



Principal: Ms. Leona Twiss

Deputy Principal: Marie Murphy

Teachers:

Junior Infants Elaine McGuire

Senior Infants Michelle McLaughlin

1st Class Michelle McLaughlin

2nd Class Catherine O'Shea

3rd Class Siobhán Hayes

4th Class Jemma Doyle

5th Class Una Harmon

6th Class Pat Fitzgerald

Junior Autism Unit Sandra Walsh / Lisa Stack

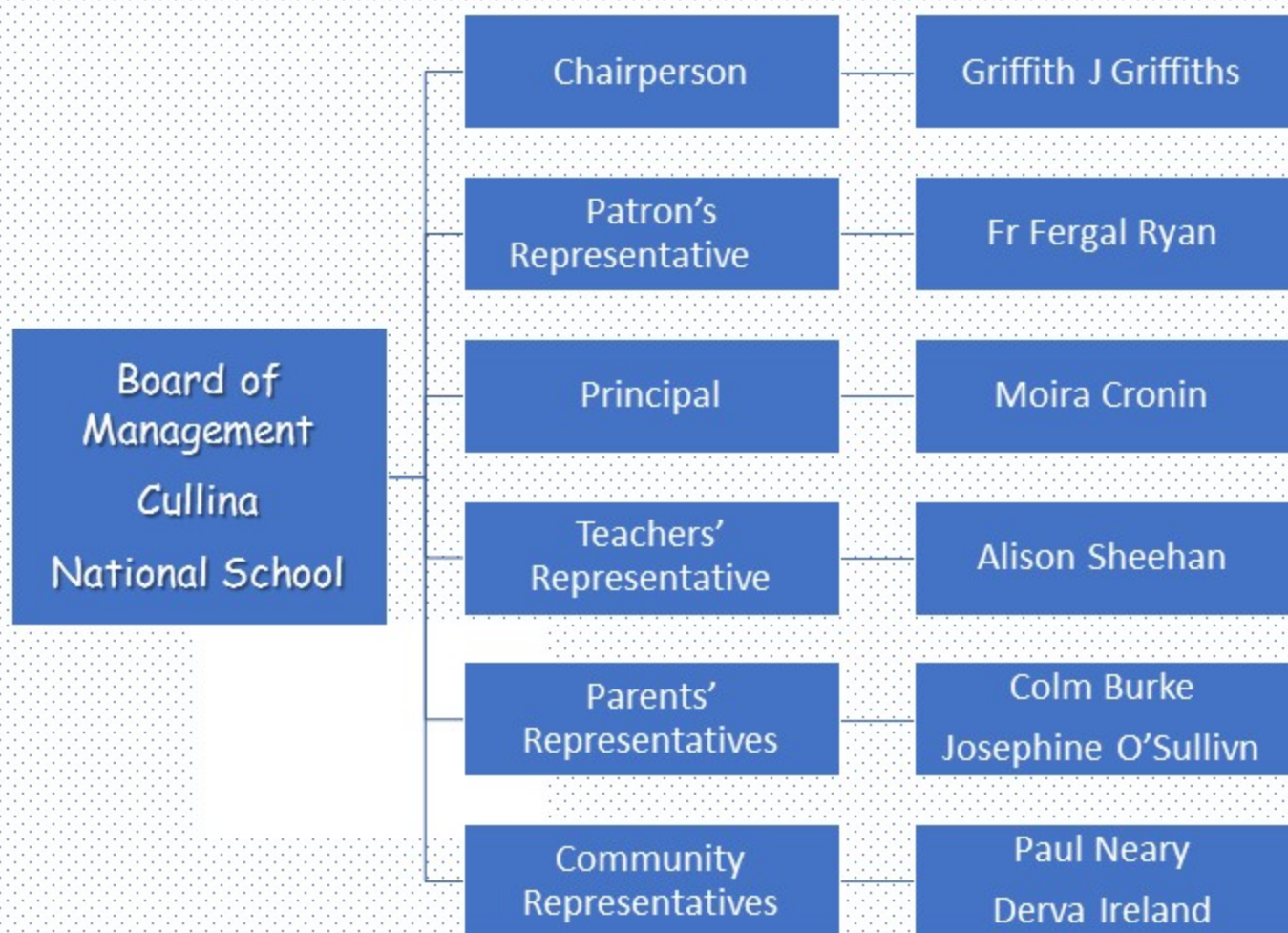
Senior Autism Unit Lorraine Counihan

S.E.N. Team Alison Tuohy
Pat Fitzgerald
Donal O'Sullivan

Special Needs Assistants: Emma Dennehy
Nora Ferris
Siobhán O'Shea
Lisa Fogarty
Karen Lucey
Lisa Dennehy
Teresa Coffey

Secretary: Agnes Curran

Caretaker: Mike Coffey



Chairperson: Miriam Galvin

Secretary: Fiona O'Leary

Treasurer: Margaret Crowley



- **Basketball Coaching**
- **Piano Lessons**
- **Set Dancing**
- **Athletics Training**
- **Chess**
- **Spanish for 6th Class**
- **Art Classes**
- **Football Training**
- **After School Club –**
for Junior/Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd Classes

Please contact the coaches directly

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Cullina National School

Booklet for Parents of Infants Starting School



Fáilte romhat agus roimh do pháiste.

*We wish to welcome you warmly to **Cullina N. S.**, a very special "Céad Míle Fáilte" for those who are coming to us for the first time. The years that your child spends in Infants are the most important years in his/her school life. We will do everything in our power to nurture and care for your child's developing mind, body and spirit.*

Starting school will be the first big change in the life of your child. Up to this he/she has felt safe and secure with you in the home and family but now he/she is facing the wider world of classroom and school. This may seem a big step for someone so small but most children manage it without any great fuss or stress, particularly children who have attended a Níonra or Playschool.

However, it is also a time when parents and teachers should take special care to ensure that the transition from home to school is as smooth as possible. If the child's first experience of school is one of happy involvement, a very good foundation will have been laid for fruitful school years ahead.

It is important too, particularly during the first year that parents understand what the aims of the school are, as many may be expecting too much in the way of academic achievement.

We know from experience that parents are very anxious to help in any way possible. We have, therefore, included some ideas for the home, which should stimulate the child's interest and nurture his/her desire to know more.

With these aims in mind we have put together this little booklet as a general guide for parents. It offers advice and suggestions based on the collective experience of teachers over many years. It deals briefly with the period before your child comes to school and his introductory stage in Junior Infants.

We trust you will find it helpful and that your child will be happy and fulfilled with us.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Mae An U. E. E. E.
Príomhoide.

Children are natural learners. They have an inbuilt curiosity and an eagerness to know more about everything – about themselves, about others and about the world around them. And they learn fast – but only when they are ready and their interest is aroused.

Because they come to us so young we must guard against putting pressure on them to learn what they are not yet ready for. Demanding too much too soon can have a detrimental effect. At the same time we must cultivate readiness so that they can get moving as soon as possible.

The rates of progress of children can vary greatly. We try to give them an opportunity to move ahead at their own pace or as near to it as possible.

Our first year in school therefore, is mainly about settling in, relating to others, making friends, feeling happy and gradually getting used to the routine of the school. On the learning side the emphasis is on getting children ready for learning by –

- Developing their oral language and expression.
- Sharpening their senses, especially seeing, hearing and touching.
- Developing physical co-ordination especially of hand and fingers.
- Extending their concentration span and getting them to listen attentively.
- Learning through play – the most enjoyable and effective way.
- Co-operating with the teacher and other children.
- Performing tasks by themselves.
- Working with others and sharing with them.
- Teaching each child to **accept the general order**, which is necessary for class and school to work well.



Before Your Child Starts.....

You should have already filled in an enrolment form and permissions form. You will have provided Birth Certificate and Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)

You should ensure that your child is as independent as possible - physically, emotionally and socially.

It would help greatly if he/she is able to –

- ✚ Button and unbutton his/her coat and hang it up.
- ✚ Use the toilet without help and manage buttons
- ✚ As regards personal hygiene and cleanliness. Your child should know to flush the toilet and wash his/her hands, without having to be told.
- ✚ Use a hanky or tissue when necessary.
- ✚ Share toys and playthings with others and “take turns”.
- ✚ Tidy up and put away his playthings.
- ✚ Remain contentedly for a few hours out of the home environment in the care of a relation, other parent etc. If a child has had this experience, then separation from their parents when they start school will not cause them any great anxiety



Preparing for the 'Big Day'

The child's first day at school is a day to remember for the rest of his/her life. You can help to make it a really happy one for them.

- ✚ Tell them about school beforehand, casually, and talk about it as a happy place where there will be a big welcome for them and they will meet new friends.
- ✚ Don't use school or the teacher as a threat.
- ✚ If you feel it would help, you could take them for a stroll to the junior classrooms and play area on an afternoon during June when the other children have gone home. He/she can browse around and become familiar with his/her new environment.
- ✚ Children like to have a new uniform and a new bag when they begin. These help them to identify more readily with the school and other children.
- ✚ Your child's books will be taken from him/her, the first day of school and the teacher will hold on to them until such time as they are needed. This minimises books getting lost. Please have your child warned of this fact; in case he/she thinks they will never see the books again. All books/copies etc. should be marked with your child's name.



The Big Day

Please be positive with your child in preparing him/her for school. Explain what will happen with teacher, other children, breaks, sitting down, tidy-up time, home time etc. On arrival the teacher will show your child where to hang a coat and leave a lunch box.

Coming in...

When you arrive at the classroom, be as casual as you can. He/she will meet the teacher and the other children and will be shown his/her chair. Try not to delay in the classroom and leave with as little fuss as possible. Most children even if initially upset soon become distracted by their new surroundings and settle down.



Packed Lunches (See Healthy Policy also)

Cullina N.S. is a 'Health Promoting School' and as part of our health promoting policy we encourage parents to provide healthy alternatives for lunches.

Your child will need a snack for the first break 11:00 a.m. – 11:10 a.m.

and a packed lunch for mid-day break 12:45 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch is an important meal for school going children. It should provide one third of their recommended daily allowance of nutrients without being high in fat, sugar or salt. We will ask you to encourage a healthy lunch right from the start. Also, please, only give your child something you feel he/she can easily manage to eat.

Bread & Alternatives

Bread or rolls, preferably wholemeal.

Rice – wholegrain.

Pasta – wholegrain.

Potato Salad.

Wholemeal Scones.

Savouries

Lean Meat.

Chicken/Turkey.

Cheese



Fruit & Vegetables

Apples, Banana, Peach, Plum, Pineapple cubes, Mandarins, Orange segments, Grapes, Fruit Salad, Dried fruit, Tomato etc.

Drinks

Drinks either from home or bought should be in manageable containers that your child can independently open and close.

Going Home

All junior Infants go home at **2 o'clock**. However, for the first week parents may collect children at any time up to 12:00 noon. In week two all children should be collected at 12:00 noon. By the end of week three it is hoped that all children will remain for the full school infant day i.e. until 2:00 p.m. (Junior Infants, of course may remain in the school until 2:00 p.m. from the start if you feel they are capable of remaining for the full junior infant day).

Where and How to Drop and Collect.

During week one children may be brought directly to and collected directly from the classroom.

During week two children may be brought directly to the classroom and collected at the gate.

During week three it is hoped that children can be dropped and collected at the school gate.

Please Note.

- ❄ **Be sure to collect your child on 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.**

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 any outward signs of your own distress. Sometimes the parents are more upset than the child and are the main cause of his/her anxiety.
- Try to be firm from the start. Even if a child is upset you must insist that they stay. Invariably children settle quickly after the parents have left.
- Children need plenty of rest after the effort and excitement of a day at school. You should ensure that they get to bed early and have a good night's sleep.

Homework (See Homework Policy also)

Homework for Junior Infants for any given week is set out on Monday and placed in the child's A4 size homework folder. In this way if a child is absent parents can catch up on the work. This homework folder is also used as a means of communication between teacher and parents. Important messages relating to school are sent to parents via text messaging to those parents who have signed up for it.



Books and stationery.

You will have received a booklist for your child. Please ensure that all books etc. are clearly labelled with your child's name. Please ensure also that your child has at least two pencils, preferably thick to suit beginners, a sharpener to suit the pencils and a sturdy eraser.



School Bags.

Schoolbags should be large enough to accommodate school books, lunchboxes, etc. Roller bags might be useful.



Toys

There is no need for children to bring toys into school. The school itself has an adequate supply and we cannot be responsible for items brought in by individual children.

If you are worried or need further information the Junior Infant teacher works in her room from 2:00p.m. to 3:00 p.m. each day. She is available at this time to meet parents who wish to speak to her.



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.

Care of Hair

Parents are asked check their child's hair regularly for outbreaks of head lice. If there is an outbreak of head lice in a class, all parents of pupils in that class are informed by note and asked to take immediate action to treat infestation. Girls with long hair should have it tied up or back.

Further Information.

- All parents are provided with a copy of the school calendar outlining the school closures, at the beginning of the school year. Where unplanned closures occur parents are informed by Newsletter, text or individual note.

- **The school day begins for all classes at 9:20 a.m.**

School finishes for Junior and Senior Infants at 2:00 p.m.

School finishes for all other classes at 3:00p.m.

Break times are from 11.00 a.m. to 11:10 a.m. and from 12:45 p.m. to 1.15 p.m.

- No meals are provided by the school.

The School Uniform

The school uniform is very important for the image of the school as it enforces your child's association with the school. We ask you to adhere strictly to the colour scheme of the uniform.

All pupils enrolled in Cullina National School should be dressed in full school uniform / school tracksuit from the commencement of the school year. Junior Infants are given a choice of wearing school uniform or tracksuit. All children enrolled in other classes must dress in full school uniform every day.

Comfortable footwear. Boots are not permitted.

Girls may wear a **pale blue coloured shirt, blue/grey tie, grey skirt or pinafore accompanied by a crested grey coloured v-neck jumper or cardigan.** Boys may wear **grey trousers with a pale blue coloured shirt, blue/grey tie and a crested v-neck grey coloured jumper.**

These uniforms and tracksuits are available from 'Place of Clothing', The Square, Killorglin. Parents who wish to buy their uniforms in other retail outlets must ensure that the colour matches the official uniform. **Please note that all uniforms must have a School Crest.**

All items of clothing and belongings must be clearly labelled.



Curriculum

The '***What, Why and How of Children's Learning in Primary School***' is a DVD for parents about the Primary School Curriculum. Copies are available for all parents and 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 Cullina National 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 numeracy. Emphasis is placed on identifying children with learning difficulties early and putting an effective intervention programme in place, in consultation with parents.

Specialist teachers will be timetabled to teach all classes at allotted times from Junior Infants to 5th in the areas of PE, Music and Dance.

Some Important Areas of Early Learning

Developing his/her Command of Spoken Language

It is important that the child's ability to talk is as advanced as possible. It is through speech that the child communicates thoughts and feelings, needs and desires, curiosity and wonder. If the child cannot express these in words he/she will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from the learning activity of the class. That is why a lot of attention is given to language development in the first years of school.

You Can Help....

- Talk to your child naturally and casually about things of interest that you may be doing-at home, in the shop, in the car, etc.
- Try to make time to listen when they want to tell you something that is important to them.
- Answer their genuine questions with patience and in an adequate way. Always nurture their sense of curiosity and wonder.
- Introduce them gently to the ideas of why? How? When? Where? If? etc. These demand more advanced language structures.
- They will have their own particular favourite stories/nursery rhymes that they never tire of hearing. Repeat them over and over again and gradually get them to tell them to you.

First Steps in Reading

Ability to read is the foundation for all future progress in our school system. However, learning to read is a gradual process and a lot of preparatory work must be done before a child is introduced to his/her first reader.

We very deliberately do not rush or push children into reading. We get them ready for it over an extended period. Reading is something to be enjoyed. It should never start as a chore for the small child.

You can Help..

- Have attractive colourful books in the home.
- Read a variety of stories from time to time. They will get to associate these wonderful tales with books and reading.
- You must convey to them gradually that books are precious things. They must be minded and handled carefully and put away safely.
- Look at the pictures and talk to about what they say.
- Read nursery rhymes.
- Remember that the teacher as a professional is the best judge of what rate of progress is best suited to each child.
- Sing the alphabet song with your child.

Understanding Maths

First a Word of Warning

Maths for the small child has nothing to do with “sums” or figures or tables or adding and subtracting. These will all come much later. Maths is really part of the language the child uses in understanding and talking about certain things in daily experience e.g.

- Associating certain numbers with particular things – two hands, four wheels, five fingers etc.
- Counting – one, two, three, four, etc.
- Colours – black, white, red, green, etc.
- Prepositions (telling position) and their opposites: over/under, before/after, inside/outside etc.
- Matching/Sorting – objects of the same size/colour/texture/shape etc.
- Odd One Out – difference in size/colour etc.

Understanding of these concepts comes very quickly for some children. For others it takes a long time. Be patient. You cannot force Maths understanding on a child.

But You Can Help...

- In the course of your ordinary daily routine in the home, in the shop, in the neighbourhood you should use suitable opportunities to casually introduce the maths vocabulary referred to above. E.g. How many cakes? The glass is full/empty. We turn left at the lights.

The child gets to understand Maths best by handling and investigating and using real objects. This has been the natural method of learning since a baby. It allows the child to do the learning.

You could display the numbers 1 – 5 at home.

Gaeilge

All children enjoy learning another language besides their own language. They have no difficulty in picking it up because it fascinates them as another code of communication. They are free of any hang-ups about Irish unless they become aware that the home attitude towards it is not

good. So please be careful that anything you say does not give a negative attitude to your child.

We would want parents to give every encouragement and help to the small ones in their efforts to acquire Irish. If they learn new words in school encourage them to use them at home. Use little Irish phrases or words now and again. If they must learn Irish, let them enjoy it and master it to the best of their ability.

Getting Ready For Writing

Making letters on paper is not easy for the small child. They must learn to hold the pencil properly and make regular shapes. Hand and finger muscles are only gradually developing at this stage.

You Can Help...

- Your child will be learning to write lower case letters initially so it would be helpful if you could put your child's name written this way perhaps on the bedroom door.
- Your child must develop the ability to get the hand and eye working together. This is very important. Try manipulating toys like:
 - (a) Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc
 - (b) Pleistocene (Marla) to make shapes
 - (c) A colouring book and thick crayons
 - (d) Sheets of paper that can cut up with a safe scissors
- When your child begins to use a pencil make sure that it is held correctly at the start. It will be difficult to change later.

Your child may be making block letters at home even before coming to school. This is fine. But when they start making lower case letters

- at school you should try to get them to discontinue the blocks and practise the new system consult the teacher about this.
- Don't discourage left-handedness. If that is the definite natural inclination, don't attempt to change it.

Other Areas of the Curriculum

The child in Junior Infants learns rapidly through interaction with other areas of the curriculum Art & Craft, P.E., Music, Nature, Religious Education.

Social skills are very important. We encourage good manners at all times, please/thank you, addressing teachers properly, being courteous to fellow students and teachers. It is important to encourage your child to play with others at school also encourage mixing rather than being dependent on one friend only. Rough behaviour is totally discouraged in the playground.

Teacher and Parent

At the early stages some parents meet the teacher almost daily and this is a very desirable thing. However, if there is something in particular that you would like to discuss you can arrange to meet her as previously suggested between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.

Our Hope

We are offering this Guide to Parents as a little practical help in dealing with the education of their children at the very early stages. We will be very happy if you dip into it from time to time and find something in it of value to you and your child. We hope that your child will settle quickly into the Junior Infant programme and begin to enjoy their time in Cullina National School as those who have preceded him/her.

Máire Bn. Uí Chroinín
Priomhoide