



Lucan East Educate Together National School

Junior Infant Information Booklet



www.lucaneastet.ie

Phone: 01 6212690



Information for Parents of Infants Starting School

Lucan East Educate Together NS is an Educate Together primary school which seeks to ensure that all its pupils are educated and nurtured in an environment that is caring, considerate and equality based. We are delighted that you have chosen this school for your child and we look forward to many happy and successful years ahead.

The staff of Lucan East Educate Together NS aim to help children to develop skills, attitudes and values which will bring the greatest happiness and fulfilment to their lives. We prioritise the safety, security and well being of all pupils as a prerequisite to their growth and development. As a staff, we seek to help children develop morally, socially, physically and cognitively to the best of their ability. The achievement of this aim informs all of the planning, processes and activities which occur in this school.

Parents and teachers are partners in the children's education, and co-operation and communication between home and school are vital ingredients in the educational process. We each share the same aim - the well being of the children in our care. This information booklet for the parents of Junior Infant pupils has been prepared with the express purpose of sharing information with you concerning our school rules and routines.

We know from experience that parents are anxious to help in any way possible and so we have put together some ideas as a general guide for you. This booklet deals briefly with the period before your child comes to school and the introductory stage in Junior Infants.

Grainne McManus

(Principal)



Getting Ready for Learning

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

The first year in school is mainly about settling in, relating to others, making friends, co-operating within a group and gradually getting used to the routines of school.

With regard to academic education, the emphasis is on:

- Developing their oral language and expression.
- Developing physical co-ordination, especially of the hands and fingers.
- Extending their concentration span and getting them to listen attentively.
- Learning through play.
- Co-operating with the teacher and other children.
- Performing tasks by themselves.
- Working with others and sharing with them.
- Becoming familiar with and following the rules and routines of the class and school.



Before Your Child Starts

Before your child starts school encourage them to be as independent as possible - physically, emotionally and socially. This will help them to feel secure and confident and settle into school more readily.

It would help if your child was able to:

- Button and unbutton, zip or unzip their jacket or coat and hang it up properly.
- Use the toilet without help and manage the pants, buttons or zip.
- Flush the toilet and wash hands without having to be reminded.
- Use a tissue when necessary.
- Cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze without having to be reminded.
- Share toys and games with others and "take turns".
- Tidy up and put away playthings and activities when asked to do so.
- Be happy spending a few hours in the home of a relative, friend or neighbour. If your child has had this experience, then separation from you when starting school will be easier.
- Be able to follow/ carry out very basic instructions e.g. come and sit on the chair, go back to your seat etc.

Preparing for September

- Tell your child about school beforehand, and talk about it as a happy place where they will have fun, meet new friends and learn lots of new things.
- Please **put your child's name on all books and copies** when you get them.
- Your child's books will be taken from them on the first day of school and the teacher will hold on to them until they are needed. This minimises books getting lost. Please have your child warned of this in case they think they will never see the books again.



Some Tips

- Don't use the school or teacher as a threat.
- It helps to have the clothes and schoolbag ready for the first day.
- Please remember to have a **name label on your child's clothing items** e.g. jumpers, coats, hats, scarves etc.
- Unclaimed items are placed in the lost property basket (located outside the hall). If they remain unclaimed they are sent to local charity shops at the end of each term.
- Please have your child's name also inside the schoolbag as many of these bags are very similar.
- The school has a free lunch programme which will begin for your child on Monday 7th September 2020. Details of this lunch are on our website.
- It would help if you child could peel a banana or mandarin on their own before starting school.
- If sending in your own lunch make sure he/she can open the lunch box easily as some containers can be quite tricky. Try to give your children food and drinks that are healthy, that children can open themselves and that won't easily spill.





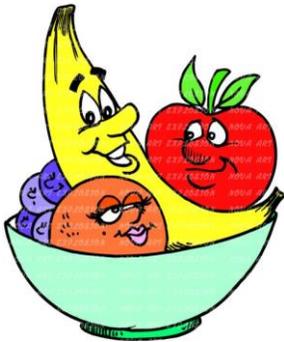
September - The Big Day

This year, school re-opens for pupils on Monday 31st August 2020. The new Junior Infants start at 8.40 am and stay until 11.40 am.

From Wednesday 9th September they will stay for the full Infant day - from 8.40 a.m. until 1.20p.m. During this period they will have a fruit break and a lunch break.

Coming in

When you arrive at the classroom, be as casual as you can. Your child will meet their teacher, will be shown to a table and chair and given an activity to do. Assure your child that you will be back shortly. Be enthusiastic about the classroom and remain upbeat. Say goodbye and leave.



Eating times are at 10.35 a.m. and 12.20 p.m. The school has a free lunch programme which will begin for your child on the 7th September. You will be asked to select items from a menu which can be updated and changed online.

If you choose to opt out of school lunches, we encourage you to give your child healthy lunches right from the start e.g. fruit, vegetables, yogurts, sandwiches, rolls water, milk or fruit juice.

Please do not give your child sweets, chocolate, fizzy drinks or crisps for lunch. Chewing gum is not allowed in this school

Handling the Upset Child

In spite of the best efforts of both teacher and parents a small number of children will still become upset. If your child happens to be one of them don't panic.



A Word of Advice

- Trust the teacher. She/He is experienced and resourceful and is used to coping with all kinds of starting-off problems.
- Try not to show any outward signs of your own distress. Sometimes the parents are more upset than the children and can be a major cause of their anxiety.
- When you have reassured your child, leave as fast as possible.
- The teacher can distract and humour them more easily when you are not around. You can check back discreetly shortly after if you want.
- You must be firm from the start. Even if your child is upset you must insist that they stay.



As Time Goes on...

- School begins at 8.40 a.m. It is very important that your child is in school on time as phonics, reading, maths games and motor skill development activities start at 8.40 am.
- Please make sure that your child is collected on time as the teacher has planning, meetings and other work to do when class finishes. Get into the habit of being in good time for school from the beginning.
- Children need plenty of rest after the effort and excitement of a day at school. Try to ensure that they get to bed early and have a good night's sleep.
- When your child has settled in and looks upon school as a "home from home", do continue to show interest in their daily activities.
- If your child's progress is slow do not compare them adversely with other children. Loss of self-esteem can be very damaging to them.
- Be careful about criticising the teacher in their presence. Remember that she/he is a parent figure while they are at school and it is important that they have a positive image of her/him.
- It is vital that homework is completed every day as it revises the work being done in school.
- Children often "forget" or relay messages incorrectly so please check your child's bag each night for notes. Sign up to our weekly newsletter on the website www.lucaneastet.ie to receive regular updates on school activities.
- You will have bought books and other bits and pieces for your child for September. As the year goes on, there are other school fundraisers, but they are optional. These include:

Book Fair

School Discos

School Walk-a-thon

Clothes Collection

Further details will be given during the year.





Home School Community Liaison Teacher (HSCL)

Sinead is our Home School Liaison Teacher. Some of her roles and areas of work involve:

- Organising classes and talks for parents, e.g. yoga, DIY, gardening
- Monitoring attendance
- Involving parents in their children's education through taking part in class activities or school events, e.g. Clover Reading Project, Maths for Fun
- Helping 6th class students and their parents with the transfer from primary to secondary school
- Visiting parents in their homes
- Liaison with local agencies such as the Health Board, the Education Welfare Service, Lucan Library, Tallaght IT, the ETB and TUSLA. This ensures that children and families in our school community get help in a variety of ways if needed
- Offering advice to parents on issues relating to homework, behaviour, attendance, social skills, etc

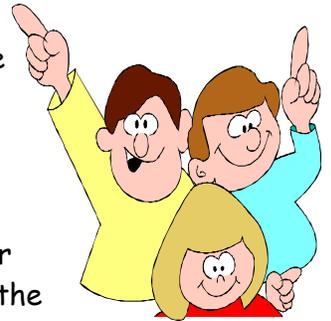
You can drop into the school to see Sinead or she can call out to visit you. Her office is room 38 and Sinead can be contacted anytime on 0861701972, no issue too big or too small. During the year there will be coffee mornings for each of the class groups so please come along, have a chat and meet other parents from your child's class.



Some Important Areas of Early Learning

Developing your Child's Command of Spoken Language

It is important that the child's ability to talk is as advanced as possible. Oral language is the basis of all learning. It is through speech that they communicate their thoughts and feelings, needs and desires, curiosity and wonder. If they cannot express themselves in words, children will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from learning activities in class. This can be the first sign of failure in the school system and must be remedied, if at all possible, as early as possible. That is why a lot of attention is given to language development in the first years of school.



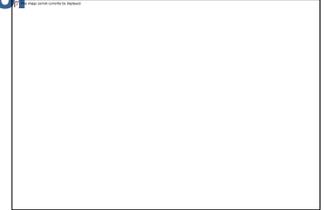
You Can Help....

- Talk to your child naturally and casually about things of interest that you or they may be doing-at home, in the shop, in the car, etc. Remember that all the time they are absorbing the language they hear. If English is not your first language in the home it is very important that your child develops their abilities in their home language. Any skills that your child learns in their first language will help them when learning English. Take them to the shop or to a local playgroup or activity where English is spoken. This will help them when they come to school.
- Introduce them gently to the ideas of Why...? How...? When...? Where...? If...? etc. These demand more advanced language structures.
- They will have their own particular favourite stories that they never tire of hearing. Repeat them over and over again and gradually get them to tell them to you. Once again, if English is not your first language, reading to your children in their first language will help them when they are learning to read in English.

First Steps in Reading

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

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



You Can Help..

- Have attractive colourful books in the home.
- Read your child a variety of stories from time to time. They will get to associate these wonderful tales with books and reading.
- You must convey to your child that books are precious things. They must be minded and handled carefully and put away safely.
- Look at the pictures with your child and talk to them about what they say.
- Read nursery rhymes.
- Sing the alphabet song with your child, so that they have at least heard of the letters. If your child knows what each one looks like, all the better.
- Above all, don't push them with their early reading. You may turn them against it for evermore.
- Remember that the teacher is the best judge of what rate of progress is best suited to each child.

Getting Ready For Writing

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

You Can Help...

- Your child must develop the ability to get the hand and eye working together. This is very important. Get them manipulating toys like:
 - a) Jigsaws, Lego, beading thread etc.
 - b) Playdough to make her/his own shapes
 - c) A colouring book and thick crayons
 - d) Sheets of paper that she/he can cut up with a safe scissors
- When they begin to use a pencil make sure that they hold it correctly at the start. It will be difficult to change later. A rhyme used in the school to help this is "My thumb is bent, Peter pointer on top, tall man at the side, I tuck my last two fingers in and take them for a ride".
- Your child may be making block letters at home even before they come to school. This is fine. But when your child starts making lower case letters at school try to encourage them to use lower case letters instead.
- Don't discourage left-handedness. If that is the definite natural inclination, don't attempt to change your child.



Understanding Maths

First a Word of Warning

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

They associate certain numbers with particular things - two hands, four wheels, five fingers etc.

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

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



But You Can Help...

- In the course of your ordinary daily routine in the home, shop and neighbourhood you should use suitable opportunities to casually introduce the maths vocabulary referred to above. E.g. How many cakes? The glass is full/empty. We turn left at the lights.
- The child gets to understand Maths best by handling, investigating and using real objects. This has been your child's natural method of learning since they were babies. This, at times, can be a nuisance but if it allows them to learn by themselves the final result is very worthwhile.



Lucan East Educate Together National School

Gaeilge (Irish)

All children enjoy learning new languages. They have no difficulty in picking it up because it fascinates them as another code of communication. All the children at Lucan East are great language learners and they love learning Irish in our school.

We would like all parents to encourage and help their children in their efforts to acquire Irish. If they learn new words in school, encourage them to use them at home. Your child can become the teacher and teach you these new words and phrases. If you can, use little Irish phrases or words now and again. Children are delighted to find out that their parents are into their new code as well. If they must learn Irish, let them enjoy it and master it to the best of their ability.

Other Areas of the Curriculum

The child in Junior Infants learns a lot through many other activities, which do not need any elaboration here. The general development is enhanced through Visual Arts, Drama, P.E., Music, Geography, History, Science, S.P.H.E. and of course through the Learn Together Programme.

The Learn Together Programme focuses on four main strands:

- The major belief systems of the world
- Equality and Justice
- Environmental awareness and care
- Moral and Spiritual development.

All the children spend half an hour each day working on the Learn Together programme. This is the same amount of time which is devoted to religious instruction in denominational schools.

Social Skills

Social skills are very important. We encourage good manners at all times - please/thank you, being courteous to fellow students and teachers. It is important to ask your child whom they played with at school and to ensure they aren't alone. It is important to encourage mixing rather than being dependent on one friend only. Rough behaviour is totally discouraged in the playground. You will find a list of school rules and policies in the general school booklet or if you contact the school office. All parents will be asked to sign the school code of behaviour.



Parting Thoughts



Bit by bit your child will get used to the general discipline of the classroom. They will get to understand very quickly that in certain important matters an instruction from the teacher must be obeyed promptly and without question. The children will get used to the routines of the classroom and wider school.

Teacher and Parent

At the early stages some parents meet the teacher almost daily and this is a very desirable thing. However, if there is something in particular that you would like to discuss you can arrange to meet her/him at a time when you both can have a little peace and quiet.

Easy Does It

There are lots of ideas and suggestions in this little book as to how you can help your child. If you find that they enjoy a fun approach to certain aspects of learning then we say give it a go - but remember don't overdo it.

Our Hope

We are offering this booklet as a little practical guide to help your children when they start school. We will be very happy if you dip into it from time to time and find something in it of value to you and your child.

As the saying goes:

“Mol an óige, agus tiocfaidh sí”

(Praise the young and they will succeed!)

Regards,

Grainne McManus (Principal)

