

Welcome to our school....Here is a message from our principal.....



It is an honour for me as Principal to welcome you to our wonderful school. The Convent Junior School, Castleblayney, is a unique educational environment where we focus on the holistic development of your child. We are an infant school and we foster values of courtesy, consideration and individual responsibility along with ensuring that every child reaches their potential both academically and personally.

There is no doubt that the achievement of our students is built upon the partnership between students, parents and staff. I firmly believe that a strongly led school is strongly led by many. I know that with the excellent staff team we have here we can ensure that your child achieves the very best. Through partnership we continue to enhance and strengthen the success of the Convent Junior School.

As a Catholic co-educational school, we strive to provide the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, social and cultural needs of our pupils and whilst our school is a school with a Catholic Ethos, we also welcome other beliefs from which we all learn understanding and tolerance.

This document will provide you with useful information and should help answer questions about our school and some of the important school policies.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me either by telephone on 0429740517 or email on principal@conventjuniorschool.ie.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

Veronica Trehy

Principal

Welcome message from our deputy principal and secretary.....



My name is Sinéad McArdle and I am the Deputy Principal, as well as a former student, of the Convent Junior School. My role is to assist in the day to day running of the school and to deputise for the Principal in her absence. I lead the SEN team in our school and alongside the Principal promote ongoing staff development across all curricular areas.

My aim is to support the principal and staff in making sure that all children in our school are presented with every opportunity to reach their potential... "To be the best that they can be!" I believe that communication with parents is vital and always welcome suggestions or questions from parents which will be to the benefit of their children.

The holistic development and pastoral care of all members of our school community is of huge importance to me. I look forward to meeting with you and feel very privileged to be a part of your child's educational journey at the Convent Junior School.



My name is Sabia O'Neill. I am the school secretary. My primary role is to serve as the face of the school, greeting children and parents and providing them with information. I am usually the first person of contact and it is my duty to facilitate visitors, including parents, HSE staff, special education needs organisers, psychologists, community groups, to mention but a few.

As I am more than often the first line of communication when parents call or visit our school, I am readily available to assist you with any questions/concerns you may have at any given time in relation to your child's education so please do not hesitate to knock on my door, pick up the phone or drop me a quick email!

My role is a demanding one but my priority is the welfare of all the children entrusted in our care. I look forward to meeting with all of you and welcoming you into our school!!

Message from our HSC and SCP staff...



Amanda McGeough is the H.S.C.L (Home School Community Liaison) coordinator for our school. Her primary role is one that seeks to promote partnership between home and school by bringing parents closer to their children's education. Amanda has been teaching for 20 years and throughout her career to date, she has taught across all class levels and most recently been a member of the SET team in The Boy's School. As a mother of two boys she is fully aware of the highs and lows of both parenting and education. No two days are the same!

As the HSCL Teacher, Amanda is here to support the families of our children by visiting their homes, organising a range of self-development courses for parents providing opportunities for parents to take part in classroom activities with their children and by developing relations with community initiatives that support family and children. Amanda is always here to listen and offer advice where she can.

Martina Daly is part of The Castleblayney and Clones School Completion programme (SCP) providing support to our school to help our children get the most benefit from their time in school. This support can take place within the classroom and outside the classroom on occasions. This support has been in place for many years at our school and has become part of our everyday interactions with the children.

Supports and programmes Martina organises include, Relax Kids, Literacy and Numeracy groups and Social Skills and Motor Skills groups. These supports are offered to class groups throughout the year and have been invaluable for many of our children and parents.

Convent Junior School

Facts you need to know!!



Staying in Touch

Annual meetings for all parents are arranged in September /October.

Parent / Teacher meetings are usually held during the first term of school.

Report cards are issued in June.

Class teachers can be contacted directly via individual email and these email addresses will be communicated to you during the first week of school.

Essential Facts

School Address:

Convent Junior School, Laurel Hill,
Castleblayney, Co Monaghan A75KC57

Telephone Number: 04297 40517

Email Address:

info@conventjuniorschool.ie

Website: www.conventjuniorschool.ie

Instagram: @Convent Junior

Facebook: Convent Junior School

X/Twitter: @Conventjunior

School Opening times:

Junior Infants: 9.00am – 1.40pm

Senior Infants: 9.00am – 1.40pm

First Class: 9.00am – 2.40pm

Break Time: 10.30am – 10.40am

Lunchtime: 12.15pm – 12.45pm

Enrolment

Enrolment week will take place early in the year – usually in February or March.

Uniform:

Boys & Girls: Navy tracksuit with crest

Optional:

Boys: Navy V-necked jumper with crest, white polo shirt, navy trousers.

Optional: Girls: Green tartan pinafore, navy cardigan with crest, white polo shirt.

Uniforms can be purchased from **Declan Loughmans**, located inside Castleblayney shopping centre, **Atkinsons** and **Taveys** located on the main street.

School Bag:

Any bag or rucksack that will fit an A4 folder inside. No trolley bags permitted.

Transport:

A school bus service by Bus Eireann is available for children from rural areas. Private bus services operate from other areas. Please get in touch with the relevant bus companies directly as early as possible if you need to avail of these services.

Other Information

Laurel Hill Community Preschool (Previously known as Castleblayney Community Preschool) provide all our Breakfast club and Afterschool Services – they also provide a preschool and full day care service as well.

Costs are in line with similar services in county Monaghan and open to subsidies that are available.

Breakfast club will be run from 8am -9am.

Afterschool Club – 5 -12 years until 5.30pm

ECCE places from 9am – 12noon

Please contact Laurel Hill Community Childcare directly for further information on :

laurelhillchildcare@gmail.com

Our school has a lunch scheme in operation where a healthy lunch is provided for the children each day at a cost of €5 per week or €1 per day.

Due to our school policy and existing allergies some of which are airborne, no outside food is allowed into our school. All food and drinks are provided by the school so we would ask all parents to please not send in any food or drink from home.

We are happy to accommodate food requests providing they are part of our healthy food policy. Please let us know if your child has any food allergies.

Staff of the Junior School

Principal: Veronica Trehy

Deputy Principal: Sinead McArdle

Secretary

Sabia O'Neill

Teaching Staff

Emma Harte

Miriam Rice

Rebecca Linden

Aileen Cullinane

Edwina McAdam

Caroline Flack

Eadaoin Kerr

Nicola Carroll

Lisa Dolan

Ellen o'Neill

Shannon Lynch

Sandra Clarke

Tara Quinn

Natalie Mirolo

Amy Mooney

Caroline McMahon

Special Needs Assistants

Carly Fisher

Bridie Bishop

Jocasta Clarke

Michelle Rafter

Amanda Neeson

Darina Kelly

Una Forde

Donna McKeown

Pamela Boyd

Hannah McArdle

Caoimhe Kennedy

Martina Boyd

Ashling Dunne

School Completion Staff

Tina Daly

Home School Liaison Teacher

Amanda McGeough

Catering Staff

Deirdre McQuaid

Eleanor McCooley

Cleaning Staff

Katherine Duffy

Caretaker

Fintan Smith

Questions & Answers

Where are we/Who are we?

The Junior School is situated in Laurel Hill. It has eight classrooms, a sensory room, resource rooms and a large general-purpose area. We also have a large yard with a two tier playground and a sensory garden. We cater for children from 4 – 8 years old and we also have a dedicated class catering for children with mild and general learning disabilities 2 classes for children diagnosed with Autism and an extra class for ASD Early Intervention.

Our school is managed by the Board of Management, comprising of 8 members and we also have a very active Parents Association.

How will your child spend his or her day?

Your child will be taught aspects of the revised curriculum comprising of the following subjects: Gaeilge, English, Maths, Religion, Physical Education, Social and Personal Health Education, Sciences - Social and Environmental, Computers and Ipads, Visual Arts – Music, Drama and Art. Tá suim again sa Ghaeilge agus déanaimid ár ndícheall chun an cultúir a chur i bfeidhm trí cheol, dramaíocht agus rince.

Have we any Special Events?

One of our highlights is our Christmas Concert in which every child takes part. Our annual sports day and school tour takes place in the summer term.

During Catholic Schools' week we hold Grandparents Day where we celebrate and thank all of our children's Grandparents who are still with us and those that have passed.

Children also take part in Seachtain ns Gaeilge, local Art competitions and Handwriting competitions. We also hold Maths for Fun, Cuddle and Read and Lego We Do and BeeBots as part of STEM learning where parents can get involved in their child's learning experiences in school. In addition, we are an "Active School" and have a dedicated Active School Week!

What facilities have we in the Junior School?

Our bright, airy and warm classrooms are equipped with their own toilets and with reading activities, number concept materials and digital technology such as iPads, computers and all of our classrooms now have smart screens too. We also have many percussion instruments, maths and science equipment which the children access regularly.

Our yard is stimulating and equipped a lovely sensory garden outdoor space as well as play and climbing frames where the children can enjoy their free time under daily supervision. Finally, we have a sensory room which is a wonderful place carefully designed to stimulate the senses and where the children can relax and explore in a safe and secure environment.

Where do you come in?

We are very fortunate in the Junior School to have an active and hardworking Parents Association who have contributed enormously to our school. Among their notable achievements have been our beautifully equipped playground, our computers and the purchase of a HEPA Filter system for each classroom.

In addition to this, the Parents Association are active in supporting the ongoing development of our school and often subsidise school tours and activities such as Santa's Visit at Christmas, Sports Day treats and lots more. We welcome feedback from the parents on an ongoing basis and we also look forward to including them in all aspects of the children's education. We encourage as many parents as possible to join our

Parents Association as attendance at the PTA meetings are very important and valued.

Our classroom for Children with Special Educational Needs

At the Convent Junior School, we provide educational opportunities for children of all abilities. We are lucky to have a class for children with Mild Intellectual Disability where the pupils are provided with a reduced pupil/teacher ratio and Special Educational Needs support.

We pride ourselves on a model of integration to our mainstream classrooms that is individually designed to enable each child to access their equivalent mainstream class at their own pace and ability. We believe that each student with additional learning needs have different strengths, learning styles, personalities, varied interests and the same need for affirmation and success.

Should you wish for your child to be considered for access to our class for children with Mild Intellectual Disability you can contact us directly to arrange a visit to see how this model works in practice and to discuss your child's individual needs. Please find some brief information below on Mild General Intellectual Disability.

What is a Mild General Intellectual Disability?

The National Council of Special Education (NCSE) outlines that a general learning disability can range from borderline mild, mild, moderate, to severe/profound. Children with general learning disabilities find it more difficult to learn, understand and do things than other children of the same age. They can continue to learn and to make progress all through their lives but at a slower pace than other children. A child with borderline mild or mild general learning disability has very different learning abilities and needs than a child with a moderate or a severe/profound learning disability.

Children with disabilities are children first and have much in common with other children of the

same age. Every child has different strengths, personality and experiences so a general learning disability will impact differently on individual children.

For further information please visit www.ncse.ie or contact your G.P. for further information..

Our classrooms for Children with Autism

At the Convent Junior school as part of our suite of educational opportunities we provide 2 classes for children with a diagnosis of Autism. We aim to offer a positive meaningful educational experience, which allows the child to develop to his/her full learning potential in an environment that offers clarity, routine, stability and calmness.

There will be a maximum of 6 children in each class with a full-time teacher and two SNAs to support them (up to 3 children = 1 teacher and 1 SNA). This allows us to deliver a very personalised and tailored education to meet the individual needs of each child.

Our ASD classes offer an autism specific learning environment within a mainstream co-educational national school. This setting facilitates optimum inclusion in mainstream education as part of the school community as appropriate, with regard to levels of general learning ability, resources and suitability for such inclusion. We wish to provide a broad curriculum which focuses on the abilities and strengths of each child, while supporting their areas of need.

Each child in the class will have access to individual learning stations, quiet zones, our multi-sensory room/facilities, an outdoor play area and trained and supportive staff.

Your child must have a diagnosis of Autism / Autistic Spectrum Disorder made using the DSM-IV/V or ICD 10 by the psychologist or team along with a written psychological assessment /report (dated within the six months prior to the Application being submitted) with a recommendation by the relevant professionals that a special class placement in a mainstream school is both necessary and suitable for the

child. Please see our ASD enrolment policy for further information.

All policies are available to view on our website: www.conventjuniorschool.ie

ASD Early Intervention Class (Age 3-5 years)

We are delighted to announce that in September 2023 we opened our Early Intervention Class for children with Autism. This is a class for children who have a diagnosis of Autism. Entry to the ASD Early Intervention Class is intended to provide support for children with ASD before they start school.

There will be a maximum of 6 children in the class with a full-time teacher and two SNAs to support them (up to 3 children = 1 teacher and 1 SNA). This allows us to deliver a personalised and tailored education to meet the individual needs of each child.

Our aim is to help each child develop and reach their full potential in a holistic manner. We also strive to create the highest possible levels of inclusion and promote understanding, acceptance and appreciation of all children. Opportunities for inclusion are availed of when and wherever possible. This inclusion happens formally and informally, both in the playground in the classroom environment, providing many opportunities for each child to develop academically, socially and emotionally.

Each child in the class will have access to individual learning stations, quiet zones, our multi-sensory room/facilities, an outdoor play area and trained and supportive staff.

Children must be over 3 years of age on entry and cannot be over 6 years of age in the final placement year.

Completed application forms must be accompanied by a psychological report with a written recommendation for an ASD class placement. ***Placement in the Early Intervention Class does not automatically mean a placement in the school going age ASD class.***

Please see our ASD enrolment policy for further information.

Lunch Information

Here at the Convent Junior School we are dedicated to following the Nutrition Standards for the State's School Meals Programme by making sure Healthy Eating Guidelines are met at all times. This means that only healthy food choices that meet the Standards will be provided at our morning supervision club, school lunches, mid-morning snacks and afterschool club. Certain foods and drinks high in fat, salt and sugar will not be offered to children and only milk and water which are the best recommended drinks for children will be served.

The school meals programme is implemented in our school in the following way:

Mid-Morning Snack (10.30-10.40am): A mid-morning snack is provided consisting of a selection of breakfast items that are presented on a platter for the children to choose from, including buttered scones, carrot sticks, pepper slices, fruit pots, rice cakes and water.

The food choices for this meal are presented on a platter as we find that a visual display works very well for the children because they can exercise their independence and choose on a daily basis what they would like to eat. As well as the foods already mentioned, we also provide a selection of seasonal fruits prepared freshly in our kitchen. Including blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, grapes, melons, oranges, apples and bananas. These fruits options are rotated on a regular basis, so the children have plenty of variety and do not get bored!!!

Lunchtime (12.15pm – 12.45pm): A wide selection of sandwiches, wraps and rolls are presented to the children at lunchtime. They come in the form of brown bread, wheaten bread, brown wraps, brown rolls and baguettes all with a mixture of fillings – ham, chicken, tuna, salad, cheese, turkey, chicken tikka, served with butter, mayonnaise etc. Healthy yoghurts, custard and rice pudding pots are also available every day along with breadsticks and fruit. All water served in the school is filtered water of the highest quality and these filters are maintained regularly. All meals are served individually by our staff maintaining all food hygiene standards.

When possible, a hot lunch is provided for the children. Either chicken goujons, sausages, fish fingers served with brown bread or brown roll. As mentioned earlier, if there is a certain food your child likes or does not like please be sure to let us know.

On a more serious note, any **food allergies** MUST be communicated in writing and in person to the principal and the class teacher. We have a strict **no nut policy** in the school as some nut allergies are so severe that even the presence of nuts in the room may cause a reaction. Therefore, to avoid any such incidences we do not allow ANY nut produce in the school. We also do not allow food to be brought in from home as some of our children's allergies are airborne and we cannot risk food being brought onto the premises that may be harmful to another child.

Our school lunches are not pre-packed but freshly prepared in our kitchen by our kitchen staff Deirdre & Eleanor. Therefore there is a small cost of €5 per week for school lunch preparation (€1 per day). Lunch money can be put into an envelope with your child's name on it and given to your child to hand in to the class teacher.

Please be aware that food preparation and distribution are carried out adhering to strict hygiene and food standards and complying with all regulations.

Insurance & School Costs

School costs bills are issued every year for every child and they cover everything your child will need for that school year. You will not need to purchase anything as all materials for school such as pencils, crayons, art supplies are included in this bill as well as photocopying costs and 24-hour pupil accident insurance.

We urge parents to pay this bill of €40 as early as possible. Unfortunately we cannot accept card payments as it is very costly for our school to introduce at this time but we are looking into introducing this at some point in the future. In the interim, you can pay via cash or cheque in person, or online via bank to bank transfer as one lump sum, please contact school office for bank details if you wish to choose this method.

Our School Policies

Please familiarise yourself with our school policies and mission statement which can be found on our school website at www.conventjuniorschool.ie These policies are as follows:

- Code of Discipline & Behaviour Policy
- Mission Statement
- Admissions Policy
- ASD Admissions Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

Our School Year at a Glance

September

Whole School Parents Welcome Evening
Junior Infant Parent Coffee Morning
First Class Swimming Lessons
European sports Day

October

Climate Action Week
Halloween – Trick or Treat Party
Maths Week – Maths for Fun with Parents

November

Science Week
Wellbeing Week
Parent Teacher Meetings

December

Christmas Shows
Whole School Winter Walk
Santa Visit

January

Catholic Schools Week
Well Being Week
GAA Skills Training
Blast Drama Workshops

February

Grandparents Day
Enrolment Opens
Swimming Sessions for First Class
GAA Skills Training

March

Seachtain Na Gaeilge
Engineers Week
La Glas Party & Parade
World Book Day

April

Active Schools Week
Zumba Classes
Whole School Spring Walk

May

Soccer Skills
Cuddle & Read with Junior Infants Parents
School Tour

June

Sports Day
First Class Graduation Show & Ceremony
Bi Annual Green Flag Raising Ceremony
Active Schools Week
Annual Parents Association Tractor Run

*Thank you for enrolling your child at our school. We look forward to meeting with you all in
September!!*