



**WELCOME
TO
HOLY FAMILY JUNIOR SCHOOL**

**Aughnaharna
Summerhill
Portlaoise
Co. Laois**

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Holy Family Junior School



Introduction

Holy Family Junior School is a Christian community under the patronage of the Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin, where we encourage children to attain their full potential.

First day at school is a milestone in everyone's life. In Holy Family Junior School we aim to make it as happy an occasion as possible for both you and your child.

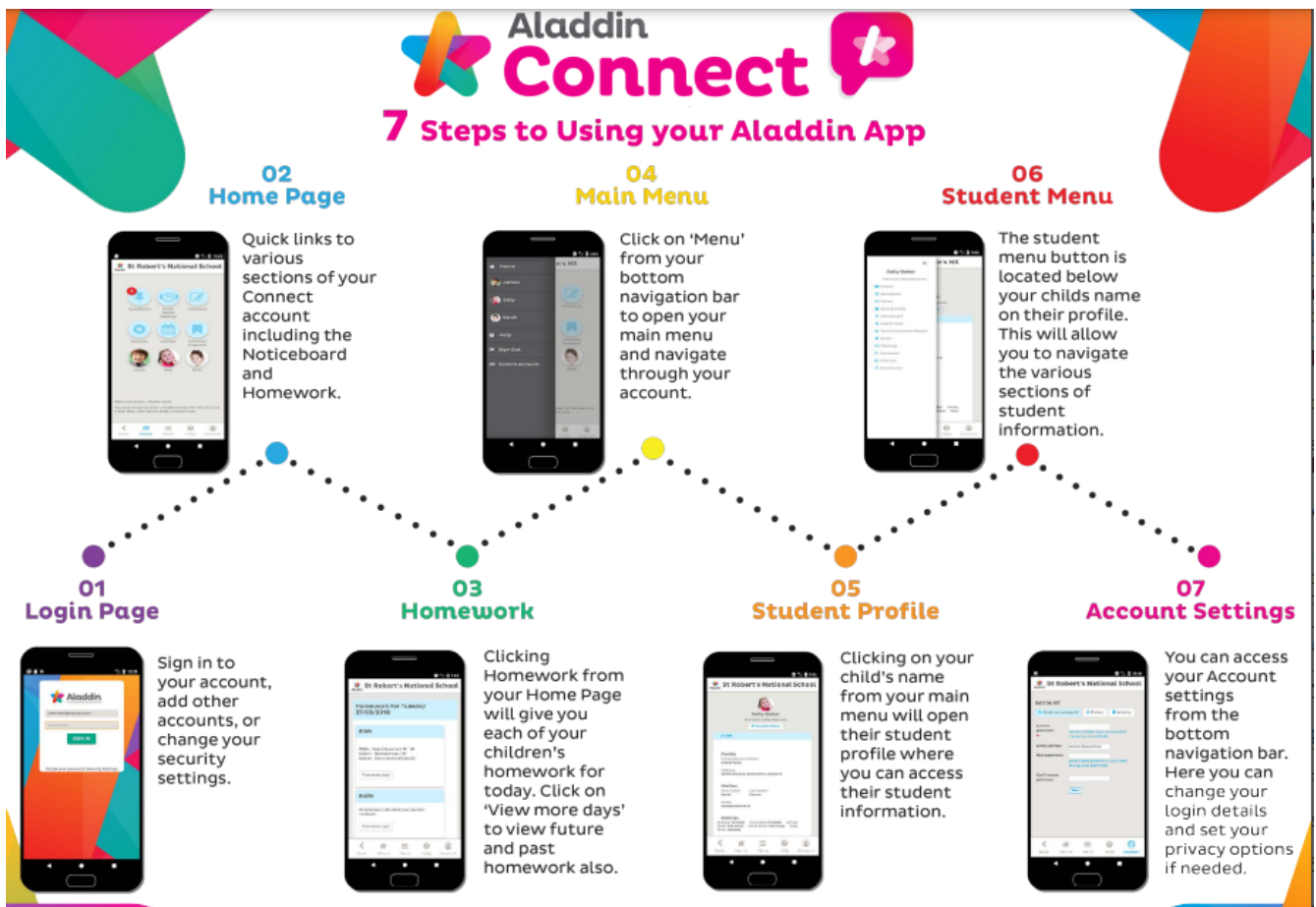
This booklet has lots of practical information about the school, together with some ideas which you may use to help your child prepare for school.

Thank you for choosing Holy Family Junior School. We look forward to many happy experiences together in the coming years.

Our aim is to work closely with you for the good of your children.

School Communication

The school use the free Aladdin app as its main means of communication with parents. This app is used by the school for texts/emails, school reports, attendance records, reasons for absences, permissions etc. You will receive a link and access code from the school to download the app before your child starts school. Parents have told us that this app is easy to use.



Preparation for learning



Children learn informally from birth from their parents and from their environment. Parents are often anxious to begin to see some results of formal learning soon after the child starts school. Children will start to read and write at their own pace. Just as they walk and talk at different ages - they also read and write when they are ready to do so themselves. It is not necessary for children to be able to write or recognise letters before coming to school - it is far more important to prepare them and this can be done informally by parents.

The following will help you develop your child's skills.

- Language is an essential pre-requisite to reading. Listen attentively to your children. Talk to them and encourage them. Give them time to explain and retell events to you. Avoid interrupting even if you know what they are going to say. When talking to your child, don't economise with words. Don't use baby talk.
- Read to your child regularly. This encourages a love of books and creates an interest in reading. Short enjoyable experiences are best.
- Pay attention to the mechanics of reading i.e. holding the book, turning the page - page by page. Let your finger run under the words as you read from left to right. The child's main interest will be the pictures - allow time to examine and comment on them. Encourage them to repeat the story to you or tell you their favourite bit.
- Encourage them to repeat what happened in the story, and retell their favourite bit. Play "what do you think would have happened if....!" games, or "what would you have done if you were Goldilocks?"
- Enjoy nursery rhymes together. Help your child identify colours/ shapes etc.
- Writing: Young children need to develop the right muscles in their hands before they can begin to write properly. You can help this development by encouraging them to do things which involve using their hands such as drawing, cutting paper, using play dough etc.



At Home:

You should provide:

- Large sheets of paper and chubby crayons for scribbling, drawing, colouring in/tracing, copying etc.
- Scissors for cutting paper
- Activities which involve pouring, stirring, mixing, rolling e.g. making play dough
- Dolls/teddies with clothes that can be buttoned, laced, zipped and tied
- Encourage them to dress themselves
- Choose toys carefully. Children should have blocks to build, simple jig-saws, construction toys etc. Encourage them to build and make using odds and ends i.e. paper plates, used packets, cartons, egg boxes etc.
- You can help your child become familiar with the concepts they will need to understand when they are introduced to basic maths in school. Allow your child to help you at home, sorting cutlery, setting the table, counting out the correct number of spoons, forks, sorting the laundry etc. Allow your child to help you divide sweets among friends.
- Encourage your child to collect things from the park or beach on walks like shells and cones, pebbles, nuts and feathers. They can have fun later sorting and classifying the different objects. Try the same thing with collections of buttons, badges, lids etc. and other odds and ends from around the house
- Use language with your child that will help them to understand the concepts of: more, less, the same, different, longer than, shorter than and other useful comparisons.
- Allow your child to use whichever hand they feel most comfortable with.



Preparation for school

Starting school is a milestone in the life of a child and is often a time of stress and anxiety for parents.

Parents, however can do much to reduce such anxiety - both for themselves and their child. This preparation should begin some months before the child starts and should be carried out gradually.

There is much that you, as a parent, can do to prepare your child for school.

The following may help:



- Talk to the child about your own school days. Emphasise the opportunities for making friends and for getting involved in new activities. However, don't "hype up" school life. Approach this talk with a calm attitude - treat it as a normal development in the child's life.
- Children should be able to put on and take off coats and hang them up, to use the toilet and flush it properly, to tidy up their crayons and colouring books. Help them to practice putting things in and out of the school bag. Teach them to use tissues etc., to share toys and take turns.

Making life manageable for the Junior Infant

Give some thought to the items your children need to get through the school day.

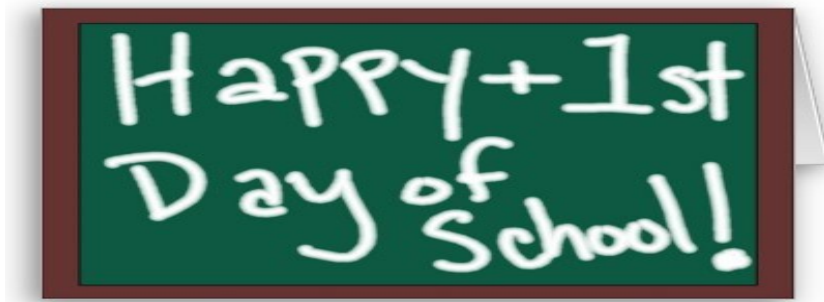
For example:

- Footwear with a Velcro fastener can be easier to manage.
- Ask yourself whether or not your child can manage his/her clothes by himself/herself. Zips may be easier than buttons for example. Elasticated trousers can be easier than zips or buttons.
- Choose a lunch box and flask/bottle that he/she can open easily. Again make sure that the school bag can hold these.
- Give some thought to lunches too. Peeled oranges, for example, will make your child less dependent on teacher.

All of these, if given a little thought, can help your child feel capable of dealing with classroom routine. It also helps the teacher enormously.



The First Day



On the big day, if you are feeling upset, try not to show it!!

If your child is upset, trust the teacher. The teacher is very experienced and knows how to comfort an anxious child.

It is important that you can arrive on time to collect your child from school. Children can become upset if they see other children being collected and feel they are being left behind.

It takes time for children to adapt to school life and routine. Don't expect too much too soon. Talk to them about what happened and allow them to respond in their own way.

If you ask "What did you learn today?" you will most likely be told "nothing". Most of the work at infant level is activity based and children are not conscious of 'learning' as adults understand it. If, however, you ask "What happened?", "What did you do?", "Did you sing?", "Did you draw?", you will have more success!!

If you feel that your child is worried about something school related, talk to the teacher.

Hygiene

Teach your child to wash and dry hands properly.



Your child will need to be able to say “I need to go to the toilet”

Make sure they can:

- A) Undo any buttons etc. on trousers
- B) Use the toilet roll
- C) Flush the toilet
- D) Wash and dry hands afterwards



Practise with your child.

Head lice happens:



Check your child’s hair regularly.

Tie up long hair.

Buy a fine-comb in the chemist.

Use the fine comb every week.

School Uniform

Girls: Navy skirt / pinafore / trousers
Navy cardigan / V-neck or round neck jumper (with crest)*
Blue blouse, Navy tie
Navy socks/tights
Comfortable footwear

Boys: Navy V-neck or round neck jumper (with crest)*
Blue shirt, Navy tie
Navy trousers
Comfortable footwear

*Parents have the option of buying generic jumpers/cardigans onto which crests can be sown / ironed on or to buy pre-crested jumpers. School crests are available from the school. Pre-crested jumpers /cardigans are available from Shaws and Colgans Sports.

Tracksuit (for boys and girls):

This will consist of a navy and pale blue zip-up crested jacket, with generic blue polo-top and generic navy bottoms.

The tracksuit will be only worn on P.E. days.

Summer Uniform (optional in fine, Summer weather)
Generic navy shorts/ ¾ length pants worn with tracksuit top

Label Everything!

All jumpers and tracksuit tops look the same.

It is very easy to bring home the wrong one.

Label all your children's clothes and belongings clearly (coats and bags also) - help them to identify their own belongings. Please have a zip lock bag with spare socks and underwear in his/her school bag. As accidents can happen!!



You should also provide the school with the name of a person to be contacted if you are not at home. Explain this arrangement to your child.

Please do not send toys to school.

Healthy Snack Break

We encourage children and parents to choose healthy foods and drinks for the lunch and small breaks.



“Yogurts” sound like a great idea for lunch! They are healthy, but very messy on books, bags etc.!!.

In keeping with our healthy eating policy, children can bring in a treat on a Friday only.

In line with our Healthy Eating Policy and because of serious concerns around food allergies we would ask that parents do not send birthday / party treats for other children into school.

Glass bottles / cans are not allowed for safety reasons.

SCHOOL DAY

Junior and Senior Infant - 8.50am to 1.30pm

First and Second Class - 8.50am to 2.30pm

Small break - 10:45am to 10.55am

Large break - 12.15pm to 12.45pm

ABSENCES

If your child is absent from school, the school needs to record this in order to comply with educational regulations. Please insert the reason for the absence on the Aladdin App.

The following categories of explanations appear on this App:

Illness Urgent Family reasons Suspension
Expulsion Transfer to another school Other Unexplained

Schools are also required to promote punctuality in school. For this reason, persistent unexplained lateness for school must also be recorded.

Early collections:

For safety reasons we are asking parents to sign your child out from school office if they are collecting their child/children early from school.

Please go to the school office, sign your child out and then your child will come to the office for collection.

Parents Council

Relationships between school and the home are of fundamental importance.

Holy Family Junior School aims to foster active parental partnership.



Get involved in the school activities.

Your help will be very welcome, particularly with the Parents Council.

Children need support!

Tell the teacher about any problems or worries your child may have.

If you don't tell her/him, she/he cannot help!

Teachers need to know about any difficulties with speech, hearing, sight, movement or health issues.

If you have a Report from a Speech Therapist, an Occupational Therapist, a Doctor, a Psychologist or other professional or if your child has been seen by the HSE Early Intervention Team please let us know. Please also inform us of allergies or anything else which you feel the school should know of.

Special arrangements may need to be made for children who need medication during a school day. Please make an appointment to meet the principal if this applies to your child.

PRINCIPAL Enda Hickey

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL Catherine Moloney

Please make an appointment to meet your child's teacher if there is an issue or concern you need to discuss.

You can make an appointment by speaking to the class teacher or ringing the school secretary.

Individual parent-teacher meetings are held in the first term.

SCHOOL TELEPHONE NUMBER 057 8688224