



# St. Catherine's Nursery School

## Welcome Pack



2023/2024

Firstly, we would like to welcome you and your child to St. Catherine's Nursery School.

We hope that the coming year will prove to be enjoyable, stimulating and fruitful for all.

At this time of the year our key priority is to prepare children and parents for entry to Nursery.

This booklet provides practical and useful information, as well as some valuable advice on making entry to Nursery as smooth and trouble free as possible.

### **General Information**

St. Catherine's Nursery School has two Nursery Classes with 26 places in each. It is attached to the Senior School (Barrack Street Site) of St. Catherine's Primary School and is designed to serve the local area.

**Principal:** Mrs. B. Wilders

**Vice Principal:** Miss J Doherty

St. Catherine's Nursery & Primary School

Barrack Street

Strabane

Co. Tyrone

BT82 8HE

**Tel:** 02871 382 614 (Option 1)

**Email:** [bwilders592@c2kni.net](mailto:bwilders592@c2kni.net)

## Our School Vision

Our Vision for St. Catherine's Nursery and Primary School is that it will be ...

- An outstanding school which is **wholly** child centred
  - rooted in Gospel Values of Christ
  - Where Children come first at all times
- A school of excellent practice where dedicated, talented staff will collaborate to ensure high quality teaching and learning for all our pupils from Nursery to Year 7
- A school with a family atmosphere – where emphasis is placed on forging strong, positive relationships between pupils, parents (who are the first educators), Staff, Governors, Parish & Community which will result in...  
Confident, happy young people who have high aspirations and high expectations, who have developed physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, morally and spiritually, who are life long learners and who will have the skills and capabilities to be successful, confident and comfortable in an ever changing world.



## Nursery Staff

Our Nursery team consists of two teachers and two Nursery assistants.

Teachers : Mrs. B. Porter and Mrs. M. Mc Brien

Nursery Assistants: Mrs. S. Caulfield and Mrs. B. Campbell (Plus additional staff)

Your child will be in the care of one teacher and one assistant and will be based in one of the Nursery Rooms.

Your child will be in Nursery Room \_\_\_\_\_

The Staff working with you and your child will be \_\_\_\_\_

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The Nursery Day begins at **9:00am**.

Children should be brought to the Nursery Foyer by an adult and should remain with the adult until handed over to Nursery staff. It is not acceptable for Nursery children to be brought to school by other children.

Pick up time is between **1.30pm - 1.40pm**

Prompt arrival and pick - up of children is essential for your child's stability.

## Attendance

If your child is to fully benefit from his/her Nursery experience he/she needs to attend every session, except when illness or some other reason prevents him/ her from doing so.

If your child is absent from Nursery, please provide a written explanation for the absence on the child's return.

## Sickness

Infection spreads very easily in the Nursery setting and it is inadvisable to send a child to school with an illness which is very contagious. If your child contracts a very contagious illness please seek advice re: attendance at school.

Guidelines on particular illnesses/ infections are available in the Nursery Foyer.

If your child is very sick it is usually advisable/ sensible to keep your child at home until they feel more able for a full Nursery Day. If staff feel that your child is at school but unwell, they will contact you to ask you to collect your child and get medical advice.

## Food at Nursery

### Buffet Break

Children are offered a snack during the morning, which consists of milk (which is free to all pre - school children) and toast/ plain biscuits/ fruit or another healthy option

Snack is payable in payments of £25.00 per term which covers each week of the school year. Parents can pay £25 in each of the three terms or they can pay the full amount of £75 at the beginning of the School Year. This money may also be used to purchase resources to aid your child's learning.

### School Dinners/ Packed Lunches

A healthy school dinner is **usually** provided for Nursery children at a cost at £2.50 . **We will keep you updated if there are any changes to service going forward.** Parents who think that they may be entitled to free school meals should contact the Education Authority, as soon as possible (Omagh 028 824 11411) to make an application. Free school meals cannot be given unless granted by Education Authority Western Region (EA)

### School Meal Payments

Dinner money can be paid in advance using our School Money App. This will give you the opportunity to select which day you would like your child to eat dinner. If you have any difficulties with using this facility, please contact Clerical Staff on any of our school sites. Thank you.

**N.B.** Sweets and other food items should not be brought to Nursery for eating during the session.

Packed lunches should consist of foodstuffs in keeping with Food in Schools Policy. Please send foods in your child's lunchbox which are easy to open and easy for your child to handle so as to encourage independence and self - confidence. (See enclosed Food in Schools Policy)

In line with our Healthy Eating Culture crisps and chocolate are not permitted in our children's lunch boxes. Chocolate may contain nut traces and we have children in our school who are anaphylactic and may need emergency hospital attention if they come into the slightest contact with any item/ person who has had slightest trace of nuts. We treat this situation very seriously and respectfully request your support and co-operation in this matter.

Our children will have a treat day every Friday where they can bring ONE treat in their lunch box BUT again this cannot be chocolate or nuts for the above mentioned reasons.

## Uniform

Our uniform is designed to promote ease of movement and safety. The uniform should therefore be worn daily along with suitable footwear for running, climbing etc. Our uniform can be obtained from GMG Logos, Orchard Road Industrial Estate, Strabane.

Our uniform consists of a white poloshirt (with school logo) / royal blue sweatshirt (with school logo) and navy jogging bottoms. Footwear with Velcro fastening is essential for your child's independence. Children are not permitted to wear any jewellery in Nursery for Health & Safety reasons.

## Change of Clothes

Accidents are unavoidable with small children and we aim to limit the distress and discomfort associated with such accidents. In the event of your child soiling themselves, you will be contacted. For Child Protection reasons staff are unable to change children. Children **must** be toilet trained before beginning Nursery or their place will be held until such times as they are.

## Labelling

All clothes and other belongings should be clearly labelled. If a child loses a piece of their property at school - this causes them a lot of distress and also disrupts learning and teaching in our Nursery School. Therefore, we would ask you to label your child's property. These can be sewn on to their uniform pieces (i.e.) sweatshirt, poloshirt, jogging bottoms, coats, hats, Velcro slippers, lunchboxes etc.

## Settling into Nursery

At St. Catherine's Nursery School our settling in programme is designed to give children and parents time to get used to a new routine, new surroundings and people, at their own pace.

A variety of measures are in place to allow for this; and staff are available and willing to advise on how to proceed if settling in proves difficult.

## Staggered Intake

Small groups of children are taken into Nursery over a short period at the beginning of September.

The needs of individual children are taken into account in this matter, based on the information that you have provided about your child's needs.

## Shorter Day

The full Nursery day often proves too tiring for children in the first few weeks of the year.

### **STAGGERED INTAKE PLAN**

- **Weeks 1-3: 9am-11.30am**
- **Week 4: 9am – 12.30pm (Pupils stay for lunch)**
- **Week 5 onwards: 9am-1.30pm (Pupils experience the Full Nursery Day)**

## Parents and Settling in

Some children require extra support in settling in. Nursery Staff work with parents to ensure the child's needs are met, and every effort should be made to make the child feel secure.

## Comforters

Feel free to allow your child to use a special comforter if it helps to make her/him feel more at home during the settling in period.

Although this is permissible we would rather general toys and unnecessary items are left at home.

**NURSERY CHILDREN DO NOT NEED SCHOOLBAGS.**

## Updating Information

It is vital that we always know where to contact you, or one of your nominees.

If there is any change in address, telephone numbers or other arrangements we need to know straight away.

If somebody other than one of your nominees is to collect your child we need to know, in writing if possible or by telephone.

## Curriculum

We are here to help your child develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally and we aim to do this in St. Catherine's Nursery School through our structured and stimulating day in a happy, secure and caring atmosphere. Your child's happiness and contentment in the Nursery is vital in forming a basis for his/her future years of more formal education.

The curriculum of our school takes into consideration the differing skills, previous experiences and needs of each individual child. It signifies the process of learning. Nursery education is thought of in terms of activities and experiences rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored. Your child will be encouraged to be an active, independent learner in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The curriculum is very carefully planned and evaluated by the staff who are qualified teachers and childcare assistants.

The curriculum is developed through themes incorporating the six key learning areas of the Revised Northern Ireland Curriculum.

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Physical Development & Movement
3. Language Development
4. Early Mathematical Experiences
5. The Arts
6. The World Around Us
7. Religious Education

As is evident, St. Catherine's Nursery School is not a baby minding service but a place of learning for Pre-School Children under the direction of Department of Education, Education Authority and Catholic Council for Maintained Schools.

Your child's work each day is Highly Structured Activity Based Learning and having fun while doing it!

We will send you out a Curriculum Information Newsletter once per term to inform you of exactly what your child is studying in school so that **YOU TOO** can support this learning at home. If for some reason you don't receive a copy of this newsletter ... please ask your child's teacher or Principal. If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress, abilities, strengths, areas for development at any stage do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher and a meeting can be arranged to update you. Teachers meet with parents at the start of the year after settling in has occurred (you will be notified in advance when this will happen... if an appointment time doesn't suit your child's teacher will

reschedule to suit a mutually agreed time). They will then send out a written end of year report in Term 3, Summer Term.

### **Road Safety**

When bringing your child to Nursery School each day ... always hold your child's hand on leaving your car, when walking into the school grounds and when leaving the building at the end of the day.

**Please do not allow your child to climb on the wall or shrubbed area at the front of the school for Health & Safety reasons.**

There is a yellow track painted onto the Primary School Playground that you and your child walk through in order to get to the Nursery Entrance. Please walk between the Nursery Yellow Line and the wall to avoid the playground if you find that the playground is too busy. Keep walking to the left hand side. This is also for Health & Safety reasons!

Traffic concerns outside our school are well noted and for that reason we have had Safer Route to Schools Signage installed. However we are constantly aware of the concerns of the area and we ask for parental support in terms of parking responsibly and exercising extreme caution at all times when crossing the road with your child . We also request that you cooperate with the school crossing patrol lady and that you **NEVER** attempt to park in the school grounds. This car park is small and only used for staff at present. If every parent were to try to park in our grounds we have too many cars crossing at the main gate which is too close to where our children are walking out of school hence a greater risk of an accident. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

### **Child Protection and Safeguarding**

This school has a very clear, detailed written policy on Child Protection and Safeguarding which is enclosed. It is the duty of all staff to protect all pupils from physical, emotional or sexual abuse and from neglect.

The Department of Education requires all those working in Education to cooperate fully with Social Services and other agencies to protect children. St. Catherine's Nursery School must, by law, inform Social Services where there is a concern about a child.

Mrs. B Porter is the Designated person dealing with Child Protection matters and Mrs. M McBrien is the Deputy Designated Teacher in the Nursery. Should parents have any concerns please discuss these with the designated teachers or the Vice Principal (Miss J Doherty) or the Principal (Mrs. Bridget Wilders) (See enclosed Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)

### Parents' Noticeboard

This is situated in the Nursery foyer and is for your convenience. Please read any of the literature and posters as they are for your information.

### Communicating to Parents

- We distribute a note on the first Monday of every month detailing any events coming up (exclusively for Nursery Parents/ Pupils) over the next month.
- We produce Curriculum Newsletters once per term to keep parents up to date with what their children are learning in the Nursery so that they too can best support their child's learning at home.
- We use text messaging to parents. Always make sure that we have your correct mobile phone number.
- We have a facebook page

### **St Catherine's PS**

- We also have a school website .... [www.stcatherinesps.co.uk](http://www.stcatherinesps.co.uk)
- Download our FREE School APP which gives loads of information regarding the school events and can automatically notify your phone. The App is : **St Catherines PS,Strabane**
- You can find us on Twitter also ... @StCatherinesPS
- You can find us on Instagram ..... St Catherine's Primary School
- We have a flat screen TV in the foyer to display photos of all our children during the many learning activities that happen in school and we also post notices on this tv for your information.

## Nursery Graduation

Each year in the month of June we have a graduation ceremony to celebrate your child's successful pre-school year. The school photographer will have been in school to take a special photo of your child in their Graduation Gown and Hat and this is always available to buy at the actual Graduation Ceremony itself if you wish to.

## School Photographer

The school photographer also comes in during Term 1 to take an individual photograph of your child and a class photograph. When this date is arranged you will be informed and you will be given the opportunity to bring along other members of the family for family group photographs.

## Preparing Your Child for Nursery School

1. Talk to your child about starting school. Remind them about their previous visit, how they will play with dough, sand, water, paint, jigsaws and listen to stories.
2. You can help your child become independent by encouraging them to do things for themselves- put on their own clothes, shoes, coats etc.
3. Encourage your child to go to the toilet independently and teach them to always wash their hands after going to the toilet and before / after eating.
4. Take time to develop your child's love of books- to enjoy listening to stories- this will develop your child's level of concentration and also develop their language skills and vocabulary.
5. When writing your child's name please use lower case letters not capital letters e.g. Jack or Mary. Please encourage your child to hold a pencil and attempt to write/ copy their name.

## School Term Holiday Dates

Holiday dates for the school year 2023/20234 will be forwarded to all parents at the beginning of the school year.

## Concerns

If you have any concerns at any stage of the school year please do not hesitate to contact the Nursery Team or the Principal or the Vice Principal and we will be only too happy to help. Your child is our main concern. (See enclosed Senior Leadership Team Pamphlet)

## St. Catherine's Nursery School - Parent Partnership

At St. Catherine's Nursery School we are fully appreciative of the important role parents play in their child's development.

Research advises us that parental involvement in the child's early education is essential for sustained development and progress.

At St. Catherine's Nursery School we encourage your participation and welcome you to work with us as partners in the following ways:-

1. Sharing information and your own observations of your child's development at home.
2. Making suggestions that you feel will enhance Nursery life.
3. Being involved in your child's learning at Nursery and at home.

Finally, we hope that you and your child enjoy your pre - school experience at St. Catherine's Nursery School.

We look forward to working with you.

**Principal , Vice Principal & Nursery Team**

## Meet the Staff



Principal



Vice - Principal



Nursery Teachers



Nursery Classroom Assistants



# St. Catherine's Nursery Unit

Programme of Themes 2023 - 2024



Term	Month	Theme
1	September	A New Place
	October	Snap, Crackle and Pop
	November	Over the Rainbow
	December	Sparkle and Shine
2	January	Who am I?
	February	What shape can you see?
	March	Time to Grow
3	April	Helping Hands
	May	The World outside my Window
	June	Let's Count

