awareness'
- In May 2017 we were awarded our fourth green flag for Travel Flag.

We are very proud of our Green School Committee team, which comprises pupils from each class. We greatly appreciate all the extra work undertaken by teachers who have coordinated the various teams over the last number of years.

Home School Communication

A child's parent/guardian is the most effective teacher she will ever have.

In St. Philomena's N.S., we recognise the role of parents/guardians as the primary educators of their children. The home environment determines to a great extent the success of the child's progress in school. The influences and values of the home cannot be overstressed. Parents/guardians and teachers work together to help the child reach her full potential. The support and co-operation of parents/guardians is essential to the effective operation of the school.

Home School Community Liaison Coordinator

The aim of our Home School Community Liaison Coordinator is to promote partnership between home, school and the wider community.

Our HSCL Coordinator is shared between St. Philomena's N.S. and Scoil Bhríde N.S.

The following are examples of activities undertaken by the HSCL Coordinator.

- Visiting parents/guardians in their homes
- Organising activities/courses/talks for parents/guardians in the school
- Supporting parents on education-related issues such as study skills and the promotion of a stimulating home learning environment
- Meeting with community groups/interests relevant to the education and welfare of pupils in our school

How Parents/Guardians Can Help

It is known that children perform better in school if their parents/guardians take an active role in their education.

- **All written communication between parents/guardians and teachers should be through the diary. The diary must be brought to school every day.**
- Written, dated notification to the class teacher is required if your child is to remain inside at breaks.
- It is important to check for notices regularly as you may miss out on important information or deadlines.
- Don't forget to check our Website – www.stphilomenasns.ie regularly.
- **Please notify the school of any change of address or phone number.**
- Show an interest in, and concern for your child's education. .
- Make sure your child arrives in time each morning and acquires a good habit of punctuality
- If your child has a disability e.g. hearing, speech etc. please make sure that you fill in the appropriate part of the enrolment form and discuss same with the teacher at the beginning of September.
- Encourage your child to take part in after school activities. Hobbies are vital for life!
- If your child is sick at night or/and in the morning, please keep them at home until they are fully better. No child who is ill should be in school.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Arranging a meeting with your child's teacher within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However, parents are welcome to make an appointment by phoning the school in advance. A meeting with a class teacher at class doors to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds:

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

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.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc. this can be done through the Secretary's office.

Keeping Informed of Your Child's Progress-Social and Academic

1. **Your child's Homework Journal:** is a useful means of communicating simple messages between teacher and parent.
2. **Parent/Teacher Meetings:** will be held once during the school year. It is important to attend this meeting to be kept informed of your child's progress and it is also important that your child sees that you are interested in her school work.
3. **Annual School Reports.**
4. **Meetings** are held in connection with Confirmation.
5. **Other events.**

Ongoing General School Information

Our school is a busy place with many different events and activities taking place. To accommodate a busy schedule, it is necessary to send notes to parents/guardians regarding activities, events, school closures etc. on an ongoing basis, through newsletters, notes, texting and on the school website.

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Parental Involvement

As a Catholic school, we believe that the school is not an isolated unit but a union of many people who come together to give it its life and meaning. The triple partnership of home, school and parish is essential if the school is to live up to its Mission Statement. We aim to establish this relationship through:

- Encouraging a shared commitment to the success of each individual child.
- Encouraging an ethos of understanding and openness in home-school-parish relationships.
- Helping parents to develop a positive role in complementing and supporting the work of the school in educating their children.

Parental involvement in the life of the school is encouraged in many ways:

- Through parent nominees on the BOM and Parents' Council.
- Involvement in celebrations, concerts, assemblies and school Mass.
- School sports activities.
- Fundraising.

Information on Custody/ Separation

The Staff of St. Philomena's N.S. encourages parents experiencing separation to come and speak confidentially to the Principal and/or to the class teacher. It is our aim to handle such matters with sensitivity and compassion, and ultimately, our primary concern is for the well-being and overall development of the child.

When a child spends time in two homes, it is requested that the school be provided with both sets of emergency/contact numbers. Regarding the collection of child/ren from school, it is requested that the school be informed of any changes in collection arrangements, by a signed and dated note.

It is assumed that when we wish to communicate with parents regarding their child, the parent who is contacted (i.e. the parent with whom the child principally resides) will inform the other parent, of meetings, arrangements, school reports etc. Special requests for separate communication can be accommodated.

*In the absence of a custody arrangement, both parents will be treated as equal partners in terms of parenting rights and responsibilities. **The school cannot be asked to withhold a child from either parent, in the absence of a custody arrangement or court order.***

The BoM and staff of St. Philomena's will endeavour at all times to deal sensitively and caringly with children experiencing separation.

Extra-Curricular Activities

- **The Setanta Book Club** is run each term.

- **Sports** are offered as after school activities
Training during the winter is in St. Mary's Youth Centre, and during the Spring/Summer, we use the G.A.A. grounds. Our school takes part in the Cumann na mBunscoil matches
- **Enterprising Student initiative**
- **Spelling Bee.** .
- Credit Union **School Quiz**
- **Art/poetry/essay etc.** Competitions
- Charities supported include **Christmas Shoebox Appeal, Bóthar, Daffodil Day etc.**
- **Various visitors** visit the school; members of the Fire Brigade, Gardai, and much, much more!!!



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