



**Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire**

**Welcome Pack for  
Junior Infants  
2020**

## Welcome to Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire



Hello everyone, I'm Deirdre Sweeney, Principal at Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire. For those of you who are new to our school I've attached a photo of myself. We've put together this information pack to help you prepare for your child's first day at our school.



We are looking forward to welcoming our new Junior Infants to our school.

Unfortunately, you weren't able to visit us this month for our annual open day. So, we have put together some information and advice which will help prepare you and your child for the first day of school and for the year ahead.

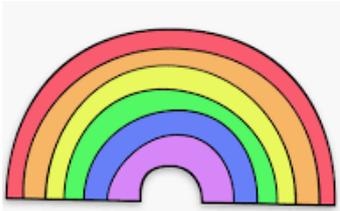
**Our school:** This year we have 295 pupils in our school and 14 teachers. We have two Special Education Teachers who provide extra help for children with English, maths or any special educational needs. We have two Special Needs Assistants, Agnes and Elaine. Our school secretaries, Olive and Maria, provide invaluable support and help in the school office, and our caretaker Hugh keeps our extensive grounds in tip-top condition!

I am very proud of our staff and their commitment to making your child's educational experience a very positive and successful one. Your child will receive a very good education in the 12 subjects she will study over the next 8 years until she graduates in 2028! There will be many opportunities for her to develop her talents - on our GAA team, on quiz teams, as a member of our choir, playing the recorder, taking part in the Excellence in Science awards, in our Green-School's activities, on the Student Council, on the school stage at our monthly assembly or annual class plays - to name but a few of the activities that make our school a special place.

If you have any questions in the weeks ahead please email me on [dsweeneysmntardee@gmail.com](mailto:dsweeneysmntardee@gmail.com) and I will be very happy to help. You can also visit our school website [www.smntardee.ie](http://www.smntardee.ie) where you will find useful information.

Starting primary school is a very exciting and special time for you and your child and over the coming school year we will work with you to make it the most wonderful experience. I look forward to meeting you and your child in late August.

Mrs Deirdre Sweeney, Principal



Hi everyone,

My name is Mrs. Rust. I am going to be your teacher in September. I am really looking forward to meeting you all very soon. I have heard from your playschool teachers that you are all fantastic girls. We are going to have great fun at school. We will listen to wonderful stories, sing songs, dance, play and learn to read! Have a wonderful summer and I will see you all soon.

Mrs. Rust



This is our classroom.

## Preparing your child for Junior Infants

- It is important to create a positive attitude towards school. If children have this, they will try to become more involved with their work and learning.
- Read books and stories about starting school.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and express her ideas and feelings about starting school.
- Play school at home - have fun trying on the uniform and packing a school bag and lunchbox.
- Talk about how your child will get to and from school - take a drive or walk past the school to help your child familiarise herself with the building.
- Encourage and practise independent toileting. Remind your child to flush the toilet and to wash and dry her hands properly.
- Encourage and practise independent dressing. Let your daughter dress herself and put on her own shoes and coat.
- Encourage and practise opening and closing her new lunchbox, drinks bottle and schoolbag.
- If you feel your child is becoming anxious, keep the starting school chat to a minimum and ask well-meaning family members to do the same.
- School books and belongings: Please label your child's coat, jumper PE top, lunchbox, bottle and all belongings with her name - it will help if she can identify her belongings. Remember every girl has the exact same school jumper and PE top so it's very important that your child's name is on hers. Label her books clearly with her name on the front of each book.

## First day of School

The first day at school is a special milestone for both parents and child. Whilst you may be going through a mixture of emotions try not to pass on any anxieties to your child. Most children settle into school quickly but do not be concerned if it takes a little longer- we will help with that.

- Have everything ready the night before. Keep everything calm and happy that morning, arrive on time - but not too early!
- Your child will be welcomed into the classroom via the infant playground (to the left of the school building).
- When it is time for you to leave, assure her that you will be back later, wish her goodbye and leave - don't worry if your child becomes upset - she will be fine. We are here to help with the transition.
- She will be given a name badge to wear and there will be toys and activities on the tables to play with so the girls will be busy straight away!
- Mrs Rust will show her where the bathroom is, and she can use it when needed. We will explore the cloakroom where we put our coats.
- We will collect her books from her schoolbag - most of her books will be kept in school.
- She will spend some time playing and getting to know her new classmates. We will read stories and sing songs.
- She will spend some time in the playground. Our little break is at 10.45am. The girls will sit outside on the benches and eat their snack. If it is raining, they will sit in the lunchroom. There will always be a teacher on the playground to help and to supervise.
- She will be collected at home-time from our outside classroom door. Home-time is usually 12pm for the first two weeks but we will confirm that for you in mid-August. (The usual school day is 9.20am to 2pm for infants.)

## Helping your child prepare for Literacy and Numeracy

- Phonological awareness, (an understanding of sounds) is an important skill that we explore before we start formal letter sounds. You can help your child by identifying rhyming words in books - mat/bat/cat etc.
- Play games like 'I spy'.
- Sing and read nursery rhymes at home.
- Reading to your child cultivates an interest in reading and hopefully in life-long learning.
- Talk to your child and listen to her answers - talk about the weather, days of the week, visits to the park, her favourite food etc. This will help develop her language.
- Play board games.
- You can help your child become familiar with simple mathematical concepts at home - encouraging her to sort items - socks/ cutlery crayons etc.
- Talk and explore different shapes and colours.
- Explore the size of objects.
- Match objects that are the same size.
- Language is key to all learning - oral language skills are vital. Talk and read to your child about a wide variety of topics.

## Play/ Aistear

- Play is a very important part of a child's development.
- It helps the children to learn new, exciting skills and gives them opportunities to discover and learn for themselves.
- Play is given high priority in the infants' classroom and the children rotate play areas to allow them to explore different aspects of play. This is called "Aistear".
- Aistear helps to develop speech and language. It helps the children learn new vocabulary from each other in the comfortable setting of play.
- It can also improve fine motor skills in the classroom.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Under normal circumstances the children arrive to the school for 9.20am. The infant playground is supervised by a teacher from 9.10am each morning. For the month of September, you can wait in the playground with your child until 9.20am. From October you will be encouraged to leave your child in the playground at 9.10am with the teacher on duty. Please note - the new guidelines may bring changes to these arrangements.

At 2pm your child will be dismissed from our outside classroom door. I will only allow your child to leave when I see the designated person who collects her. If there is a change in personnel you need to contact the school office or let me know prior to collection. This is for the safety of all our infants.

## School Ethos

Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire is a Catholic Primary School. We are proud of our ethos and it is evident in the daily life of our school. Religion classes are traditionally timetabled from 12-12.30pm daily but religion will be part of the full school day and year - we begin and end the school day with a prayer, and we celebrate religious feast days and celebrations such as St. Patrick's Day, Catholic Schools' Week and Easter over the course of the school year.

We are also fully committed to inclusivity and diversity and we have pupils from many different countries, and cultural and religious backgrounds. We have always been able to work with parents of other faiths to make satisfactory arrangements for all and if you have any queries in this regard please contact us.

## Attendance

Good school attendance is vital for all children. If your child is absent it is important that you explain the absence, in writing, to the class teacher. If a child is absent for 20 school days or more the school is required to report this to Tusla.

## Behaviour

Our pupils learn good social skills, how to take responsibility and how to play with kind words, kind hands and kind feet. We will encourage your child to mix on the playground. Our Code of Behaviour sets out the standards we expect and promote with our pupils. Please visit our website to read our *Code of Discipline and Behaviour* and our *Anti-Bullying Policy*.

We do not tolerate unfair, mean, hurtful or bullying behaviour.

## School Uniform

We are proud of our school uniform and we expect pupils to wear it well. Your child should wear flat, black non-slip school shoes. It's best to avoid laces on runners or shoes - Velcro straps are best for infants. The PE tracksuit is worn 1-2 days per week for PE. School Bag: Buy a sturdy bag that will hold A4 sized workbooks and a lunchbox. No trolley style bags please

### Our Uniform:

- Green plaid pinafore
- Green jumper with school crest
- White shirt
- School tie
- Black flat-heeled shoes (*non-slip soles, feet securely strapped/tied/buckled in*)
- Black tights
- White socks in summer
- Green school jacket (reversible) ~optional

### Uniform for P.E. Days:-

- School tracksuit with school crest
- White polo shirt
- Runners



The school uniform is available from the three drapers in town:-

- Paul Sharkeys, Market Square, Ardee
- Jas Malone Drapers, Bridge Street, Ardee
- O'Neills Menswear, Castle Street, Ardee

## School Support and Wellbeing

We are very proud of our home-school links and of the pastoral care system in our school. Our teachers look out for your child and have her best interests at heart whether that is her academic welfare or her social and emotional welfare. If you have any concerns at all about your child starting school please let us know. If at any time you have a concern or query please do not hesitate to contact us. Sometimes a quick phone-call to the office can clear something up or we will be more than happy to make an appointment if you wish to discuss something in confidence.

**Communication** Your daughter will get notes and newsletters home - so keep an eye out in her school bag and folder. You will also get texts from time to time and our website [www.smntardee.ie](http://www.smntardee.ie) will have important information. Likewise, it's important that you keep us informed about anything we need to know to help your child, whether it's a health issue, change of phone number, something that's happening at home, change of personnel collecting her from school etc.

## Important School Policies

Please visit our school website [www.smntardee.ie](http://www.smntardee.ie) (Parents' Info - Policies tabs) and take note of our school policies, and in particular the following key policies:

- **Enrolment Policy**
- **Code of Discipline and Behaviour**
- **Ethos Statement**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Healthy Eating Policy**
- **Child Safeguarding Policy**
- **Homework Policy**
- **Acceptable Use Internet Policy**
- **RSE Policy**

This checklist will give you some tips to help prepare for school – don't worry if your child can't do all the skills – it's just a guide.

## Preparing Your Child for School Checklist

A Guide for Parents and Guardians...

The period before a child starts school for the first time can be an anxious time for parents. We have put together the following checklist as a simple guide to how you can best prepare your child for this exciting time in their lives!



I can...	I can...	I can...
recognise my name <input type="checkbox"/>	hold my pencil carefully <input type="checkbox"/>	put on my socks <input type="checkbox"/>
write the first letter  <input type="checkbox"/>	colour in carefully  <input type="checkbox"/>	find my shoes  <input type="checkbox"/>
draw a face <input type="checkbox"/>	name the colours I use <input type="checkbox"/>	put on my shoes <input type="checkbox"/>

I can...	I can...	I can...
count from 1 to 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	sing simple rhymes <input type="checkbox"/>	find my bag <input type="checkbox"/>
do buttons <input type="checkbox"/>	sing and clap to a song <input type="checkbox"/>	zip up my bag <input type="checkbox"/>
move to music  <input type="checkbox"/>	tap a beat  <input type="checkbox"/>	dress myself  <input type="checkbox"/>

I can...	I can...	I can...
eat with a knife and fork <input type="checkbox"/>	tidy away my toys <input type="checkbox"/>	say please when I ask <input type="checkbox"/>
pour myself a drink <input type="checkbox"/>	clear away things I've used <input type="checkbox"/>	say thank you when I get <input type="checkbox"/>
taste different foods <input type="checkbox"/>	put my clothes away <input type="checkbox"/>	ask to go to the toilet <input type="checkbox"/>
wash my hands before and after meals  <input type="checkbox"/>	help at home  <input type="checkbox"/>	wait my turn to talk  <input type="checkbox"/>

I can...	I can...	I can...
clean myself <input type="checkbox"/>	use the stairs hand rail <input type="checkbox"/>	cut along a line <input type="checkbox"/>
wash my hands  <input type="checkbox"/>	hold hands on the street <input type="checkbox"/>	cut 'snips' into paper <input type="checkbox"/>
dry my hands <input type="checkbox"/>	take turns when playing <input type="checkbox"/>	cut out a shape <input type="checkbox"/>
go to the toilet when I need to <input type="checkbox"/>	share toys with a friend  <input type="checkbox"/>	cut out shapes to make a picture  <input type="checkbox"/>

We hope you found this information helpful. The first day back to school this year will be a bit different to other years given the current restrictions. In August we will inform you of all arrangements for dropping your child to school and for collecting her at home-time. In the meantime, you are very welcome to email us if you need any further information about starting school.

**Have a great summer  
and we look forward to seeing you soon!**

