

KEEP SAFE FOR REFERENCE
Information Booklet



**Scoil Mhuire Réalt Na Mara,
Brittas Bay,
Co. Wicklow.**

Telephone: 0404 47488

Email: brittasbaynationalschool@gmail.com

School Website: brittasbayns.com

The History Of Scoil Mhuire Réalt Na Mara

A school was established on the present site in 1857. It was moved to Brittas Bridge in 1876 where the old school still stands.

In 1967 the 2teacher school was moved once again back to Ballinacarrig where the present school is. The 'new' school consisted of 1 prefab. There were 64 children on the Roll.

In 1989 a second prefab was installed on the site to accommodate growing numbers and a third teacher Brenda Byrne, joined Aggie O'Brien and Eileen Byrne.

With further growth in numbers a new school was opened in 1998. Pupils and staff spent a year in buildings on the grounds of Magheramore Convent while building work was in progress.

In 2006 a prefab was added.

A resource room, staff toilet and staffroom were built by the parents alone and are a huge asset to the school.

In 2009 a new classroom and SEN room was built.

In 2013 a classroom was built to replace the prefab and in 2022 an SEN room was completed.

It is still the hope of all interested in the development of the school that we will have a P.E. hall, Principal's office, storage space and an all-weather pitch someday.

Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara, Brittas Bay, Co. Wicklow is a co-educational Catholic primary school which operates under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

MISSION STATEMENT

Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara is a medium-sized school serving a rural community that is mixed in both religion and socio-economic class. It is a Catholic school, and this ethos is promoted sincerely, but in a spirit of tolerance and respect for the beliefs of all who attend the school.

The school aims to teach the skills that are needed to develop each child's intellect. Its aims are also to imbue the children with appropriate spiritual, moral and cultural values and to develop their awareness and understanding of their environment at a local, national and global level. The school seeks to promote the physical and emotional wellbeing of all pupils, and to develop their expressive, artistic, creative and intellectual abilities to each pupil's full capacity.

The teachers will work in a spirit of partnership with the parents and the clergy for the good of the children and they aim to make the school a happy and effective place for learning.

Vision Statement

Our school vision states that we wish to promote and develop an environment where each child will be given equal opportunity to develop his/her full potential, through an enjoyable experience of learning.

This environment should encourage a positive self-esteem, consideration for and acceptance of others in an atmosphere of tolerance.

Staff

In September 2021 there were 128 pupils enrolled. We are an 8 teacher school consisting of a Teaching Principal, 5 Mainstream Teachers, 2 full time Special Education Needs Teachers, 1 part time Special Education Needs Teacher and 1 Special Needs Assistant. The number of teachers in a school is determined by the Department of Education and Skills and allocation depends on the enrolment of a school on the preceding September 30th.

STAFFING LIST

Principal	Úna Gallinagh (Teaching)
Deputy Principal	Maude O'Doherty (Teaching)
Teachers	Imelda Burke
	Frank Clune
	Mary Doyle
	Aisling Gibney
	Lisa Heffernan
	Ursula Walsh
Special Ed. (Part Time)	Sarah Fitzgerald /Marianne Nicholson (<i>Shared with Scoil San Eoin Redcross</i>)
Special Needs Assistant	Angie Nolan
Secretary	Ann Devereux
Domestic Staff	Una Jackson
Caretaker	Pat Walshe

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management is responsible for the management of the school on behalf of the Patron, the Archbishop of Dublin and is accountable to the Patron and the Minister. The Board is appointed for a 4-year term. The term of office for the present Board is from December 2019 to 30th November 2023.

The Board manages the school in accordance with:

- The Rules of National Schools
- The Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure
- Circulars issued from time to time by the Minister

The Board Membership is made up as follows:

The Chairperson	Padraig O'Brien
Patron's Nominee	Elizabeth Quinn
Parents Nominees	Jim Howe Caitriona O'Dwyer
Principal Teacher	Úna Gallinagh
Teacher Nominee	Lisa Heffernan
Community Nominee	Paula Conway

The Board acts as a corporate body and all act as one in the best interest of the school.

Parents /guardians and those visiting are expected to behave in a courteous and respectful manner towards all staff and children in our school. Any correspondence or behaviour deemed to be inappropriate will not be tolerated and will be brought to the attention of the Principal and subsequently the Board of Management.

We thank you for your co-operation in this matter. The health, safety and wellbeing of all in our school community are a priority and procedures must be followed.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION

The Parents Association works in co-operation with the school, for the benefit of the school community. Regular meetings are held throughout the year and all parents are encouraged to attend. P. A. related enquiries to brittasbayparentsassociation@gmail.com

The Officers on the Committee are as follows:

Chairperson	Margaret Kavanagh
Secretary	Joanne Dunne
Treasurer	Louise Devlin
PRO	Elaine Howe

Class Reps:

Junior infants	Paula Copeland
Senior Infants	Kerrie Beacom
1st Class	Orla Witter
2nd Class	Lisa Heffernan
3rd Class	Sarah Herlihy
4th Class	Brid Murphy
5th Class	Leonie Brolly
6th Class	Martina Donohoe

Code of Discipline and School Policy

By enrolling your child in Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara you are agreeing that you accept and will support the Code of Discipline and all school policies. Policies are updated on a regular basis and are available from the office. Some are available on the website.

POLICY CODE OF DISCIPLINE

INTRODUCTION

In devising the code of discipline consideration has to be given to the particular needs and circumstances of this school. The aim is to create an ordered and orderly environment in which pupils can, through developing self-discipline, feel secure and make progress in all aspects of their development. We recognize the variety of differences that exist between children and our aim is to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to an education in a relatively disruption-free environment.

This policy reflects our school's philosophy and ethos which aims to foster the values of respect, honesty, courtesy, responsibility, tolerance and consideration of others.

The code of discipline has been devised with regard for the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community. A high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within the school and a high level of co-operation among staff, pupils and parents.

Pupils will be treated fairly and consistently and will need to be aware of the consequences of misbehaviour.

Positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are used by teachers. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within the classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises and its environs and on trips.

AIMS

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operations of the school.
- To encourage pupils to respect themselves and others and to value their own property and that of others.
- To foster a sense of pride in their appearance, school work, their school, community and country.
- To take responsibility for their actions and to admit and apologise for wrong doing.
- To develop a sense of tolerance and justice in their dealings with others.
- To understand and accept the necessity for rules and the willing observance of them for the common good.
- To create an environment conducive to effective and efficient learning.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.
- To develop pupil's self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- • To ensure the health and safety of all pupils and school personnel.

SCHOOL RULES

- Pupils are expected to treat all adults and fellow pupils with respect and courtesy at all times including visiting coaches, speakers and volunteers. Behaviour that interferes with the rights of others to learn and to feel safe is unacceptable.
- Pupils are expected to show respect for all school property and to keep the school environment clean and litter free.
- Pupils are expected to take pride in their appearance, always be aware of personal hygiene, have all books and required materials and to be in the right place at the right time.
- Healthy lunches must be brought to school. See Healthy Lunch Policy.
- Each child is expected to obey a teacher's instruction, to work to the best of his/her ability, listen carefully in class, complete all homework and present written work neatly. A child's learning differences and general circumstances are taken into account.

- Disruptive behaviour where a teacher's time is taken up disciplining a child to the detriment of other children's learning and comfort in class is totally unacceptable.
- Children should be honest and truthful at all times.
- Enter and leave the school building and grounds in an orderly fashion. This is of prime importance where school safety is concerned.
- No cycling on school grounds. All children cycling should dismount at the school gate and walk the bicycle to the parking area, so as not to pose a hazard to others.
- Bullying, fighting, stone/stick throwing, rough play, bad language (spoken or written), spitting, hitting, name calling and any behaviour that interferes with the rights of others are forbidden and should be reported to parents and teachers.
- Any instructions or directions given by the supervising adult are to be complied with.
- Children are not allowed to run or play on footpaths. They must be kept clear for access and emergencies.
- At breaktimes they must not return indoors without prior permission of the teacher on duty.
- When the bell rings stand quietly in an orderly line until you are directed by the supervising adult to go in.
- Running in the school building is not allowed.
- Pupils must not leave the school ground during the school day.
- Children whose ears are pierced may wear studs only.
- No other body piercing is acceptable.
- Jewellery is banned with the exception of watches, ear studs, chains/bracelets for medical purposes.
- Punctuality is important. Persistent late coming is disruptive, disrespectful and unacceptable.
- Every absence of a child must be accounted for by forwarding a note to the class teacher, in advance where applicable, giving an explanation for the absence. The school must report absences of 20 days to TUSLA (Child and Family Agency). An audit may be undertaken by the Dept. of Education at any stage.
- Any allegations made by a parent / child against another child will be investigated and the matter discussed with both sets of parents.
- Coats, jumpers, cardigans, lunch boxes etc. must be clearly labelled.
- Children should not bring toys or valuables to school unless requested to do so by the teacher.
- For safety reasons drinks bottles and tin whistles should be kept in the bags when coming into and leaving school.

- No glass yogurt jars/drinks.
- There is an absolute ban on mobile phones. If any child carries one it will be confiscated. It can only be redeemed by a parent.

COVID-19

All children are expected to follow the COVID-19 Response Plan of Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara. This document will be shared with all families. Each classroom will provide explicit instruction to their class on how they are expected to behave within their classroom and in the school.

AFFIRMING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Positive reinforcement of good behaviour helps lead to better self-discipline.

Strategies:

- A quiet word or gesture
- A comment on a child's copybook
- A visit to another class or the principal for commendation
- Praise in front of class
- Individual class merit awards/stars
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege
- Written or verbal communication with parent

STRATEGIES TO BE USED TO SHOW DISAPPROVAL OF UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

1. Reasoning with pupil.
2. Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
3. Write about what happened and how the relevant rule was not followed / to be signed by parents
4. Loss of privileges.
5. Referral to Principal.
6. Communication with parents.
7. 7. For serious offences remove child from classroom/yard. Parent(s) will be contacted and the child will be removed by parent from school.
8. 8. For very serious offences where the progress and well-being of other children are at risk and where parent's intervention has failed to bring about an improvement, the Board of Management may suspend the child for a specified number of days, in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National School.
9. 9. Expulsion (Education Welfare Act 2000) will be considered where there is repeated instances of serious misbehaviour and in accordance with Rule 130(6).

SCHOOL DAY

The day is from: 8.50 a.m. – 1.30 p.m. (Infants)

8.50 a.m. – 2.30 p.m. (1st – 6th)

except in the case of a school tour/trip day. You will be informed in advance. The school gates will open at 8.50am to receive pupils and the school bell will ring. There is no supervision or insurance prior to this. No pupils or parents are permitted on the school grounds prior to this.

Please be punctual so as not to disrupt classes. Parents must collect their children on time. Infants must be collected at 1.30pm, in the interests of safety and the teachers responsibility for supervision of other pupils.

There are two breaks during the school day 10.30am to 10.40am and 12.00 to 12.30pm. Ten minutes before the start of each break children eat their food and avail of hand washing / toilet facilities.

We have 6/7 different play areas which will rotate. A timetable is organized allocating different classes to different areas. In the interests of safety children are allocated play areas which vary in wet or fine weather. Children are made aware of their area and must play in these designated areas at break times.

On dry days children will be supervised in their play areas by the teachers on duty. Please wear suitable clothing for cold weather. When the weather prevents play outside children will remain in their classrooms and will be supervised by teachers. They may play board games, use educational toys, draw, colour, read or watch DVDs. There are 2 teachers responsible for first aid.

Parents are requested to park in the church car park only. Enter through gateway nearest the shop and exit through gateway directly in front of church. The area outside the church wall should be kept free for staff parking. No parking is allowed at the front gate as this is for emergency access.

Out of respect for the church and for their own safety children should not be allowed to run freely, swing out of the bell, walk on or climb walls or slide on the rail. Teachers will not be supervising the church car park and parents/guardians are responsible for their children at collection times.

Only in exceptional circumstances i.e. a dental or doctor's appointment which cannot be made for another time may the children be taken out of class once they have come to school. A note is required if children have to leave school before normal closing time. If you are collecting your child/children during school hours you must come to the school door and the secretary will get your child from the relevant classroom. **Under no circumstances will a child be released from school during school hours to make his/her own way to the car park at an appointed time, for obvious safety reasons.**

If you are returning your child to school the secretary/SNA will accompany him/her back to his/her classroom.

During Covid parents will phone from the carpark and your child will be collected from / delivered to you.

PUPILS ABSENCE NOTE

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, it is necessary for us to maintain a record of attendance or non-attendance for each child registered at the school. The reasons for non-attendance must also be recorded. We are now obliged to return this information to the TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) when your child is absent 20 days or more.

This is a legal requirement.

Therefore, when your child is absent from school, please send in a note on their return to school and provide evidence of medical appointments where possible. All notes must be dated, have a reason for absence and signed by a parent or guardian. **If you know in advance your child will be absent please notify the teacher, as a matter of courtesy.**

The notes may be the subject of an audit at any stage by TUSLA or the Department of Education.

LUNCHES

The school has a healthy eating policy. It is available on the website and from the office. There is no fizzy / soft drinks, chocolate, crisps, crisp like snacks, popcorn, chewing gum or nuts. Children may have treats on special occasions. If there are any medical reasons why your child/children cannot have treats please inform the school. Please inform the school of any food allergies.

Children are given sufficient time to eat their food. Please be mindful of the amount of time the children have for eating e.g. oranges can be peeled at home, apples can be sliced and wrapped to bring to school. Children will eat prior to or after yard break for health and safety. All empty wrappers /containers / uneaten lunch will be taken home to prevent vermin in school bins.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Along with the annual school report, a calendar of all holidays during the next school year will be sent home in June, which will enable you to plan holidays outside of term time. Time taken for holidays during school term causes disruption to class work, school planning and your child/children's education.

ILLNESS/ACCIDENTS

In the event of a child becoming ill at school or suffering a fall or injury, parents/guardians will be contacted by phone. **It is very important that we have contact numbers of those who will be able to collect the child if the parent/guardian is not available. Please also inform the people who are your emergency contacts.**

Each pupil's parent or guardian must give details of health problems on the child's registration form. The name of the family doctor and dentist **must** be supplied and permission given to the school to bring the pupil for treatment to their own doctor/dentist. In the event of their doctor/dentist not being on duty permission is requested to bring the child to the on duty doctor/dentist if the parent, guardian or nominee is not contactable.

Please inform the school of any changes you wish to make to your registration form during the school year by contacting Ann at 0404 47488 or E-mail brittasbaynationalschool@gmail.com. It is vitally important in the event of sickness or accident to have a fully updated correct registration form with contact numbers.

MEDICATION

As a general rule teachers can not be involved in the administration of medication to pupils. In the exceptional circumstance were a teacher agrees to become involved in the administration of medication the parent will write to the Board of Management requesting the Board to authorise a teacher to administer the medication. If the Board, having considered the matter, authorises a teacher to administer medication they will then seek an indemnity from the parent in respect of any liability that may arise regarding the administration of the medication.

Parents are welcome to come to the school and administer medication themselves.

Please be aware that the self-administration of medication by a pupil - prescription or non-prescription (including Strepsils, Calpol capsules etc.) is forbidden. Also, please ensure that your child is fully recovered after illness before returning to school and the teachers are made aware of any medical condition or other problems, which may affect a child's performance or behaviour at school.

Parents should ensure that teachers are aware of any medical condition or other issues, which affect a child's performance or behaviour at school.

HOME/SCHOOL LINKS

The child's education and welfare are best served when there is regular contact between parents and teacher on matters relating to the child's progress and well-being. Parent/teacher meetings form an integral part of the school programme.

PARENT-TEACHER MEETINGS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Parents may meet with or phone the teacher, by appointment, to discuss the child's progress or other matters of concern to parent or teacher. Such meetings may be initiated by either the parent or the class teacher. Please contact the school secretary 9.30am to 2.30pm, who will arrange a meeting at a time suitable to both teacher and parent. It is important that there is sufficient meetings/phone calls to the satisfaction of both teacher and parent on a matter.

Teachers cannot be kept out of class with impromptu meetings or telephone calls or be distracted from their duty of care while in charge of a group of children e.g. in the morning at 8.50 am and at 1.30pm / 2.30pm. The teacher has to monitor who collects the children and their safety.

Where a meeting is not necessary a note will suffice. We encourage open communication but it cannot compromise the teachers care duties to the other children.

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence. All staff will be made aware, as all staff interact with all the children. Understanding and catering for individual needs are a priority.

ANNUAL FORMAL PARENT-TEACHER MEETING

Teachers will meet all parents on an individual basis to discuss each child. This usually occurs in the first term. This will give parents a clearer picture of their child's performance/behaviour and social interaction at school. Their support plan will be discussed, if in place. Parents, pupils and teachers will benefit from this interaction and analysis. Teachers will also phone / meet parents at other times if required.

ASSESSMENT

A teacher is continually assessing the children through observation and class tests. Assessment is also carried out by the children themselves in 'Self-Assessment'. The Drumcondra Standardised Tests in Reading and Maths are administered to all children from 1st to 6th class in May. MIST is administered in senior infants.

The Department of Education and Skills require schools to send the results of the tests home in the annual reports for 2nd, 4th and 6th classes. All results are reported to the Department of Education and Skills at the end of the school year. See www.ncca.ie for further information.

CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

Regular consultation occurs between the Special Education Needs Teachers and class teachers to identify children who may need additional educational/social interaction support. When children are seen to be encountering learning difficulties the class teacher will inform the parents and plan and open a **Continuum of Support**. The Special Education Needs Teacher will consult with the parents/guardians if he/she decides a child would benefit from individual/small group support. Consultation will also take place to review progress and when children have made sufficient progress it may be decided that it is no longer necessary to receive support. Support is also offered to high functioning / gifted children.

Team teaching is an integral part of school life in Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara. All classes benefit from having their class teacher and the schools Special Education Needs Teachers help all pupils.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

Again, in consultation with the Special Education Needs Teachers, the class teacher may decide a pupil would benefit from further diagnostic tests and recommend that a parent consults a psychologist for either educational or behavioural assessments. The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides psychological services in public and private primary and post primary schools and in related educational centres. It is a service of the Department of Education and Skills and aims to support the personal, social and educational development of all children. **However, this service is limited due to lack of resources.** A professional educational assessment will outline your child's needs/requirements for primary and secondary school.

The Assessment of Needs is available through the HSE. A parent must apply to the HSE for this. Your child will be assessed by a team of professionals e.g. O.T., Speech Therapist, Physio etc. Private assessments are also available and the school has a list of local professionals offering this service.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Individual Reports on pupils are issued at the end of each academic year. A copy is also kept at school. A 6th class report is sent to secondary school for children transferring to 2nd level. The children are invited to fill in a profile about themselves (My Profile) and their parents are invited to do likewise (My Child's Profile). All this material is sent to the secondary school. This is expected to help the child's transfer to secondary school by sharing as much information as possible.

INCOMING PUPILS

Parents and children of incoming Junior Infants are invited to the school for an Open Day in the year of their enrolment. (Covid Dependent). Children will spend some time in the new classroom, play with some toys and interact with other children who will be in their class. Parents will talk to a class teacher, the Special Education Needs Teachers, and the Principal will also attend to answer any questions.

On their first day of school the Junior Infants can be accompanied to the classroom by their parents. The class teacher and support teachers and Principal will welcome them and help them settle. Usually from the third morning the children can come into the room themselves when the bell rings. This encourages independence and gives the children a sense of responsibility.

New Pupils Senior Infants to 6th - In September and throughout the year other pupils enrol in the school and they are made feel very welcome and helped integrate into school life by pupils and staff and Parents Association.

SPLIT CLASSES

Because of the size of the school and number of teachers allocated, split classes are inevitable. We have a teacher allocation / rotation policy and a class split policy in operation in the school.

BOOKLISTS

Booklists are sent home in June, which will have the classroom number for your child with the calendar for the next school year. In the middle and senior classes some books are available on the school rental scheme. These books, like all others, must be treated with respect and kept clean. A rental book will have to be replaced by a parent if it is lost or damaged. Please put your child's name and class clearly on each book.

In keeping with Inspectorate guidelines text book purchasing will be kept to a minimum. Pupils must have all the necessary books in September and a supply of copies, pencils, etc. which are needed throughout the year. Also ensure that each child has all requisites needed for school e.g. pencils, erasers, rulers, protractor, compass, tin whistle, knitting needles etc.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH PARENTS

If you have any query with regard to your children or school in general, please contact the class teacher initially. All queries will be dealt with in due course. Please understand that the Principal is non administrative and is teaching. Ensure that any communication to her warrants time from her teaching duties.

A school Newsletter is sent home at the end of every term by email. Please take time to read this as it keeps you informed of all school activities.

We use the Aladdin ePayment System for collecting money (see pg. 27), alternatively if you wish to send cash or cheques into school for various events or collections please put the correct amount in a sealed envelope with your child's name, class and details of payment clearly marked on the outside. All notes and money are checked by the class teacher and the secretary. Records are kept.

EMAILS/TEXT A PARENT

School information will be sent home by email. Please ensure the school has an up to date email address for you and **please check emails regularly.**

The school will operate a 'text a parent' system to communicate with parents in some instances. Please ensure we have an up to date mobile number so that we can relay messages to you promptly.

CARDS AND INVITATIONS

Birthday/Special Occasion Invitations or presents cannot be given out by class teachers or children themselves during school hours. This can cause upset to children not included. This is regardless if there is one for everybody as this may not always be the case.

SPHE (Social, Personal, Health Education)

Throughout the course the key principals of SPHE in a child-centered curriculum will be identified and considered and will include:

- The promotion of personal development, Self-awareness, Self-confidence, Self-esteem, Well-being
- To develop awareness of the role of Unconscious Mind and Formative Learning in education and to consciously use it to develop individual potential
- To foster a sense of care and respect for Self and others and an appreciation of the dignity and uniqueness of each human being
- To promote the health of the child and of healthy living in all its aspects
- Informed choices and decision making
- The development of social and environmental responsibility
- To enable the child to respect human and cultural diversity and to appreciate the interdependent nature of the world

THE STAY SAFE PROGRAMME

In accordance with Department of Education and Skills guidelines the 'Stay Safe Programme' is taught in the school. This involves hand-outs, discussions and videos dealing with bullying and other problems children encounter as they grow up.

ACCORD

Accord provides a school's programme in **relationships and sexuality education for 5th and 6th classes** to complement the primary SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) curriculum. The facilitators visit the school in October and May and give students age appropriate information about their development in an appropriate context.

Information is sent home to parents prior to the visit in October and a parent must sign a consent form to allow a child to participate. The facilitators are professionals who are trained and experienced in education in this area. The teacher will also remain in the room with the children.

CHILD SAFE GUARDING STATEMENT

In recent years, as a society, we have become very aware of the problem of child abuse through neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Each one of us has a duty to protect children and *Children's First, the National Guidelines* for the protection and welfare of Children noted that teachers, who are the main care givers to children outside the family, are particularly well placed to observe and monitor children for signs of abuse.

In response to this, the Department of Children and Youth affairs published *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children— (first published in 1999 and updated in 2017)* for all schools in relation to protection and welfare. These guidelines promote the safety and welfare of all children and are to be welcomed.

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara has adopted and will implement fully and without modification the Department of Education and Skills Child Safeguarding Procedures for Primary schools. Consequently, if school staff suspect or are alerted to possible child abuse they are obliged to refer this matter to Tusla. Tusla will then assess the situation and provide support for the child concerned.

Children's First, the National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children may be accessed on the website of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (www.dcy.a.ie) and the Department of Education and Skills Child protection Guidelines can be read on the Department's website (www.education.ie), (www.gov.ie)

Any concerns with regard to child welfare should be reported to the

Designated Liaison Person– Úna Gallinagh, Principal

Deputy Designated Liaison Person—Maude O'Doherty, Deputy Principal

INFECTIOUS ILLNESS

The school must be notified immediately of any infectious illness such as:

- Covid-19
- Bacterial Meningitis
- Chicken Pox/Shingles
- Head Lice/Nits
- Measles
- Ringworm
- Rubella
- Scabies
- Scarlet Fever
- Strep Throat (Strep tonsillitis)
- Threadworms
- Viral Meningitis
- Whooping Cough (Pertussis)
- Mumps
- MRSA
- Hand Foot and Mouth
- Impetigo
- Slapped Cheek Syndrome

HYGIENE

The school is cleaned daily during Covid. Paper towels and Liquid soap are provided. Sanitiser is provided and children may also bring their own. The children are encouraged to keep the school tidy indoors and outdoors.

HAIR CARE

Please check your child's hair regularly for head lice as it is a common occurrence in schools. Inform the school if there is a problem and a letter will be issued to state that there has been an incidence of it in the classroom.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Like all other schools, Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara relies on fund-raising to finance the running of the school. Voluntary Contributions details are sent out in May and can be paid in May or partial payment can be made in May and the balance in October.

The details are also enclosed with the school report, booklist and calendar in June. The Department of Education and Skills has reduced funding to schools in the last few years with the onset of the recession and it has not been restored. The school is very grateful for this support as it helps in the upkeep of facilities for the children.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

We have interactive whiteboard systems in each mainstream classroom. This enables us to provide a new dimension in teaching and learning. We hope to further expand the technology in the school. We also have a set of ipads and facilities for remote teaching. Google Classrooms is the forum used. We hope to continually build on this.

SACRAMENTS

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is received every year, usually in May, by 2nd class. A series of Masses leading up to the Holy Communion are held in the local church and the children are prepared in school.

Confirmation is held every second year. The next year for Confirmation in Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara is 2023. The date itself is set by the Archbishop of Dublin.

The Grow in Love programme is used in Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara.

While Scoil Mhuire Réalt Na Mara is a Catholic school it gives due recognition and respect to all other Religions. Children from other faiths are very welcome. The child/children may participate in religion class or they can do some other school work quietly, if they do not wish to participate.

MOBILE LIBRARY

The mobile library visits Brittas Bay every fortnight for the local community. The children of 5th and 6th avail of this facility on a Friday every second week.

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Principals from local secondary school visit 5th and 6th classes every year and invite the children to their open nights, give the children information and answer questions about their school.

6TH CLASS SCHOOL LEAVERS

There is a graduation ceremony for the 6th class at the end of the school year. Parents organise class photographs and certificates. There is a Mass followed by a graduation ceremony and light refreshments in the school afterwards.

BOOKS/BAGS

Please check books and school bags and ensure they are kept neat, clean and tidy at all times. Also check that your child's bag has the minimum amount of books necessary and keep the weight of the bag as light as possible. The school will also facilitate this by only sending home books which are required for homework. Check regularly that your child has sufficient pencils, pens, colours and copies.

NAMETAGS

All possessions must be labelled with the child's name i.e. coats, sweatshirts, lunchboxes, books etc. Please do not bring valuables to school. The school cannot accept responsibility for lost items. Coats, sweatshirts etc. which are not claimed by the end of the school year will be given to charity.

FIRE DRILL

Fire drills are held throughout the year. All classes assemble in the church car park.

ARTS (ART/MUSIC/DRAMA/DANCE)

A qualified Arts Teacher may come to the school to do a module in this area. Parents pay for this at the beginning of the module/school year.

At Christmas, performances vary from year to year. It will be carol services/plays. This will be decided at the beginning of the school year taking resources, time constraints, personnel and other commitments into consideration.

The children participate in the Arklow Music Festival each year with recitations. Parents must bring the children to the venues themselves. The school will inform you of the date and time as soon as the schedule is printed. You may buy the catalogue yourself as it is available in many Arklow shops.

SCHOOL GARDEN / GARDENING CLASSES

We are very proud of our school garden. It has won many awards. Help is needed each year in preparing for planting, weeding and maintenance. Our Gardening/SESE teacher, is a keen organic gardener who directs and plans the gardening schedule. She has many years of experience teaching adults and children alike. An open day is held every June when all the hard work is displayed and vegetables, plants and herbs can be purchased. A module of gardening lessons will be paid for at the beginning of the school year or spring term.

If you would like to help in any way with the garden, please give your name to the office. Adults benefit greatly from it, learning many skills.

SPORTS

The school has a football pitch and a basketball court. There is no indoor sports facility. This is unfortunate as our P.E. curriculum is weather dependent. Throughout the year the pupils receive coaching in hurling/soccer/GAA and rugby. Outside coaches attend the school. The range of sports provided for each class may vary. During the winter it is not possible to use the football pitch as it becomes water logged.

A Sports Day is organised each June. The children are divided into groups and there are 8/9 activities organised for the day. Sports coaches and past pupils help to make the day a memorable one.

When participating in sporting events in school and outside school, children will be required to wear safety equipment i.e. shin guards, gum shields for GAA and Rugby, shin guards for soccer. Please ensure they have these available.

SCHOOL TOURS

School tours and field trips are organised every year. These are good educational and social occasions for children and teachers and all are encouraged to participate. These trips also provide good memories for the children of their time at school. Value for money, length of the day, keeping with the curriculum and health and safety are a priority. The children are given details of the school tour well in advance giving them the opportunity to save the cost. When extra supervision is required parents (Garda Vetted) are asked to come along.

GARDA VETTING

If parents wish to help with school activities garda vetting is required. (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts 2012 to 2016.

A garda vetting form can be found in the enrolment pack or are available from the office at any stage. If you would like to apply please complete section 1 & 2 and return to school with 2 copies of identification.

HOMEWORK

This is generally a mix of oral work (study/memorisation) and written work. This balance may vary depending on class work. Memorisation i.e. learning by heart, along with study form a very important part of homework and should always be checked.

Infants: Homework is given and is usually recorded in their reading folder. It is generally 10 minutes reading/oral work.

1st—6th classes: Homework is written in a homework copy. There is written and learning work and this covers all subject areas. Class teachers will make this known to the pupils.

If a child is taking too long to complete his/her homework the parent/guardian should write a note in a child's copy, explaining the difficulty and/or arrange to meet the class teacher to resolve the issue. Homework must not become a stress nor too time consuming for a child.

In addition to homework it is also important that the child has adequate time for play and for their after-school activities.

Homework should not be interfering with this as the child works hard all day in school and down time is of importance.

Children are excused from homework if they are sick or when there is a family emergency. A note must be sent to the school fully explaining the reason. Communication for all is most important.

Homework / work will not be provided during school terms if the family are on holiday.

GREEN SCHOOLS PROJECT

In the year 2000 Scoil Mhuire Réalt na Mara joined the Green Schools Project. This project is co-ordinated by the Foundation for Environmental Education in Europe (FEEE). Schools which successfully implement a Green – Schools programme are awarded a prestigious European Environmental Certificate and may fly the Green Schools flag.

In 2021 we were awarded our 6th Green Flag. The 6 flags were awarded for our school's achievement in the following areas:

1. Litter and Waste
2. Energy
3. Water
4. Transport
5. Biodiversity
6. Global Citizenship, Litter and Waste

Our children have a Green Schools Committee and work hard in this area.

It is important that teachers, parents and pupils are all involved in developing environmental awareness in our schools, homes and the wider community.

PURE MILE

The senior classes have also participated regularly in the Pure Mile Competition which is part of our Green Schools Project.

**REMEMBER Think Globally
Act Locally
Change Personally**

CODE OF DRESS

Children must dress appropriately for school. Oversized jumpers and sweatshirts with long sleeves interfere with a child's ability to write neatly and participate in other indoor and outdoor activities. "Bare Midriff/Skimpy Top Fashion" is not to be worn. Large baggy trousers with bottom hems torn and hanging off and unsuitable footwear impair a child's mobility particularly in the playground and during P.E. which is a health and safety issue. Fringes should not be so long as to interfere with a child's vision and long hair should be tied back. Hoods / hats are not to be worn inside. Again, this is a health issue because of head lice.

Children can maintain their individuality without making statements through dress. **Please adhere strictly to this rule. No jewellery only ear studs and watch. Children are playing, climbing and participating in team games. There must not be anything around their neck which could be pulled.**

SECURITY SYSTEM

A security system is in operation in the school and we would appreciate your co-operation in making sure it works effectively. If you wish to gain access to the school during class time, press once on the buzzer at the main door, on the left of the building (beside the office). If your child is late for school please accompany him/her to the door and press buzzer on left-hand side. Always ensure your child has gained access to the school before leaving. During Covid please follow the Covid policy and phone the office first.

If anyone other than a parent/guardian is dropping your child/children to school please inform them of this procedure. In addition to this if you are collecting your child during school hours please come to the main door, press the buzzer and the secretary or principal will collect your child from class. Again, this different during Covid, phone the office first.

If someone other than a person known to the teachers is collecting your child/children during class time (e.g. when going to the dentist or a doctor's appointment) please inform the teachers by writing a note.

As this will cause extra disruption during class time we would ask that interruptions be kept to a minimum i.e. make sure children are at school on time and that lunches and all necessary books and requisites are in the bag.

CCTV is in operation on our school grounds before and after school hours and on school holidays.

POD (PRIMARY ONLINE DATABASE)

The Department has developed an electronic individualised database of primary school pupils, called the Primary Online Database (POD). Individualised databases are now in place covering pre-primary, post-primary, PLC and third level education—the lack of individualised information on primary school pupils presents a very significant data gap for monitoring the progress of learners throughout the education system. An online system will help to eliminate duplication in data requests to schools and allow real time information to be accessed centrally in the Department for school inspections and other administrative functions and reduce the response burden on schools.

All pupils must be on POD in order to be counted for school's capitation payment and teacher allocation purposes.

The Department has consulted with the Data Protection Commissioner in relation to collection of individual pupil information for the Primary Online Database. As both religion and ethnic and cultural background are considered sensitive personal data under Data Protection legislation, it is necessary for each individual pupil's parent/guardian to identify their own religion and ethnic or cultural background, and to consent for this information to be transferred to the Department of Education and Skills. All other information held on POD was deemed by the Data Protection Commissioner as non-sensitive personal data and therefore does not require written permission from parents for transfer of the information to the Department.

Schools, as the provider of a public service, are allowed to ask for a pupil's PPSN as long as there is a valid purpose for collecting it. The Department has consulted with the Data Protection Commissioner and they have stated that PPSN can now be collected by primary schools with the purpose being it is a requirement of the Primary Online Database to validate pupil identity. PPSN is already collected for the ECCE and by post-primary schools. A PPS number is an individual's unique identification number for all dealings with the Public Service, including Social Welfare, tax, education and health services. Having PPSN on the database will help ensure that there are no duplicate records in the system i.e. that two schools do not have the same child on their roll. In future the Department of Education will be able to track pupils from early childhood education, to primary school and onto

post-primary, which will ensure that every child in the State of compulsory school age is in education, e.g. exemptions etc. if applicable, and has access to all their learning different entitlements.

RECORDINGS AND PHOTOGRAPHS AT SCHOOL EVENTS

Parents and guardians are permitted to take photographs or videos for private, personal use only and these must not be uploaded to any social forums to be viewed by others. You must be mindful of the privacy and consent of others. Photographs will be taken in school or away by Press Photographers e.g. first day at school, prize giving at sports fixtures, garden days, Halloween etc. or for the school website. On enrolment parents are required to sign a permission slip in this regard.

ALADDIN EPAYMENT SYSTEM

Our school uses the Aladdin software service for administrative purposes and the ePayment system will give you access from an internet browser on your computer, phone or tablet to make secure payments to school using your credit or debit card. The purpose of the ePayment system is to facilitate the easier payment of school money collections for parent/guardians and to reduce the amount of cash and cheques being sent into our school in line with central bank directives. Aladdin uses state of the art security to safeguard information entered by you and the school and data is stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish data protection laws. When money is due for any school activity that is relevant to your children, you will receive a text/email message containing your payment access link. This will bring you to a parent payment page which will contain all payments requested for all siblings in a family. There is only one link per family ensuring you have the option to pay all amounts due for all your children in one transaction. Once you have completed your payment, you will be issued with a reference number. You will also receive an email receipt which will contain details of the transaction and reference number. Please quote this reference number in any queries you may have as regards this payment with the school.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE GUIDELINES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Please ask to have any issues clarified firstly. This shows respect for all members of the school community.

The INTO and the CPSMA reached agreement in 1993 on procedure for dealing with issues/complaints by parents. The purpose of the procedure is to facilitate the resolution of misunderstandings / issues / complaints where they may arise in an agreed, fair and calm manner.

Introduction

Only those issues / complaints which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those issues/complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- I. On matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education
- II. Frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school: or
- III. Issues / complaints in which either party has recourse to law or another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out below in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

1. **A PARENT/GUARDIAN WHO WISHES TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUE SHOULD MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE CLASS TEACHER WITH A VIEW TO CLARIFYING AND RESOLVING THE ISSUE.**
2. **Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the issue with the class teacher she/he should make an appointment with the principal.**
3. **If the issue / complaint is still unresolved the parent / guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.**

Stage 2

1. If the issue / complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge it in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
2. The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written correspondence to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five days of receipt of same.

Stage 3

If it is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:

- a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written correspondence and
- b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving the matter. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written correspondence.

Stage 4

1. If the matter is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).
2. If the Board considers that the issue / complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.
3. If the Board considers that the issue / complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
 - a) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - b) the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the issue / complaint;
 - c) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board in response.
 - d) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of his/her case to the board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - e) the board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and
 - f) the meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

When the board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the board.

Stage 5

1. When the board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the Board.
2. The decision of the Board shall be final.
3. The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.
4. Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

In this agreement 'days' means school days.



USEFUL WEBSITES

www.education.ie
www.dcyia.ie
www.education.dublindiocese.ie
www.ncca.ie
www.sess.ie
www.ncse.ie
www.hse.ie Public health/infectious diseases
www.accord.ie
www.cpsma.ie
www.tusla.ie
www.helpmykidlearn.ie
www.dcu.ie>ctyi
www.nala.ie
www.aspireireland.ie
www.autismsupport.ie
www.dyslexia.ie
www.aware.ie
www.mentalhealthireland.ie
www.specialolympics.ie
www.dohc.ie
www.feach.ie
www.irishdeafsociety.ie
www.enableireland.ie
www.webwise.ie/parents
www.npc.ie

Map of Scoil Mhuire Réalt Na Mara

