



St. Cronan's Junior National School
Scoil Chrónáin

Brackenstown, Swords, Co. Dublin. Telephone: (01) 8402194
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Roll No. 19456B

Booklet
for
Parents

FOREWORD

St.Cronan's Junior National School,
Brackenstown,
Swords, Co. Dublin

Tel: 01 8402194
01 8904594 (Principal)
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Dear Parents/Guardians,

A very warm welcome to St. Cronan's Junior National School. We hope that your child will be extremely happy here.

Our school is a happy and safe place where every child matters. Without your support we cannot succeed so we look forward to working in partnership with you in the interest of your child's all round learning and personal development.

We have a wonderful staff and you can be assured of our full co-operation and commitment at all times.

Should you have any query or concerns at any time please feel free to come and talk to us.

Beir bua agus beannacht,

Brigid Manton.

Welcome to St. Cronan's Junior National School.

Background:

St. Cronan's Junior National School was founded in 1972.

It is a co-ed Catholic School catering for children from Junior Infants to Second Class.

At present there are 615 pupils and 31 teachers.

The staff is made up of :

Principal
Deputy Principal
3 Assistant Principals
18 Mainstream Teachers
5 Learning Support / Resource Teachers
3 English Language Teachers.
7 Special Needs Assistants
Full / Part-Time Secretaries
Full Time Caretaker

Cleaning Staff of 6.

Visiting Music Teacher
Visiting Drama Teacher
Visiting P.E. Teacher.

Shared Resource Teacher for Traveller Children.

The school operates under the Rules for National Schools, laid down by the Minister for Education.

Our Vision

To enable each child through positive learning experiences, to recognise that he/she is a unique individual. To develop social skills through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society. To enable each child to reach his/her full potential, face life confidently, find fulfilment and be respectful in an ever-changing world. To enable each child to recognise the good in him/her self.

We endeavour to achieve this goal in a climate of positive co-operation, supported by the entire school community of pupils, teachers, support staff, parents/guardians, Board of Management and Parish.

Our Mission

St. Cronan's, Brackenstown, is a Catholic school, which nurtures a positive co-operative educational environment where each child can develop his/her full potential in a caring environment.

We believe each child has a unique and special contribution to make. We believe every child matters.

We strive to develop independence in our students together with the ability to self evaluate, self motivate and internalise discipline. We want our students to be happy with themselves, others and their world.

We want our pupils to enjoy school.

These aspirations can only be achieved through the co-operation of students, teachers, support staff, parents/guardians, Board of Management and Parish.

ETHOS

St. Cronan's J.N.S. is a Catholic school with a Roman Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and operates in accordance with the schedule of a Catholic school.

We promote gentleness, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, openness and tolerance. We seek to promote a school that is pleasing and fun.

We are proactive in our efforts to achieve this environment through our language and our actions. The teachers see parents/guardians as partners in this process.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:

The school is run by the Board of Management.

Constitution of Boards of Management

For schools with more than one teacher:

- i) Two direct nominees of the Patron.
- ii) Two parents of children enrolled in the school (one being a mother, the other a father), elected by the general body of parents of children enrolled in the school.
- iii) The principal teacher (or acting principal teacher) of the school.
- iv) One other teacher on the staff of the school, elected by vote of the teaching staff.
- v) Two extra members proposed by the nominees, (i) – (iv) above.

For school with one teacher:

- i) One direct nominee of the Patron.
- ii) The principal of the school.
- iii) One parent elected from parents of pupils enrolled in the school.
- iv) One extra member proposed by the nominees, (i) - (iii) above.

Functions of the Board of Management

Boards of management are responsible for the direct governance of schools. The duties of the board of management include the following:

- The appointment of teachers and ancillary staff
- Approving school closures
- Approving teacher absences for a variety of reasons
- The appointment of teachers to deputy-principalship and other posts of responsibility
- Ensuring compliance with relevant legislation
- Ensuring that schools are adequately insured and maintained.

Specific duties of the Chairperson of the Board of Management include:

- Acting as a correspondent with the Department of Education and Science and all outside bodies.
- Presiding at board of management meetings
- Signing the monthly returns and annual statistical returns
- Serving on the selection board for the appointment of teachers.

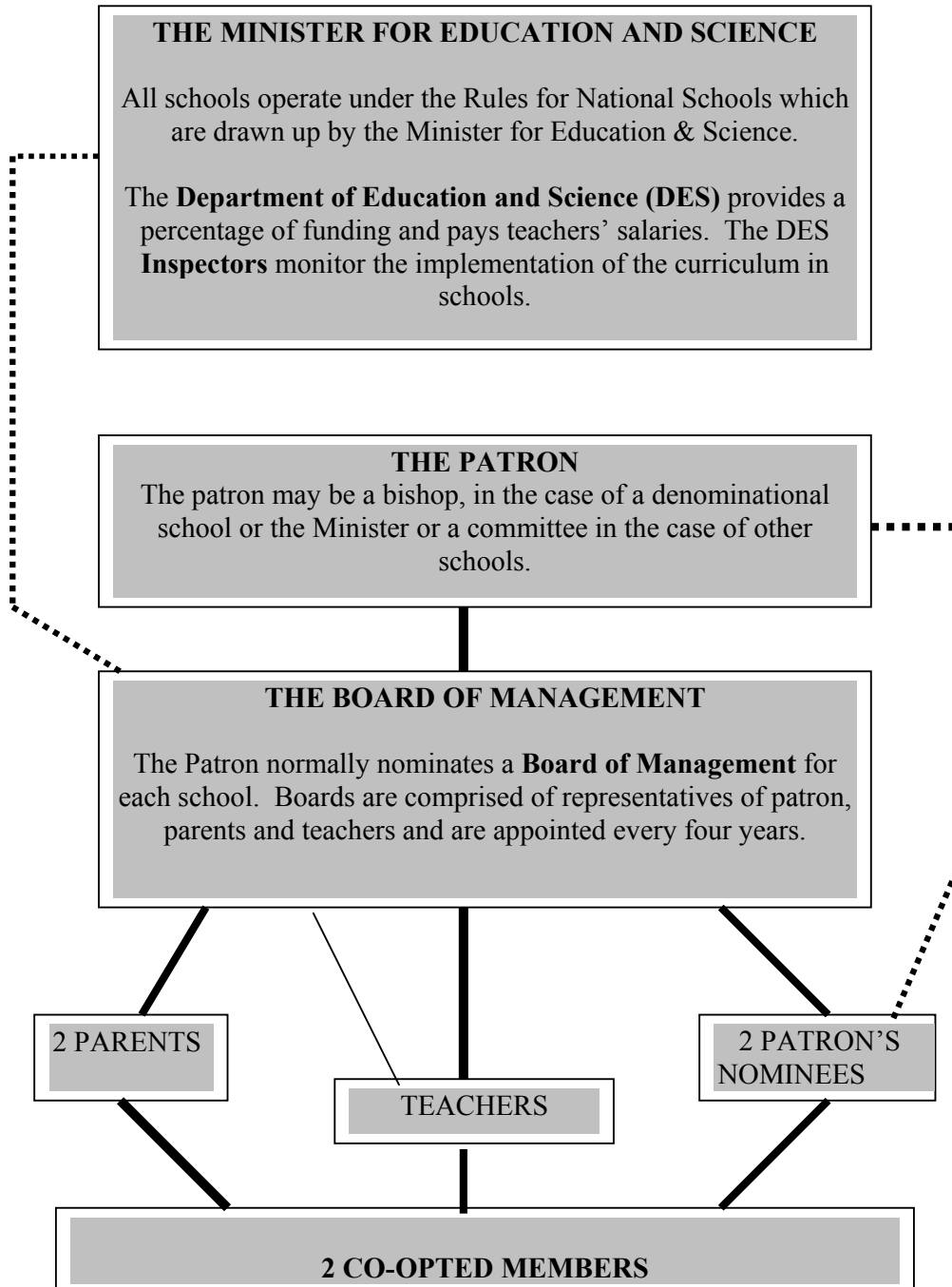
More information on boards of management is available in *Boards of Management of National Schools – Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure*, published by the Department of Education and Science.

The Board of St. Cronan's J.N.S. is made up of **8 people: 2 Parents Representatives, 2 Community Representatives, 2 members of the Teaching Staff (one of whom is the Principal) and 2 Patron's/Diocesan nominees.**

The names of current Board members are available from the school office. The Board of Management has a four year term.

THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The structure of school management is set out in the diagram below.



PARENTS ASSOCIATION

As a parent/guardian you are an automatic member of our Parents Association. The Parents Association is run by an executive committee of parents/guardians. Their names are available from the school office.

Your ideas and support will be crucial in helping to make the Parents Association a success. From time to time during the year the Parents Association run meetings, talks, events and fundraisers. These contribute greatly to the social life of the school. They are also a means of getting to know new people while at the same time making a real contribution to your child's education.

REMEMBER YOU ARE THE ASSOCIATION SO PLEASE DO GET INVOLVED.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our **Discipline Policy** has at its core 5 **Golden Rules**. Pupils and staff are all expected to respect these.

They are:

- We will be kind to one another.**
- We will call each person by their proper name.**
- We will move quietly around our school.**
- We will listen well, to our teachers and to each other.**
- We will try always to do our best work.**

A complete copy of the Discipline Policy is available from the school.

THE SCHOOL DAY:

Junior & Senior Infants	9.00 a.m. - 1.40 p.m.
1st and 2nd Class	9.00 a.m. - 2.40 p.m.
Morning Break:	10.30 a.m. - 10.40 a.m.
Lunch Break:	12.00 p.m. - 12.30 a.m. Jun/Sen. Infants
	12.45 p.m. - 1.15 p.m. 1st / 2nd Classes

Please note that all Junior Infants will finish early for the first two weeks of the school year. (see page ? for details of times)

PUNCTUALITY AND ATTENDANCE:

The children are expected to be punctual and to attend school everyday. Good school attendance is crucial to your child's progress.

It should be noted that your child may not enter the school before 9.00 a.m. Children remain the responsibility of their parents/guardians until that time. Reception time is 9.00 – 9.20 a.m. and teaching begins at 9.20 a.m.

We ask that you are on time picking up your child daily. Infant Teachers have other duties to perform and small children's trust is shattered if they are left waiting when every other child has been collected.

ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL.

Entry / Exit to School Buildings.

Junior Infants:

Junior Infant classes are accommodated in the new school building. They enter through the main door which opens at 9.00 a.m. Parents are welcome to accompany their children to the classroom for the first few weeks at school. It is envisaged that by Halloween the parent will be able to escort the children to the door of the building and that the children will make their own way to the classrooms, under the watchful eye of the Principal. You may be surprised at how quickly your Junior Infant child feels secure enough to enter on his/her own, more quickly perhaps than you the parent/guardian feel secure about letting him/her go alone. Parents of children with special needs may continue to escort their children for as long as they feel it is necessary.

Home Time for Junior and Senior Infants:

All Junior and Senior Infants will exit school through the outside doors of their classrooms or will be delivered by teacher to the main door. Parents will be informed in September of appropriate pickup point.

1st Class / 2nd Class:

Children in classroom No.s 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 will enter the building in the morning by Door No. 2., i.e. the door nearest the B.A.S.E. Centre.

Children in classroom No.s 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16 will enter through Door No. 1. i.e. main front door.

The main doors to the school will be opened between 9.00 and 9.20 a.m. After this time all doors will be closed and all children, parents, visitors will have to use the intercom system attached to the main door.

Home Time 1st and 2nd Classes

Children in classrooms facing the car park will exit through the outside doors of their classroom otherwise teachers will escort the children out through the door they entered in the morning.

All children are expected to observe rules for lining up outside the school, i.e.

Look in front
No pushing
No Skipping other people.
Enter / Exit the school quietly.

We encourage children to obey these few rules in the interest of safety and discipline.

In the interest of fostering independence, children are encouraged to say ‘Good Bye’ to their parents/guardians outside the school door. They will know their own classroom and are expected to take responsibility for their own coats, bags and lunches.

Traffic:

With the exception of staff cars, traffic is not allowed into the school grounds between 8.30 a.m. and 9.30 a.m. and between 1.00 p.m. and 3.00 p.m. Parents are encouraged to walk children to school if at all possible, as it is much healthier. Lollipop Ladies are provided by Fingal County Council outside the school, on the distribution road between St. Cronans Estate and Swords Manor and on the Rathbeale Road at Mooretown Estate, Brackenstown Road, opposite the school.

Parents are requested not to block the school gates. They are also asked to maintain civility and tolerance at all times while parking in the school environs.

Early Home Going:

Taking your child out of school early eats into teaching / learning time and should only be done if absolutely necessary. The following rules apply:

- a) A written request signed by the parent/guardian should be presented to the classroom teacher in the morning.
- b) The parent / guardian should collect the child if possible. If not possible, parents should designate a responsible adult to do so.
- c) Children will not be released early into the care of another child or juvenile.
- d) Parents should clearly state on the note to teacher who the designated adult collecting the child is. No child will be released without this notification.
- e) The designated adult should call to the Secretary’s Office and make him/herself known. If possible they should produce a note from the parents/guardians. In the event of any ambiguity whatsoever, the Secretary will make a call to the parent to clarify the situation. We do this in the interest of each child’s safety.

School Uniforms

The school uniforms consist of tracksuit and a blue polo shirt. A school jacket is available if desired but is not compulsory. Tracksuits are available in the school library in the first week of July. Tracksuits are available to order at all other times from the school secretary. Order forms are provided for Junior Infants in their welcome pack.

Runners and shoes with Velcro opening are recommended for infants. It is expected that each child will wear the complete uniform every day.

Jewellery

Children are not encouraged to wear jewellery to school, with the exception of a watch and earrings in pierced ears. Other pieces such as rings / bracelets can get caught in things or lost and can cause injury or in the event of loss, heartache for your child.

Helpful Hints

- Please label all clothing, bags and lunch boxes. Make sure your child recognises his/her own label, as there will be lots of identical clothing and equipment in class.
- Please cover all your child's books and make sure his/her name is clearly visible on the **outside** of the books.
- If your child has had an upset at home, e.g. death in family, loss, separation, etc. please let teacher know.
(This information will be treated in confidence, but is really helpful in dealing with your child's individual needs).

Mobile Phones / Games

Mobile phones or handheld computer games are not allowed in school. These will be confiscated from the child and the parent will have to collect them from the teacher.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Lunch

We have a Healthy Lunch Policy in operation in the school. We encourage children to bring sandwiches, cheese, meat, fruit, and yoghurt, with fruit juice or water. Crisps, peanuts, chocolate spreads, fizzy drinks and chewing gum **are not allowed**. Glass bottles are forbidden. Choose a lunch box and beaker / bottle which your child can open / close easily. Practise at home before starting school. All leftover food will be returned home in the lunch box. This is so that you the parent will know what your child has eaten and it also cuts down on waste within the school.

Fridays are fruit days.

Fruit Friday is sponsored by the School Completion Programme and platters of fresh fruit are delivered to each classroom, courtesy of members of the Parents Association.

Litter

We encourage the children to take responsibility for their environment and to be **litter conscious**. This is a great help in keeping their school tidy. We work towards heightening in them a sense of respect towards the environment.

Immunisation and Screening.

The Northern Area Health Board provides **medical and dental screening** for school children. It also provides booster **immunisations** for childhood diseases to Junior Infant Classes. The local clinic is based in Bridge Street, Swords, Ph: 01 8902200. These services are generally delivered through the school in association with the H.S.E. Parents will always be notified in advance and parental consent is always required.

Medication

It is the policy of the school not to administer any medications to children. The school will be happy to facilitate Parents/Guardians needing to give medication to their child.

Disabilities.

If a child has any physical or health problems the Principal should be informed when the child is being enrolled. Should a problem develop the Principal should be told immediately. In this way appropriate provisions can be put in place. **The above information will be treated with respect and confidence.**

Children Unwell in School

When the Principal feels that a child is not well enough for school either as a result of becoming sick or an accident the Parents/Guardians will be contacted immediately. Emergency contact numbers must be valid and any change of phone numbers or address notified immediately to the Class Teacher.

This highlights the importance of filling out the contact form.

Accidents

The class teacher treats minor accidents at school. Slight cuts and grazes are normally treated by cleaning with an antiseptic solution and applying an antiseptic cream/first aid plaster as necessary. Please inform the school if your child has an allergy to any of above.

For more serious accidents, such as head injuries, etc., parents/guardians are contacted by phone. In the event of the parent/guardian being unavailable, the backup contact number requested on enrolment form is contacted. In the event of an emergency, an ambulance is called.

School rules and routines are designed for the safety of your child. The high standard of behaviour and discipline encouraged at the school is an important factor in minimising the number of accidents occurring. Serious accidents are very rare.

There is no automatic right to compensation for accidents at school, anymore than there is for accidents at home. The school has an insurance scheme operated by the Parents Association and all parents are notified of this in September.

Infectious Disease:

Please notify the school if your child is diagnosed with an infectious disease.

Head Lice.

Head lice are regular visitors in all schools! So check your child's hair regularly (i.e. at least once a week) for head lice. Please report any outbreak to the school so that we can alert others. Lotions and shampoos are readily available from your local pharmacy.

Absence and Sickness

As we have already stated, regular attendance is crucial to your child's progress. However, children do, from time to time, get sick.

In accordance with the **Educational Welfare Act** the school has a duty to report any child who has missed **20 days** or more in one academic year. **The Principal has no discretion in this matter.**

Parents/Guardians are now obliged by law to provide a written explanation on their child's absence to the school. Forms will be provided in your welcome pack. Extras available from the Secretary's Office.

If your child has a particular health problem e.g. eyesight, hearing, toilet related problem, asthma, allergies, etc., please inform the school.

DO NOT SEND A SICK CHILD TO SCHOOL.

If your child is too sick to go to the playground he/she is too sick to be in school.

Exceptions are made in the case of ongoing or chronic illness and limb injuries. Otherwise **all children are expected to go to yard**, as it is a vital part of social interaction.

Homework

At Junior Infant level it is school policy to give some **formal homework** e.g. reading and literacy exercises. The child may be given occasional exercises relative to his/her ability at the discretion of the teacher.

The emphasis in the Infant Classes is on oral language, and you can also help the child in this regard by: listening as he/she relates the events of the day; repeats rhymes and songs; and by giving him/her praise and encouragement. Activities are structured to suit the stages of development of the child, and it is important that you do not push him/her to undertake a task for which he/she is not ready.

Parents will be asked to engage in a Shared Reading Programme during the year.

In 1st and 2nd Classes, the **homework** given should not take in excess of thirty minutes, and indeed less in many cases. If your child regularly exceeds this time limit, and you are satisfied that this is not due to poor self-discipline/work habits, please feel free to come and discuss the matter with the class teacher. Where exceptional circumstances prevent the completion of homework, an explanatory note should be sent to the class teacher.

Among the purposes of homework are:

- a) To create an opportunity for linking home and school in a meaningful way.
- b) To assist in cultivating good work habits in the child.
- c) To consolidate the work of the classroom.

Our homework policy is regularly reviewed.

Retention of Pupils (Repeat Year)

Department of Education & Science Circular 32/03 states that the normal procedure should be that a pupil is promoted to the next grade at the end of each year. Under the Department's policy, there may be cases where, following consultation between the class teacher, learning support teacher and the parents of the pupil, the Principal may conclude that a pupil would benefit educationally from remaining in the same grade for a second year. It should be noted that the age of a pupil on first enrolment (e.g. 4 years old in July/August) would not be regarded as a valid reason for repeating a grade at a later stage. All children must be 6 years of age before the 31st August entering 1st Class.

Parent-Teacher Contact / Appointment

If your child is unhappy or encountering problems at school, please feel welcome to come and discuss the matter with the class teacher.

- a) For **Junior and Senior Infant Classes**, the most appropriate time is between **1.40 p.m. and 2.15 p.m.** by appointment as the teachers are involved in rostered internal organisation/supervision duties.
- b) In the case of 1st and 2nd Class, please send a note to the class teacher **to request an appointment time** or ring the school secretary at 8402194 and she will arrange an appointment.

Appointment with Principals

In general, all communications should be in the first instance with the class teacher. Because of the administrative workload attached to a large school, it is necessary to make an appointment for consultation with the Principal. Please contact the school secretary in this regard.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are held on the **last Thursday of each month** unless otherwise notified. On such days, **pupils in all classes go home at 12 noon, unless notified of change.** Please make a careful note of this and arrange to collect your child promptly at this time. After initial reminder in September, no further reminders will be issued.

DISCIPLINARY DIFFICULTIES

We know that you would wish to be made aware of any disciplinary problems concerning your child, and it will be school policy to notify parents in this regard. See **‘Code of Behaviour and Discipline’**.

Television

Much debate has taken place in recent years on the *effects of television* on young children. Parents are often concerned about how much viewing time should be allowed. The reality is that most children watch TV or play computer games and, in moderation, this is not a bad thing. Children can learn a great deal and language can be enhanced through television. Don't allow them to watch unsuitable material. Children in senior classes should be aware of what is going on in the world so encourage them to watch and talk about news items. This will add to their general knowledge and command of language. Do not allow children to watch television while doing homework. Television before school or in the bedroom is not a good idea.

From Home to school

From birth, children learn naturally and informally from their parents and from their environment. Parents are often anxious to see results of formal learning soon after the child starts school. Children will start to read and write at their own pace. Just as they walk and talk at different ages – they also read and write when they are ready to do so themselves. It is not necessary for children to be able to write or recognise letters before coming to school. It is far more important for parents to prepare children so that they will look forward to starting school.

Help prepare your child for learning.

Positive Attitude

It is important to create a positive attitude towards learning. If children have this positive attitude then they will try to become involved in the learning process.

Curiosity

The natural inquisitiveness of children should be encouraged. It is central to the learning process. Children will be encouraged to ask more questions when they get positive and encouraging responses.

Self Confidence

If children are confident about their abilities and capabilities then they will be more willing to take on new challenges.

Listening

Children should be encouraged to develop good listening skills. Instruction and directions are given continually at school so children need to be good listeners if they are to participate fully in school life.

Interacting with others

Children need to learn how to be sociable, how to share and take turns. They also need to learn respect for others and to be aware of the feelings of others.

Independence

In order to take part fully in school life children need to have developed a good level of independence.

The following will help you develop your child's management of new skills.

Play

Children learn through play and should be given lots of opportunities to:

Act out roles – pretending they are someone else. Children love to pretend that they are nurses, doctors, mothers, fathers or shopkeepers and such opportunities enable them to use language.

Play with Objects – sand, water, jigsaws, boxes and bricks and other toys.

Engage in Physical Play – such as ball games, skipping, chasing games.

Social play is essential for good development. Not only do children learn many social and emotional skills through play with their peers, they also acquire a variety of linguistic skills.

Choose **toys** carefully. Children should have blocks to build, simple jigsaws or basic construction toys. Encourage them to build and make use of odds and ends such as paper-plates, used packets, cartons or egg boxes.

Language

The role of language in education is very important and cannot be overemphasised. Language is essential for developing reading and writing skills and is also a vital part of the social and emotional development of children.

In developing your child's language skills, encourage your child to

- Listen
- Explain
- Tell
- Talk
- Question
- Retell

Listen attentively to your children. Encourage them to talk to you. Give them time to explain or describe events to you. Avoid interrupting, even if you know what they are going to say. When talking to your child, don't economise with words. Don't use baby talk.

Time given to language development will be rewarded in the further educational development of your child.

Activities, which will assist you to develop language, include:

- Encouraging your child to name objects in a room or place that are of a particular size, shape or texture.
- Asking your child to describe a particular incident, which has taken place such as a visit to the doctor/dentist or a visit to a farm/zoo.
- Assisting your child to categorise objects
Name all the food on the table
Name all the vegetables in the fridge
Name all the items in the fridge that are not vegetables
- Assisting your child to use language to reason in various situations:
Why do you wear a coat in cold weather?
Why do you need to put on sunscreen in warm weather?
- Helping your child to use language to describe past, present and future events.
What will you do when you go to your granny and granddads
- Encouraging your child to express his/her feelings:
How did you feel when your dog died?
How would you feel if Santa Claus did not bring you any toys at Christmas?
- Use of language in reacting to various situations:
What would you do if your granny gave you lots of money?

Opportunities can also be given to help children to use language to solve problems, to give directions, to indicate the position of objects, to tell you about things that have happened to them during the day.

- Rhymes and Riddles are a good way of encouraging language development.
- Reading to your child will also assist language development.

Irish, as both language and subject, is most often new to children beginning school. From time to time, use words or short sentences in Irish to help introduce children to the Irish language. This will be of assistance in easing their handling of a second language. Familiarity with expressions such as “más é do thoil é”, “go raibh maith agat”, and “maith an cailín/buachail” will be invaluable to them in coping with the new demands of school.

Help your child identify **colours**. This could also lend itself quite easily to the use of Irish as it may involve single word terms only, such as “dearg”, “bui” or “bán”.

Reading

Read to your child regularly. This encourages a love of books and creates an interest in **reading**. Ensure that reading is an enjoyable experience. Don't prolong the reading when the child has lost interest – short enjoyable experiences are best. Again, reading to children in Irish or English may serve a positive end in making their more formal encounter with a second language that bit easier for them. (Remember to keep it simple!).

Pay attention to the **mechanics of reading**, such as holding the book and turning the pages. Let your finger go under the words as you read from left to right. The child's main interest will be in pictures so allow time to examine and comment on them.

Encourage them to repeat what happened in the story and to talk about their favourite bit. Play “what do you think would have happened if...!” games or “what would you have done if you were...?”

Enjoy **nursery rhymes** together.

Writing

Young children need to develop the right muscles in their hands before they can begin to write properly. You can help this development by encouraging them to do things that involve using their hands such as drawing, cutting paper or using play dough. You should provide:

- Large sheets of paper and chubby crayons for scribbling, drawing, colouring in, tracing or copying.
- Scissors for cutting paper (be sure to use scissors that are safe for children to use)
- Activities, which involve pouring, stirring, mixing or rolling (play dough).
- Dolls or teddys with clothes that can be buttoned, laced, zipped and tied.
- Encourage them to dress themselves.

Allow your child to use the hand he/she chooses naturally. Being left-handed will not cause any problems in school!

Basic Maths

You can help your child become familiar with the ideas they will need to understand when they are introduced to **basic maths** in school. Allow your children to help you in sorting the cutlery, setting the table, counting out the correct number of spoons or forks. Allow your child to help you divide sweets among friends. Help your child to sort and match objects on the basis of:

<i>Size</i>	- put all the small objects in the box.
<i>Shape</i>	- put all the round objects on the table
<i>Colour</i>	- put all the red items on the chair
<i>Texture</i>	- put all the smooth items in the box
<i>Function</i>	- put all the items which roll together
<i>Material</i>	- put all the wooden items together.

Again, the incidental use of the Irish number terms is easy here as, just like with colours, it entails the use of single words, “aon”, “dó”, “trí”.

Encourage your child to collect things from the park or beach on walks, like shells, cones, pebbles, nuts and feathers. They can have fun later sorting and classifying the different objects. Try the same thing with collections of buttons, badges or lids, and other odds and ends from around the house. The use of Irish to identify single-word items, such as clothing (“geansaí”, “sciorta”, “briste”) or food (“úll”, “briosca”, “ceapaire”) and of personal belongings (“mála”, “leabhar”, “lón”) can also help subsequent understanding.

Use language with your child that will help them to understand the concepts of “more”, “less”, “the same”, “different”, “longer than”, “shorter than” and other useful comparisons.

PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL

Starting school is a milestone in the life of a child and often a time of stress and anxiety for parents. Parents can do much to reduce such anxiety – both for themselves and for their child. This preparation should begin some months before the child starts and should be carried out gradually.

It is an enormous change for a child to have to share a room with up to 30 other children and one adult. There is much that parents can do, however, to prepare children to cope with separation and socialisation and to help them get over their initial fears. The following may help

- **An initial visit** to the school will be arranged in early June of the year in which your child is due to start. Show your child the school building, the classroom, where the toilets and coat hangers are and the playground.
- Give your child plenty of practice following orders and performing tasks independently – tidying up, dressing/undressing themselves, setting the table for themselves, putting on/off coats etc.
- Make sure that your child is **fully** toilet trained and knows how to wash and dry their hands afterwards.
- Allow your child to get used to eating from a lunchbox. Make sure they can actually open and close the box and open a small yoghurt and use a spoon to eat it. Your child will only need a small nutritious lunch – don't give your child fizzy drinks or glass bottles. Teach your child not to throw scraps on the floor.
- Label **everything** your child brings to school. Use indelible marker to label lunchboxes, beakers, schoolbags, jumpers, tracksuit tops and coats.
- Your child will just need a **small** bag for school. The teacher will keep all his/her books at school. Check your child's bag regularly for notes. Keep your welcome pack in a safe place to store school notices. Clean out your child's bag regularly.
- Prepare an emergency phone number of an adult who can be contacted during the school day should you not be contactable at home or work.
- Please don't buy laced shoes or runners. Buy shoes or runners with Velcro fasteners. Strapped shoes are fine.
- Cover your child's books with paper that your child can easily identify. Children enjoy identifying their own books. Make sure that your child's name is clearly written on the outside front cover.
- As the starting date approaches talk **POSITIVELY** about school. If you are enthusiastic about school your child will be too.
- On the first day bring your child into the classroom – give him/her to teacher and go. Please don't linger – your child will be fine.
- When collecting your child stand at the outside school doors. The teacher will bring your child to the door and when your child's name is called out you can collect him/her.
- Lastly – don't worry your child will settle into school.

PUPILS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The school caters for children with a range of special needs. The Department of Education and Science provide resources to assist the school in this. This issue is also addressed in the school's Enrolment Policy. Please notify the principal teacher of any identified special need your child has well in advance of him/her starting school. A copy of all relevant reports on the child should be forwarded to the school with application for enrolment or as soon as possible thereafter. On the basis of these reports your child may qualify for daily withdrawal from mainstream class for extra help with our **Special Needs Resource** teachers.

Currently we have 3 full time Special Needs Resource Teachers.

Some children for care reasons require extra support in school. We are fortunate to have 7 **Special Needs Assistants** who help support the teacher in catering for the needs of these children.

EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

An Education Psychologist is available to carry out **Educational Assessments** on children who we believe are not making reasonable progress. Parents are consulted and permission is always sought before this is done.

This service, however, does not meet the needs of all the children in the school and some private assessments are undertaken. In such cases Parents/Guardians are asked to cover the cost.

LEARNING SUPPORT.

The school has the services of 4 qualified Learning Support Teachers. Early identification of learning difficulties is crucial in their remediation. All Children from Junior Infants to Second Class are regularly screened through the administration of standardised and observational tests. Parental consultation and support is a vital aspect of our learning support programme.

INTER CULTURAL EDUCATION

We are delighted to have among our students a number of children from other cultures and backgrounds. We currently have three Resource Teachers who help these children learn English as a second language.

We hope your child's years spent in St. Cronan's will be extremely happy and will help him/her to grow in all that is positive and good.

THE FIRST DAY

It is important that you establish a *good routine early*. Check that all items – uniform, bag – are ready for the morning. Do this in a calm fashion and don't have your child over-excited or anxious going to bed. Give plenty of time in the morning for dressing, washing and eating a good breakfast. It is important that your child arrives at school before class starts as children can find it very intimidating to walk into a class already in progress.

On the big day, if you are feeling upset, don't show it. Leave your child with the teacher and tell him/her you will be back at the appropriate time to collect him/her. If your child is upset, trust the teacher. The teacher is very experienced and knows how to *comfort* an anxious child.

*A Tea & Tears Session is provided by the Parent Association in the B.A.S.E
- all welcome -*

When the child arrives in school he/she will meet many children. There may be the *familiar faces* of friends from the neighbourhood as well as former classmates from pre-school. There will also be new faces.

Due to the increased *integration of children with special needs* into mainstream schools, there may be children in the class with special needs. Likewise, there are likely to be *children from other cultures* in their new class. Your child will take some time to familiarise him/herself with all these new faces but, after a time, you will find that your child will soon make new friends.

It takes *time for children to adapt* to school life and routine. Don't expect too much too soon. Talk to them about what happened and allow them to respond in their own way. If you ask, "what did you learn today?" you will most likely be told, "nothing!". Most of the work at infant level is activity based and children do not understand 'learning' in the same way that adults do. If, however, you ask, "what happened?", "what did you do?", "did you sing?", "did you draw?", you will have more success.

Your child will be tired coming home from school and occasionally may sleep for an hour or so when they come home. It is important to set a routine of a quiet time together and early to bed.

If you feel that your child is worried about something that is school related, talk to the teacher.

Start Time for Junior Infants - Week 1 / Week 2.

- School Day – Week 1..... 9.00 am to 12.00 pm.
- School Day – Week 2..... 9.00 am to 12.30 pm

After the first two weeks in September the children will be in school for the full infant day, i.e. **9.00 am – 1.40 pm.**

New Junior Infants are tired when they start school first so help by making sure they go to bed early.

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

For schools to do what is best for your child it is very important to have good home-school communication. Parents are the primary educators of their children and their co-operation and support are essential to the school. This fact was given formal recognition some years ago by the Department of Education and Science.

For general information schools usually issue *notices or newsletters* to parents through the children. It is important that you check your child's schoolbag regularly for notes. If left unchecked younger children may produce these weeks after they are relevant!

Schools hold *parent-teacher meetings* at some stage during the school year. It is important that you attend these to keep in touch with your child's progress. It is also important that your child sees you are interested in his/her progress in school.

Each school must prepare a *code of behaviour*. The principal of the school will provide the parents of each child with a copy of this code and will enlist parents' co-operation in ensuring this code is followed.

If your child is experiencing *a particular problem* it is essential that you communicate this to the teacher. Family stress caused by an illness, a new baby, bereavement or a separation may result in the child becoming disruptive or withdrawn in school. It is unfair to expect the teacher to deal with a child who is upset if the teacher does not know there is a problem. Letting teachers know will allow them to help your child to cope and to make allowance for that stress.

If you feel your child has a problem you should arrange to see the teacher. It is impossible for teachers to give parents their full attention if they arrive unexpectedly at the classroom door. *Making an appointment* allows the teacher to make arrangements for the supervision of the class. This also allows the teacher to give you his/her full attention.

CURRICULAR SUBJECTS:

In 1999 a new revised Curriculum was introduced into Irish Primary Schools. The Curriculum is being implemented gradually and each year teachers receive In Service and updating in specific subject areas.

The Primary School Curriculum consists of **6** Curriculum areas and these are further divided into **11** subjects. Your child will be learning in the following areas and subjects

1. **Language:** Gaeilge & English.
2. **Mathematics:** Mathematics.
3. **Social, Environmental & Scientific Education (S.E.H.E.):** History, Geography & Science.
4. **Arts Education:** Music, Visual Arts and Drama.
5. **Physical Education (P.E.):** Physical Education.
6. **Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.):** Social, Personal and Health Education.

There are guidelines on the amount of time to be allocated to each curriculum area.

The Curriculum aims to ensure that all children are provided with learning opportunities that recognise and celebrate their uniqueness, develop their full potential and prepare them to meet the challenge of the 21st Century. The focus is on the child as a learner.

The Curriculum aims to foster the development of key skills in communication problem solving, critical thinking, investigation and interaction.

It is also the aim of the Curriculum to ensure that children's experience of school will lead them to value and enjoy learning as a life long process.

Functional literacy, numeracy, and the ability to articulate well are stressed.

It encourages greater attention to be given to children with Special Educational needs; the needs of gifted children are also stressed.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Our philosophy is based on the notion that every child has '**Multiple Intelligences**'. In order to develop these and discover their strengths, every child needs a chance to be exposed to 'other' educational experiences apart from the purely academic.

In association with Fingallians Football Club children receive coaching in football and hurling skills.

All classes get 6 sessions with a drama teacher.

All classes get 6 sessions with a qualified music teacher.

All classes have access to fitness coaching.

All of the above are sponsored by the School Completion Board.

Various other activities including tin whistle and games club are offered by teachers after school in a private capacity.

Whenever possible Summer and Easter Camps are run in school by members of staff in a private capacity.

MONEY MATTERS

Book Money

There are 3 parts to the cost of your child's books and equipment needs, paid on the day of initial visit to your class teacher.

Books to be purchased locally in one of the bookshops and given to teacher on first day of school. All books are kept in school.

Materials & Equipment Cost.

This includes Arts and Crafts materials, educational equipment, photocopying, I.T. computers, copies, pencils, crayons etc. This is paid to your class teacher on day of initial visit for Junior Infants.

Other classes are issued with new book lists in May

We ask that all BOOK MONEY be paid before school ends in June. You may qualify for a Book Grant to cover part of this bill. Application forms are available in the Secretary's Office. Generally parents should be in receipt of Social Welfare payment, e.g. dole, to qualify for this grant.

Annual voluntary contribution is €50 per child, €80 per family, payable to class teachers and received through the Secretary's Office

FUND RAISERS:

Parents Association arrange the following fundraisers annually.

1. Bingo – Christmas / Easter
2. Golf Classic – June
3. Christmas Cards

Other events are sometimes arranged to fund certain projects.

EMERGENCY CLOSING.

The safety of the children is of primary importance at all times.

Should an emergency closing be appropriate (e.g. in the event of no heat, snow etc.) the decision to close the school will be taken by the Board of Management at the earliest possible time so as to maximise notice to Parents/Guardians.

WE ASK THAT YOU ENSURE THE SCHOOL ALWAYS HAS AN UP-TO-DATE AND IMMEDIATE CONTACT NUMBER FOR YOU.

Children walking to school alone should always be aware of the person whom they should contact in the event that Parents/Guardians may be gone to work.

If an emergency closing arises early in the morning, before school starts, Parents/Guardians will be informed of this at the gates.

An up-to-date message will be put on the school answering machine to keep you informed of developments.

In school we encourage each child to do his/her best through individual, group and whole class activities. All **children learn at their own pace**. Just as children walk and talk at different stages, they also read and write when they are ready.

Nowhere is this more crucial than in their first faltering steps to independence.

If children feel you have confidence in them they will feel they can achieve.

Education is a life long journey. We want your child's first steps to be as positive as possible. Join us as we walk the path of learning together.

CHILDREN LEARN WHAT THEY LIVE.

If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives with praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.

THE SCHOOL YEAR

School Year 2007 / 08

October 2007 Mid-Term Break

All schools will close from 29 October to 2nd November 2007 inclusive.

Christmas 2007

Schools will close on 21 December 2007, which will be the final day of the school term. Schools will re-open on 7th January 2008.

February 2008 Mid-Term Break

Primary schools will close from 14th to 15th February 2008 inclusive. (Primary schools may use 3 discretionary days to extend this break to an alternative option of a 5-day break).

Easter 2008

All schools will close on 14th March 2008, which will be the final day of the school term. All schools will re-open on 31st March 2008.

In addition, a small number of discretionary days are available to schools to close as suits local circumstances. These closures, which may include days for school planning or in-service provision will be notified to parents as early as possible by school authorities.