

Preparing For Junior Infants – Scoil Carmel JNS

Preparing for September

Unfortunately, we were unable to meet you all in person as we usually do in May. It is at this meeting that we provide you with lots of essential information but don't fear, this information is communicated below!

Perhaps worst of all, we were unable to meet the most important people – our incoming infants! Ideally, we would have invited them in and shown them their new classroom, their fantastic soft – surface yard and given them the chance to meet us, and each other! We have filmed a short video below for them but are aware that their experience of starting will be very different to previous years!

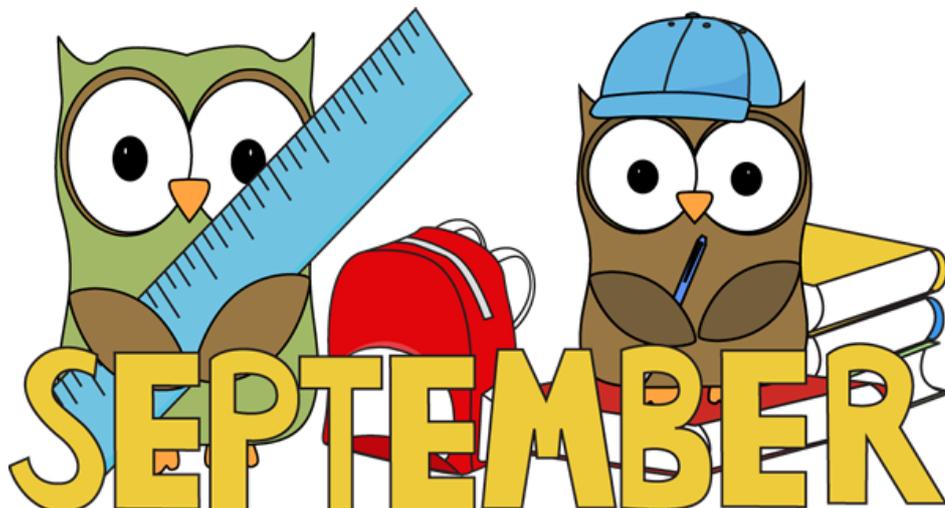
With Covid 19 restrictions in mind, there is still much uncertainty about how school will work in September. We don't yet know whether the children will be in together, or on a phased basis, for a full day or a half day, and we await clarification from the Dept. of Education regarding all of this during the Summer. As soon as we have clarity, we will communicate all arrangements to you.

As well as not meeting their new teacher, or seeing their new classroom, we are also very much aware that the children didn't get the opportunity to finish out their year in playschool or Montessori. We will, of course, be taking all of this into consideration.

Please let us know if for any reason your son / daughter has not attended playschool. Starting 'big school' is a huge transition in your child's life and be aware that it takes time to adjust. Some will settle in immediately, and for others it takes time. Here in Scoil Carmel we allow plenty of time for settling in and try to make it as smooth a transition as possible. Our aim is to make the children feel safe and secure in their new environment, as soon as possible.

As we have all been spending so much time together since March, we would ask that you make the break before September and leave your child with a relative, neighbour or friend ahead of starting school. Make sure your child has plenty of experience of you leaving, but coming back! We would also ask that you break any attachment to a blanket, or a soother ... well in advance of September!

Please let us know if your child has any food allergies/medical conditions, etc.



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The first day of school

Our first day will be August 31st. In terms of social distancing it is unlikely that schools will be allowing parents into school buildings. With this in mind, the children will more than likely have to come in by themselves on the very first day. If this is the case, please say lots of positive, reassuring things to your child, while staying composed yourself! Allow us to do what we need to get them inside! We are well used to this and will have lots of lovely things ready to distract them! Trust us ... children always settle even if there have been a few tears at first!



In terms of the morning itself, we recommend getting up nice and early so that there is no major rush! Take lots of time to get dressed, have a nice breakfast and to take lots of photographs! Make it a nice, happy, and relaxed morning for your child ... and yourselves!

We expect your child to be able to:

- Put on, take off and hang up their coat independently. Later, we will need them to be able to manage hats, scarves and mittens (no gloves) themselves.
- Tuck him/herself in after visiting the bathroom. Work on zips, buttons, and tights!
- Put on and take off their jumper: Over the summer we specifically ask that you work on turning jumper and coat sleeves inside out.
- Encourage your child to be as independent as possible in terms of dressing – this will be a huge help to us.
- Toilet: Children must be toilet trained and able to wipe themselves properly. Our classrooms have adult sized toilets, and so the children must be able to balance, reach for toilet roll, flush the toilet, and know how to wash their hands, etc. 'Toilet time' will be done regularly during the day. Feel free to put a change of clothes in your child's schoolbag in the event that they wet themselves. For their own comfort, children will be sent home in the event of soiling.
- Manage his / her lunchbox: We expect the children to be able to feed themselves and to manage independently at lunchtime. Make sure lunchboxes are easy to open for tiny hands! Play lunch time at home over the summer to practice!
- Manage his / her own drink: As a Green School, the children must have a reusable beaker- no cartons or straw drinks. Again, over the Summer practice opening and closing – like sleeves, this takes practice!



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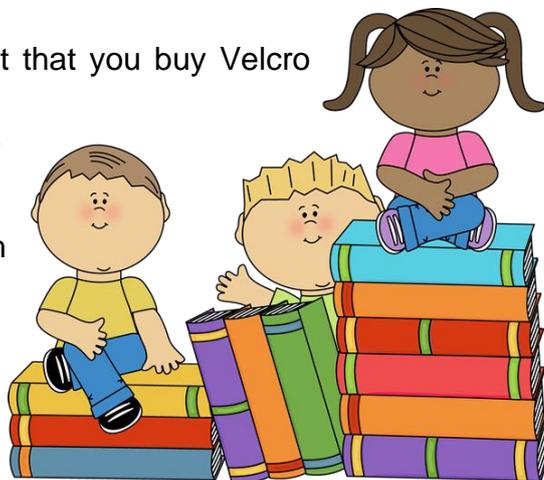
Top tips and ideas to help your child prepare:

- Talk and Discussion, encourage your child to ask lots of questions and TALK! TALK! TALK!
- Sing and say lots of nursery rhymes and counting songs
- Share lots of stories (bed-time stories, picture books, audio books)
- Give your child plenty of opportunities to colour in and draw (Please don't teach your child to write ... we will do that!)
- Social skills: encourage listening, taking turns, sharing, playing with others and experiencing losing a game (as traumatic as this can be!)
- Encourage your child to dress him/ herself and to be as independent as possible: managing his / her coat, jumper, sleeves, buttons, zips, lunchbox and beaker
- Develop basic movement skills: running, skipping, walking, jumping
- Be positive and encouraging about school – don't use Teacher as a threat please!
- As an aside, please remember to only start your child if you feel s/he is ready. Try not to compare him / her to siblings, neighbours or cousins ... every child is different. There is no harm in holding off a year if you feel they would be more socially and emotionally ready then.



Uniform & Supplies

- Make sure to label EVERYTHING your child owns (coat, jumper, lunchbox, beaker, hat etc) Check labels regularly as they can wear off
- It is your choice whether to buy a formal uniform, or just school tracksuit.
- Our school tracksuit is available from 'The Sisters' – Village Green in Tallaght. Children wear our navy Scoil Carmel tracksuit with a white or blue polo shirt.
- Our formal uniform is made up of a red jumper, white shirt, grey skirt, grey pinafore, grey trousers, grey tie. Available from any department store.
- We ask that long hair be tied up every day please.
- We ask that you buy trousers with an elasticated waist. No belts. Practice opening and closing buttons and zips.
- When buying shoes and runners we insist that you buy Velcro fasteners – no laces!
- When purchasing a coat please choose a zip not buttons! Make sure children can zip their coat independently.
- Choose a suitable school bag: Big enough to hold an A4 Folder. No wheels please!
- In September / October we will be in touch regarding the total cost of your child's supplies for the year (schoolbooks, copies, photocopying, arts and crafts materials etc).

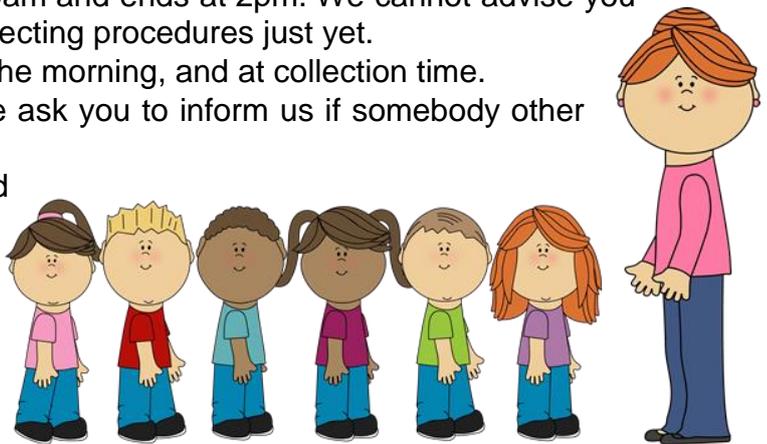


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- Those of you who have paid your initial deposit, will just need to pay the balance. Using this, Junior Infant teachers will purchase all schoolbooks, copybooks and educational materials needed. There is no need for you to buy anything.
- No pencil cases/toys at school. Teacher will provide everything the children need.
- *By all means, buy a pencil case if you want...but keep it at home for homework!

Attendance & Punctuality

- Ordinarily school begins at 9.20am and ends at 2pm. We cannot advise you on specific dropping off and collecting procedures just yet.
- Punctuality is essential both in the morning, and at collection time.
- In relation to collection time, we ask you to inform us if somebody other than you is collecting your child.
- All absences must be explained – either ring Reception or send in a note. The school is obliged to report absences exceeding 20 days per year to National Education Welfare Board.



Lunch

- For the safety and well-being of all of our pupils Junior Infants is a NUT FREE ZONE. There are absolutely no nuts, or nut products allowed in lunchboxes and we expect your full co-operation in this regard. Be vigilant, and aware of hidden nuts (no nutella spread, peanut butter, popcorn etc). Check labels carefully.
- On a full school day the children have two lunch breaks. The first break is a designated 'fruit/ vegetable break' and then later on we have 'big break' or 'lón mór'.
- Lón beag: ('Fruit & Veg break') initially 10.45am – 11am
- Lón mór: initially 12.20pm – 12.40pm
- We always give the children PLENTY of time to eat and allow even more time for this at the beginning of the year as the children get used to it!
- As a Green School, we aim to reduce waste and ask the children to take home their food wrappers. With this in mind, lunchboxes must be washed and cleaned out each night.
- When preparing your child's lunch give him/her a manageable amount of food to eat – not too much. Make sure that it is as easy to manage as possible.
- In line with Scoil Carmel's Healthy Eating Policy we ask that lunchboxes are filled with healthy contents only! The children are allowed one fun-sized treat on Fridays. Our NO NUTS policy still applies here so a small packet of jelly sweets is ideal. No crisps or popcorn please.
- Please don't send in frubes or yoghurts initially, as these can be hard to manage.

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- We ask that you send in water/fruit juice or milk in the children's reusable beakers – no fizzy drinks
- Suggestions for fruit / veg break : All must be peeled and ready to eat : Chopped apple, peeled mandarin, chopped pear, grapes (cut in half), raisins, pineapple, berries(strawberries/blueberries), peeled kiwi, Banana
- Vegetables: Cucumber, cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, sweetcorn, celery,peppers
- Suggestions for big break / 'lón mór' - sandwiches, crackers, cheese, pasta, dry cereal, pancakes, croissants



In advance of the full school day, we will ask you to talk to your son/daughter about their lunchbox, identifying what they are going to eat at each break.

Communication

- By now you should have received some information from us regarding how to log on and register with Aladdin Connect.
- This is the platform used by both our principal Ursula Martin, and all class teachers, to communicate directly with parents.
- It also allows us to remotely set homework tasks, plans of work etc.
- As teachers we will have access from mid-July and will be able to communicate with those of you who have registered, directly.
- As there will be lots to communicate before school reopens, it is essential that you are able to access the information.
- Please let us know if you are experiencing any difficulty in terms of registering.
- It is very important that you keep us informed of anything which is happening in your child's life which might be affecting him / her (eg. loss of a grandparent, a pet, parents separating etc).
- Similarly, we will be sure to inform you of anything happening in school which might be affecting your child at home too.
- If you need to talk to us, we are always available to meet after 2.15pm.
- Simply let us know and we will arrange a time that suits.
- We cannot chat to you in the mornings as our main focus is always on the children.
- If your child is ill, or has headlice, please let us know.
- As with food allergies or illnesses, please let us know if your child has any speech and language issues or if your child typically struggles to follow instructions.



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- Birthdays are a huge celebration for Junior Infants but in the interest of fairness, party invitations cannot be distributed in school, unless the whole class is invited.
- If distributing invitations, you must do so outside of school!
- Our fantastic Parent's Association have their own Facebook page if you would like to check it out.
- Simply search 'Scoil Carmel Firhouse Parent's Association'.

