

Parent Information Booklet

2023 / 2024



ASHBOURNE
COMMUNITY NATIONAL SCHOOL

Ashbourne Community National School

Killegland, Ashbourne, Co. Meath, A84 R984.



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Information for Parents 2023 / 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

At Ashbourne Community National School (CNS) we will endeavor to make your child's time here a very special experience. The year ahead is an exciting opportunity to create a happy learning environment for everyone in our school community. We look forward to getting to know you all over the coming weeks and months. To facilitate this, we host annual parent information meetings in September for all classes. We are a rapidly expanding school and as such we will welcome new additional staff to our school community in September 2023. Class allocations will be announced for all classes in August.

As you know we will be moving to our brand-new state of the art school building. We will be in touch with updates regarding this move when the building is complete.

This booklet is designed to help you prepare your child for school by offering some helpful tips and useful information.

Jenny Byrne (Principal, Ashbourne CNS)



ASHBOURNE
COMMUNITY NATIONAL SCHOOL



Mission Statement

At Ashbourne CNS we seek to provide a safe physical and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every pupil to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity or background. We promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by pupils, parents and staff. We prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of shared values.

Pupils, staff and parents at Ashbourne CNS worked together to define our mission statement and our school values. Our four key school values: **Courage**, **Creativity**, **Collaboration** and **Care** are now proudly displayed on our school crest. The crest itself was designed collaboratively by all of us and represents who we are and who we are striving to become. This pupil led design was created during our Creative Schools journey, an initiative awarded to us by the Arts Council of Ireland 2020 – 2022. During this initiative, we collaborated with a graphic designer who taught us about the design process, carried out pupil workshops, consulted, gathered and then realised our pupils' ideas to form our amazing crest. Something we are all extremely proud of. The crest was officially launched by the Ombudsman for Children, Dr. Niall Muldoon, during our *Celebration of Creativity Day* on May 25th 2022.



**Please see the section on school uniforms for further details about wearing our school crest.*

About Our School



Ashbourne Community National School is a multi-denominational school under the patronage of the Louth and Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB). We opened in September 2019 to our first pupils. Community National Schools (CNS) are child-centered, publicly accountable schools which strive to provide a high-quality education for every child. You can learn more about CNS schools on page 6.

We believe that everyone in the school community has the right to be happy and to be able to learn in a safe and respectful environment. To do this we have a responsibility to work together to support and encourage each other. In order to build the trusting respectful relationships which are the cornerstone of our school, we listen to and accept others for who they are. We negotiate our differences using Restorative Practices and learn to become resilient using Glasser's '**7 Caring Habits**' as our school rules.

At Ashbourne CNS we...

1. Listen
2. Support
3. Encourage
4. Negotiate
5. Respect
6. Accept
7. Trust



This helps establish a structured framework and an explicit language to build positive relationships for students, teachers, and parents. By working together using these habits, we cultivate the sense of community which is vital to promoting wellbeing for all.



Restorative Practice

Alongside our 7 Caring Habits, we use Restorative Practice to enhance relationships within our school community, as we believe that 'learning takes place in a relationship'. Restorative Practice is both a philosophy and a set of skills rooted in respecting each other and aims to build positive relationships between people. It is a proactive, skills-based approach that is centred on the understanding that relationships can be restored when they have been harmed by conflict or wrongdoing.

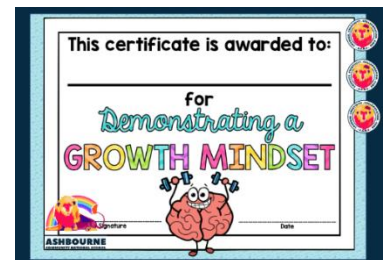
Restorative approaches are underpinned by values of respect, equity, interconnectedness, understanding, empathy, belonging and fair process. Our intentions, through the use of Restorative Practice at ACNS, are:

- To put the values of Ashbourne CNS into action (Courage, Creativity, Collaboration and Care).
- To foster and encourage positive behaviour.
- To grow and learn.
- To honour relationships.
- To repair harm.
- To develop resilience.

Growth Mindset

At Ashbourne CNS we also promote Growth Mindset. Growth Mindset is about fostering the belief that all pupils/adults can improve and develop their knowledge and skills through effort. Intelligence or talent are not innate gifts. Praising effort and hard work instead of praising talent or intelligence helps pupils develop a growth mindset. When pupils and adults have a growth mindset, they build the resilience needed to overcome adversity and support well-being.

During our whole school assemblies, we take the time to acknowledge pupils who have fostered a growth mindset through our weekly Growth Mindset Awards. These are presented to pupils who have tried something new, persevered when a task became challenging and/or for fostering a mindset that views challenges themselves as opportunities for learning.





Code of Positive Behaviour

Restorative Practice, Growth Mindset and Glasser's Caring Habits are the foundations on which our Code of Positive Behaviour was created. It is available to [view on our website here](#) where all school practices are outlined in further detail.

Core Values and Ethos of Community National Schools

Community National Schools are state run co-educational, multi-denominational schools underpinned by the core values of: Respect, Community, Equality, Care and Excellence in Education.



In Community National Schools, all students are given equal opportunities for enrolment in line with the Education (Admissions to School) Act 2018. Once enrolled, our schools strive to provide all students with equal opportunities to engage with the curriculum and school life. In all aspects of school life, all members of our school communities are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, religion / belief, age, family status, civil status, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status. You can learn more about Community National Schools at www.cns.ie.



School Office

Our school office is open from Monday to Friday 09.00 to 15.00 for any information or assistance you might require. Our office can be very busy so please check out the parent section on our [website](#) for information before contacting us on ashbournecns@lmetb.ie or by phone **086 8522068**. Please email rather than leave a voice message.

If you need to contact your child's teacher, please email the office and they will pass on your message to the relevant teacher. If you would like to meet with them, email to arrange an appointment outside of school hours as during school time they are devoted to teaching your child. Please outline rationale for meeting in advance.

Emails and messages to the office will be responded to during working hours of 09:00 to 15:00. Teachers will respond to communications outside of class time.

Aladdin Schools Connect

Our school uses Aladdin Schools software to give you secure access to your child's details and data regarding attendance, test results, report cards etc. This is all provided via a secure login and enables parents/guardians to update phone numbers, addresses and other contact details should there be any changes. Please [download the Aladdin Connect App here](#).

When your child is enrolled, the school office will set up a student profile for your child and send you details on how to log in.

Aladdin Connect is the main form of communication between home and school. Any absences are to be recorded on the app. Absences of more than 20 days are reported to the Education Welfare Officer. We do not provide work for children going on holidays or on long term leave.

Way2Pay

In addition to Aladdin our school uses Way2Pay. This is a secure provider of online payment capabilities for schools. This system facilitates payments for items such as our school crest, swimming lessons, school tours and fieldtrips, and school contributions. Please contact the office for further information on how to use Way2Pay.



Junior Infants

Our open day for Junior Infants will take place on the 21st of June 2023 from 14:30 – 15:30.

Parents/guardians and pupils will be invited into the school to meet the teachers and see the current infant classroom. Pupils will be given an opportunity to play and meet their fellow classmates whilst parents/guardians will be welcomed by staff.



Junior Infants will start school on Thursday 31st of August 2023 at the later time of 09:20 (when our other pupils are already settled in their classrooms and we can welcome the infants independently) and finish at 12:00 noon.

To further ease the transition to school from Friday 1st September – Tuesday 12th September inclusive the Junior Infant school day will be from 09:10 – 12:00. Junior Infants will commence their normal school hours of 09:10 to 13:50 from Wednesday 13th September.

Preparation for School – Junior Classes

Starting school is a major milestone in the life of your child. Before your child starts Junior Infants in September, it is important that they are as independent as possible. It would greatly help your child's progression this year if they were able to do the following things by themselves before starting school:

- Put on/take off their coat, button/unbutton it and hang it up.
- Fasten/tie their own shoes – Velcro fasteners are handy.
- Use and flush the toilet independently. Open trousers etc.
- Washing their hands with soap and drying them without assistance.
- Use a tissue where necessary and understand cough etiquette.
- Open food containers and fruit independently.
- Recognise and look after their own belongings.
- Share toys with others and take turns.
- Tidy up and put toys and their lunch away after them.



Other examples of ways in which you could help your child prepare for their learning include conversing with your child regularly, reading to your child and repeating nursery rhymes in their mother tongue. It is also very important to encourage your child to manipulate toys such as jigsaws, Lego, play dough and to provide paper and crayons for colouring and scribbling/doodling at home.



Preparation for School - Older Classes

In the older classes we look to further develop pupils' independence. They will be expected to organise their own school day including belongings and begin to take ownership over school events e.g. knowing what days P.E is on and that tracksuits are required on these days.

All personal belongings should be labelled with the pupil's name.

Preparation for School – All Classes

A few things for all parents/guardians to note:

- Please remember to have a name label on your child's belongings including their uniforms to help both them and us keep track of their things.
- **Due to allergies all types of nuts are not permitted on the school grounds.**
- **If your child needs prescribed medication during school hours, please contact the school for an Administration of Medicine Form. Children are not permitted to have non-prescription medication at school.**
- **Camera phones are not permitted at school. All phones are to be turned off in school bags and not to be taken out until outside the school gate.**
- **The school does not facilitate birthday parties. Party bags, cake or birthday invitations are not to be given out during school time.** Birthdays and special occasions will be celebrated in other ways.

Parent Information Meetings

Parents of pupils from senior infants to sixth class will have the opportunity to attend a class information meeting in September 2023. Here you will have the opportunity to meet with your child's class teacher where they will outline information about our school ethos, values, and a general overview of the school year ahead for their pupils. Scheduled dates will be announced in due course.

Parent Teacher Meetings

Our Parent Teacher meetings will take place between the 30th January – 1st February 2024 inclusive. Closer to the time, dates and times will be released on Aladdin and parents/guardians will get to book a slot most suitable to them.



Breaks and Healthy Eating Policy

All classes will have two breaks per day for a total duration of 40 mins in accordance with curriculum guidelines. Please make sure that all food is prepared for small hands. Manageable portions of fruit, cheese, bread, and crackers are advised.



Our school has a healthy eating policy in place. Fizzy drinks and unhealthy foods such as chocolate, biscuits, sweets, crisps and chocolate spread are not permitted.

Nuts are not allowed due to allergies. If your child has a food allergy, please inform the class teacher.

Please ensure that your child's lunch box and bottle can be easily opened and is also labelled clearly with their name.

Sharing is caring but your lunch is your own. Children are not allowed to share lunches.

Eco-Friendly / Green Schools



At Ashbourne CNS we are conscious of the need to preserve the environment for our children. Staff, students and parents work together to minimise our the litter and waste within the school. With this in mind, we ask parents not to send any packaging into the school as part of your child's lunch. **We encourage children to take home all waste and food that has not been eaten in their lunch box to help us reach our target of reducing food waste and litter around the school grounds.** A lunchbox and reusable products are advised. The use of cling film, tin foil and other nonrecyclable plastic products are strongly discouraged (kitchen roll is a good alternative).



Morning Drop Off

All classes start at 09:10. The children will line up from 09:00 in the yard and are supervised by staff until collected by their teacher and brought to class for 09:10. The board of management does not accept responsibility for pupils arriving before that 09:00.

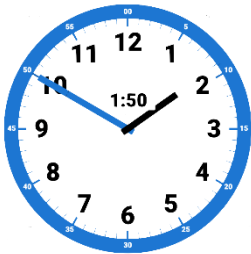
Roll call takes place from 09:50-10:00 for all classes as per Rule 55(4d) of the Rules for National Schools.

Arrival after roll call AND for a period of less than 4 hours of school does NOT constitute attendance.

This is outlined in Rule 56(2c) of the Rules for National Schools. Therefore, children attending for less than 4 hours are marked absent as per rule 56.

Parents/guardians of infant children: When you arrive at school be as casual as you can. Assure your child that you will be back shortly, say goodbye and leave without delay. The teacher will bring the children out to parents/guardians at home time, specific guidelines will be shared in advance of the opening. Once children enter the gates and the care of the teachers, they are not permitted to leave again without permission from staff.

Collection / Going Home Time



- Junior and Senior Infant classes go home at 13:50.
- All other classes finish at 14:50.

It is very important that the children are collected from the school on time. If for any reason you are delayed, please call the school to let the teacher know.

If your child is to be collected by someone else the office must be notified of this in advance of collection.

If your child has to leave school early, they must be signed out at the office by the designated adult.

Children from 2nd class may walk home with written permission on Aladdin.



Parking and Traffic Restrictions on Campus

To **KEEP ALL CHILDREN SAFE** the following parking and traffic restrictions are in place:

- Pedestrian access only to school grounds for parents/guardians, pupils and visitors.
- Parents/guardians to use parking bays on public road.
- Pupils are encouraged to walk, scoot or cycle to school.
- Bikes and scooters must be dismounted at the school gate.
- Use of both vehicle and pedestrian gates for pedestrian access and exit.
- Staff are required to enter gates prior to gates opening to pupils and exit only after majority of pupils have left campus and it is safe to do so.
- No parking/pulling in or turning is permitted in/at or near gates where pupils egress. Staff will ask anyone in this area to move on as it poses high risk to pupils leaving/entering school grounds.
- Staff accompany class to exit points and gates for collection.
- Staff on duty to manage pedestrian traffic and direct parents, guardians, and pupils accordingly inside of campus and around gate areas.
- Staff to ensure vehicle entry/exit clear for emergency vehicles.
- Engage with Gardaí to manage traffic on main road.
- Unauthorised vehicles who gain access to the grounds will be asked to leave the premises immediately unless the pupils have commenced traversing the campus. In that case they will be asked to stay in place until the campus clears and it is safe to proceed.
- Management will investigate any vehicles/work vehicle or buses which are taking space in the parking bays. They will liaise with the Gardaí where appropriate.
- Regular notifications and reminders will be issued to parents and guardians via Aladdin Connect.
- Directions regarding restricted access to campus will be available on website and shared throughout the year as a reminder.
- Pedestrian access only to school grounds.
- Bikes and scooters must be dismounted at the school gate.

Please co-operate with signage and personnel and please walk and cycle to school if possible.

We appreciate your co-operation.



School Uniform

Our school uniform is generic and can be purchased at a variety of outlets such as Dunnes Stores, Tesco, Marks & Spencer, Penny's and Next.

Our school crest is to be purchased via Way2Pay (payment of school contributions covers two crests).

The crest should be ironed/sewn onto the jumper or cardigan. The crest should always be positioned on the upper left-hand section of the jumper/cardigan. A useful tip is to mark the position of crest while your child has the jumper on, then remove it to iron/sew the crest on.



The uniform comprises of:

- Navy skirt or pinafore, navy trouser
- Red polo shirt
- Navy V-neck jumper or cardigan.
- Navy or red tights or socks.
- Although there is no specific type of school shoe required, please adhere to the following guidelines:
 - Junior and Senior Infants must have shoes with Velcro or must be easy to manage independently, **no laces please!**
 - Shoes must be comfortable and suitable for play and physical education (P.E.).
 - Shoes with wheels, lights or high heels are not permitted.
 - Wheeled school bags are not permitted for health and safety reasons.
 - Jewellery worn around the neck needs to be inside the shirt and only studs are permitted as earrings.

On P.E. days pupils are required to wear:

- Navy tracksuit bottoms and a navy round neck sweatshirt
- Red polo shirt
- Runners are required.



Again, these are readily available from Dunnes, Tesco and Marks and Spencer's etc.

All children are expected to present in full correct uniform with crest.



Your Child's Learning and Development

The Primary School Curriculum sets out 7 curricular areas. Your child will be learning about...

- Languages: English and Irish (Gaeilge) and an awareness of other modern languages.
- Mathematics.
- Social Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE):
History, Geography and Science.
- Arts Education: Drama, Music and Visual Arts.
- Physical Education (P.E.) and Wellbeing.
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).
- Multi-Belief and Values Curriculum: Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY).

Aistear, the early childhood curriculum framework for infant classes, emphasises the importance of play, communication and engaging children in problem solving, inquiry-based approaches to develop their knowledge, skills and curiosity. Playtime is an essential part of the infant school day. Structured play can assist your child in developing the necessary skills to build relationships, be creative, think and plan, use language and develop fine and gross motor skills. At Ashbourne CNS we take a holistic approach to learning, aiming to develop a love of learning in children which drives them to maximise their potential academically and socially.



Our school seeks to engage in a number of external initiatives that support the national primary school curriculum. In the few short years we have been open, we have been successful in being awarded initiatives such as Creative Schools, Languages Connect (as featured on RTE News Today) and BLAST (Bringing Live Arts to Students and Teachers).

Information on the Primary Curriculum Framework can be found [by clicking here](#).

Information on the Primary Mathematics Curriculum can be found by [clicking here](#).



Partnership Schools Ireland / Action Team for School Partnership

Partnership Schools Ireland (PSI) is a collaboration between the National Parents Council (NPC) the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) and the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Its aim is to improve children's educational outcomes by increasing parental engagement and creating effective partnerships between schools, their pupils, parents and the wider community.

Our action team consists of parents, members of our local community, school staff and pupils. This academic year was our first full school year running the PSI and we as a school community are delighted with what we have accomplished to date.

Some of our goals achieved this year were:

- Organising parent information mornings for all class levels.
- Having a renowned sports coach give a talk to the pupils on resilience and perseverance
- Some of our classes got to visit the local Ashbourne library
- Our pupil members being actively involved in weekly assembly by presenting our Growth Mindset Awards to pupils.

Books, Equipment and School Contributions

The Department of Education recently introduced the Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme meaning that all textbooks, workbooks, copies and some stationery will be provided by the school at no cost to families. All books are classified as school property.



As a result of the Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme, School Contributions for the 2023/2024 school year are significantly lower than before. Please see below a breakdown of this charge, it will be collected at the beginning of the school year via the cashless payment solution Way2Pay.

Student Direct Costs from Parents/Guardians for LMETB Schools for 2023/2024	
Details	Estimated Cost €
Home/School Communications (Aladdin, Way2Pay, Newsletters/Reports)	€15.00
Crests	€3.20
Insurance	€6.80
Proposed Total Contribution Collected for 2023/2024	€25.00

Signed:	Acting Principal Séamus McCarthy
Date:	14/06/2023



Important Details

- Children need to be independently dressing and toileting for school.
- Supervision before school starts at 09:00 in the yard. Parents must stay with their child until the teacher arrives and the children are supervised. The School / Board of Management does not accept responsibility for children before 09:00.
- Junior Infants will start school on the 31st August at the slightly later time of 9:20, finishing at 12:00. For the first day of school Junior Infants can be brought straight to their class at 09.20 by their parents/guardians where they can say goodbye and leave without delay.
- From the 1st – 12th September the Junior Infant school day will be from 09:10 – 12:00.
- From Wednesday 13th September normal school hours of 09:10 – 13:50 will apply for Junior Infants.
- **To KEEP ALL CHILDREN SAFE on a very busy campus parking and traffic restrictions will be in place. Please co-operate with signage and personnel.** Please see page 12 for the traffic plan.
- A uniform of a navy skirt, pinafore, trouser or tracksuit bottom with a red polo shirt and a navy jumper or cardigan is in place.
- School crests are available to buy on Way2Pay and can be ironed on to jumper/cardigan.
- Your child's name should be clearly written on everything they own. The school is unable to take responsibility for lost items.
- Our school has a healthy eating policy. Please promote this when preparing lunch.
- Nuts are not allowed due to allergies.
- We ask parents not to send any packaging into the school as part of your child's lunch.
- Party bags are not allowed at school. Staff will not facilitate distribution of invitations, party bags or cake.
- Textbooks, workbooks and copies will be provided by the school.
- Some stationary will be provided by the school. We encourage children from 1st class up to also have their own stationary to use as well.
- Valuables such as computer games, smart phones and jewellery are not allowed at school as they could be lost or damaged. The school cannot take responsibility for such items.
- As per our Acceptable Use policy mobile phones are prohibited from use in school. All phones are to be turned off in school bags and are not to be taken out until outside the school gate.



2023/2024 Ashbourne CNS

September 2023						
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December 2023						
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January 2024						
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February 2024						
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March 2024						
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31						

April 2024						
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May 2024						
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June 2024						
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30						

	First Day of School
	School Closed for Holidays & Bank Holidays
	End of Term Half Day – 12:00 finish
	Parent Teacher Meetings
	Staff Meeting – Early Finish 13.40 (Circular 14/04)