

New Parents'  
Information Booklet  
2024-2025

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## Welcome Note

Dear Parents / Guardians,

On behalf of all our staff, our Board of Management and our patron Educate Together, I would like to welcome you to Leixlip Educate Together National School. I hope that you will find this booklet useful, as you and your child prepare for their first year at our school. It is intended to provide you with an introduction to all aspects of school life.

Now, going into our sixth year, we have been working together to develop a warm, friendly and inclusive learning environment and a vibrant school community with the aim of providing the best possible education for all of the children in our school.

As with all Educate Together Schools, parental involvement is an integral aspect of school life. Therefore, I would encourage you to become actively involved in our growing school community.

I look forward to getting to know you and your children,

Mary McDowell

Principal

## School Calendar 2024 - 2025 (182 Days)

First Day: **Thursday 29th August 2024**

Term 1: 29th August 2024 – 20th December 2024 ( 77 days)

Midterm: **Monday 28th October 2024 to Friday 1st November 2024** inclusive

Winter Closure: **Monday 23rd December 2024 to Friday 3rd January 2025** inclusive

Term 2: 6th January 2025 – 11th April 2025 (65 days)

Imbolc/St Brigid's Day Closure: **Monday 3rd February 2025**

**\*\* Midterm: Monday 17th February 2025 to Friday 21st February 2025**

St Patrick's Day Closure: **Friday 14th of March 2025 and Monday 17th March 2025**

**\*\* Spring Closure Monday 14th April 2025 to Friday 25th April 2025** inclusive

Term 3: 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025 – 27th June 2025 ( 40 days)

**Closures:**

May Bank Holiday Closure: **Monday 5th May 2025**

June Bank Holiday: **Monday 2nd June 2025**

Final Day: **Friday 27th June 2024**

*Please note: The Department of Education may direct that schools close for training. We will notify parents as soon as is practicable.*

**\*\* Where contingency arrangements are required a school authority may reduce the length of the February mid-term break by remaining open up to and including Wednesday 19th February 2025.**

**Spring Closure 2025** All schools will close on **Friday 11th April 2025**, which will be the final day of the school term, unless changes are required as part of contingency arrangements to make up for time lost due to unforeseen school closures. Where contingency arrangements are required a school authority may reduce the length of the Spring Closure by remaining open up to and including **Wednesday 16th April 2025**. All schools will reopen on **Monday 28th April 2025**

## About Leixlip Educate Together National School

### What is an Educate Together school?

#### Ethos and Core Principles

Leixlip Educate Together NS, like all Educate Together schools in the Republic of Ireland, is founded on four core principles:

- Equality-based – All children have equal access to the school and no one religion or worldview is given priority over another within the school.
- Co-educational – All children are encouraged to explore their full range of abilities and are provided with equal opportunities regardless of their gender or identity.
- Child-centred – Our child-centred approach means that we put children at the heart of all policies and practices and involve them in decision making where appropriate.
- Democratic – We run schools on a democratic basis, encouraging active participation by parents and students in the daily life of the school whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers.

### Developing Schools and Combined and Multi-grade classes

Leixlip Educate Together NS is a developing school, and its teacher allocation from the Department of Education is based on projected enrolment (pupil numbers for the following September). The number of teachers allocated to the school may result in combined or split class levels. In general, we try to allocate a similar number of pupils to each class teacher, however other factors also affect how the principal allocates classes.

Multi-grade classes are a feature of the Irish educational system and research has shown the benefits which such classes offer. Multi-grade classes allow for differentiation across all levels and for pupils to access the curriculum at their individual stage of learning enabling them to revise or extend their learning as appropriate. The primary curriculum content is menu-based and teachers can choose content suitable to their class.

Based on our projected enrolment for 2024/25, we do not envisage having any split grade or multi-grade classes.

## School Management Structure

Leixlip Educate Together National School operates under the Rules for National Schools and is subject to the provisions and guidelines of the circulars issued by the Department of Education (DE). The DE provides funding for the general running of the school and pays teachers' salaries. The DE inspectors monitor the implementation of the curriculum in the school.

The school is managed on behalf of our patron, Educate Together by the Board of Management (BOM). Our current BOM was established in December 2023 and its members are as follows:

Chairperson: Catherine Hare

Secretary: Mary McDowell (Principal)

Treasurer: Anne Finn (Community Representative)

Patron Representative: Lindsay Mahon

Parent Nominee (mother): Agnieszka Szymłowska

Parent Nominee (father): Alan McCormack

Community Representative: Deirdre Costello

Teacher Nominee: Noreen Cronin

This BOM's term of office is from December 2023-2027

### How Boards of Management operate:

The role and method of operation of Boards of Management of primary schools was agreed by the Department of Education, school managers, parents and teachers in 2003. *The Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedures*, revised in 2011, sets out the key activities of boards of management. Its key roles are as follows:

- It has responsibility for drawing up the school plan and ensuring its implementation.
- It appoints the principal, the teachers and other staff.
- It must ensure that the school fulfils its functions as set out in the Education Act 1998.
- It promotes contact between the school, the parents and the community and must facilitate and give all reasonable help to a parents' association in its formation and its activities.
- It has overall responsibility for the school's finances.
- It is obliged to have comprehensive insurance cover for the school.
- It must keep proper accounts.
- It must ensure that child protection and welfare are taken into account in all of the school's policies, practices and activities.
- It must ensure the school has a Code of Behaviour and all other mandatory policies.

## Information for parents

### Absences

All absences must be explained to the class teacher or the school office, this should be done through the Aladdin Connect App, outlining the reason for the absence (this information is required for absence reports to TUSLA Education Welfare Services).

We urge parents NOT to book holidays or trips abroad during term time. This practice can have a negative impact on the education and well-being of your child in school and is very disruptive to your child's learning.

Under the Education and Welfare Act 2000, if a child is absent for 20 days or more, a report must be sent by the school to TUSLA Education Welfare Services.

### Illness

As children return to or start school for the first time, they are more susceptible to germs and illnesses. Parasites (such as head-lice), viruses, and other communicable diseases pass easily from child to child in schools and on playgrounds and end up in your home. Help children learn to protect themselves and avoid spreading illnesses to others by teaching them these simple rules:

- Wash your hands before eating and after toileting.
- Keep your hands out of your mouth and nose.
- Do not exchange clothing items, combs, or hairbrushes with others.
- Do not share eating and drinking utensils with others.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze

When your child is sick, please do not send them to school. If they are displaying any of the following symptoms - sore throat, cough, fever, headaches, upset tummy, vomiting etc, please keep them at home and follow medical advice. A general rule of thumb is to keep your child at home if they require any medication such as calpol or nurofen. It is of utmost importance to inform the school (in the strictest confidence) if your child comes down with any communicable childhood illness e.g. Covid; Chickenpox; Fifth Disease; Hand, Foot and Mouth Illness; Conjunctivitis etc. In cases such as these, we inform all parents that the illness has been reported so that they may be vigilant for symptoms in their own children. The same applies to head-lice. Please let the school know if your child has become infected, so that everyone can be asked to check and treat their child as necessary. Again please be assured that all such reports will be treated with the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality.

In the case of absences due to illness, inform the school as soon as possible so that their absence may be recorded as 'Illness' rather than 'Unexplained'. Parents can also record their child's absence using the Aladdin App. When a child has a vomiting or diarrhoea bug, they must stay home for 48 hours following the last episode to avoid spreading the illness in school.

## Health Matters

In Ireland, the Health Service Executive (HSE) administers a range of childhood vaccinations and screening tests for sight and hearing through the schools. Parents will be required to sign a consent form before any vaccination or screening.

### Health Needs

If your child has a particular health need such as an allergy, asthma, diabetes etc, it is imperative that you advise the school. The school should be made aware of the name and address of your family doctor.

If your child needs medication on a regular basis, you may need to make special arrangements. Please refer to our [Administration of Medicine Policy](#).

### Head lice

No matter how careful you are about your child's hair, there is still a chance that they may get head-lice. Unfortunately, it is part of school life!

Please check your child's hair regularly. It is very important that you inform the school immediately if you find lice, as they are highly contagious. We will treat this with the strictest confidence while notifying all parents to check their children's hair.

### Uniform

We have no school uniform in Leixlip ETNS but would recommend that your child wears comfortable clothing. Infants in particular have a very active day and therefore should wear clothes that enable them to move freely. We also ask that you teach your child to take off and put on their coat and how to open and close zips, buttons, buckles and laces. Zips are preferable to buttons and elasticised clothing is ideal and velcro-closing shoes should be worn in the infant classes, and until your child can tie their own laces.

### Jewellery and Accessories

Children should not wear jewellery that could pose a health and safety risk - eg long earrings or necklaces, similarly, children should not wear expensive items of jewellery to school, as the school cannot take responsibility for items lost or damaged.

Smart watches and other electronic devices (phones, cameras, ipads etc) should not be brought to school without the prior approval of the principal. If a pupil brings in such devices, they will be removed from the pupil for safekeeping and parents will be asked to collect them from the office.



## Helping your child in Junior Infants

There are many ways in which you can help your child to settle into and enjoy school life, and in particular their first year in Junior Infants.

Write their name on EVERYTHING – coats, hats, bags, lunchboxes, flasks, clothing etc - you can be sure that the unlabelled item is the one that your child will misplace.

Teach your child how to take off and put on his/her coat, and how to open and close zips, buttons, buckles and laces.

Show your child how to use and flush the toilet properly and how to wash their hands properly.

Encourage your child to share their toys and to tidy up after playing.

Talk to your child about their new school.

Give your child a love of reading - read stories with your child, in your home language. Talk to your child about the stories.

Help your child become familiar with the popular children's nursery rhymes, particularly English language rhymes, as these will help with your child's phonological awareness.

When they begin to get homework, ensure you practise their sounds, blending and sight words every evening.

Encourage kindness and good behaviour and praise them positively.

Encourage and help build resilience (the ability to bounce back from adversity).

Speak positively about school, their friends and the staff.

## Your Child's Lunch Box

**Leixlip ETNS encourages healthy eating, discourages single-use plastics and has a nut-free policy in place throughout the school.**

Please try to find a lunchbox that has separate compartments for different types of food, choose a lunch box and flask that is easy to open and practise using them over the summer. Children will also be asked to take home their own packaging. to reduce / reuse / recycle, and to foster a sense of awareness of environmental and sustainability matters..

Give some thought to healthy lunches – try to choose items from each of the categories of the Food Pyramid – wraps/sandwiches, fruit, cheese etc. Also, ensure that your child can manage their lunch e.g. pre-peeled oranges, cut apples, easy to open foods are best!

We do not encourage cheese strings, Frubes or yoghurts or other such processed foods, due to their low nutritional value, plastic wrapping and the children's difficulty in opening these items.

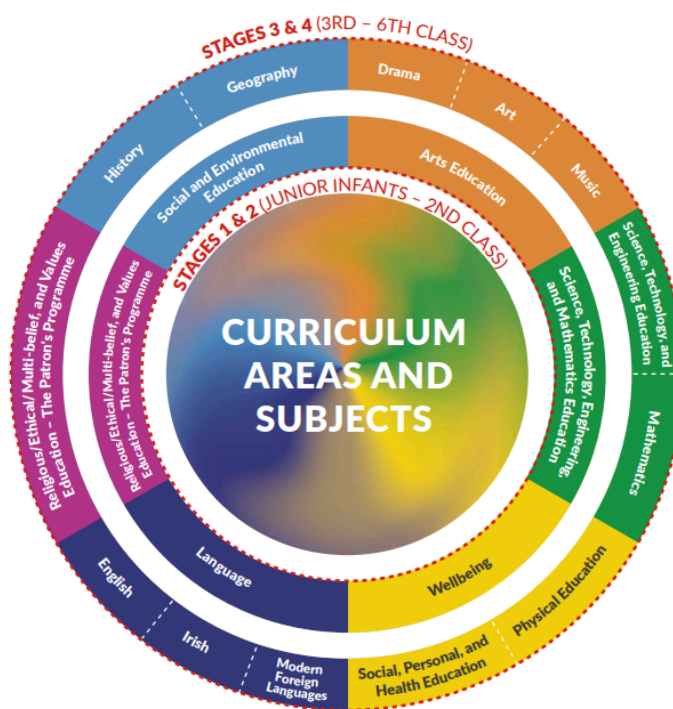
**Due to the increasing rise in nut allergies - pupils are not permitted to have nuts or food containing nuts for their lunch - this includes nut and chocolate spreads.**

## The Curriculum

Leixlip ETNS implements the Primary School Curriculum as required by the Department of Education and Skills (DE).

The subjects of the primary school curriculum are presented in five broad curriculum areas:

1. Language
2. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education
3. Wellbeing
4. Arts Education
5. Social and Environmental Education.



The primary curriculum ([www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie)) is skills-based rather than content-based and is spiral in nature, meaning that similar content is revisited at each level but the processes, approaches and information adopted reflect the needs of children at a particular time and at their various stages of readiness. Further information on the new Primary School Curriculum Framework can be found [here](#).

In addition, we also teach Ethical Education. Educate Together's *Learn Together* curriculum includes strands on Morality and Spirituality; Equality and Justice; Belief Systems and Ethics and the Environment.

## A Typical School Day

8:40 am School gate opens and children go straight to their classrooms

8:40 – 9:00 Morning activities & roll call

9:00 – 10:00 Teaching & Learning (Language / STEM)

10:10 – 10:35 Snack and yard time

10:35 – 11:00 Teaching & Learning (Language/STEM)

11:00 – 12:00 Aistear play time (learning through play and playful learning)

12:10 – 12:45 Lunch and yard time

12:40 - 1:20 Teaching & Learning (SEE/Arts/Wellbeing)

1:20 pm Junior and Senior Infants home-time

2:20pm first - sixth classes home-time

*The school will open to receive pupils at 8:40 am. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time. Junior Infant classes finish at 1:20 pm and the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after that time.*

### Important Dates:

- The new school year starts on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August at 8.40am
- From Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August to Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September, all Junior Infants will go home early at 11:40 am
- Junior Infants will go home at 1.20 pm from Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September

## Communication

### **Aladdin**

Our school uses an app called '*Aladdin*' for home-school communications, you will be sent information regarding how to set this up on your phone. All communication from the office is via Aladdin, parents must also use Aladdin to inform the school of absences and to grant permission and consent for tours, policies and other school activities, and for other day-to-day routine communications.

Debbie, our school administrator, will be happy to answer any queries with regards to setting up and using the Aladdin app. Please make an appointment to meet her if you require any support.

**Text** – urgent information may be communicated to your nominated mobile number via Aladdin text. Please keep your current phone number and email address updated on Aladdin.

**School Bag** - occasionally information leaflets, consent forms etc will be sent home via the children's school bag. We will text or email parents to let them know.

Our website [www.leixlipetns.ie](http://www.leixlipetns.ie) and facebook page [facebook.com/LeixlipETNS](https://facebook.com/LeixlipETNS) also keeps parents and the wider community informed of all that is happening in school.

### **Meeting with your child's teacher**

As a school community we value the opportunity to meet with parents to discuss and promote your child's progress. Meetings are always scheduled and by appointment only. If you have any queries, problems or concerns regarding your child please contact your child's teacher or the office via the Aladdin app, indicating the nature of your concern.

Formal parent/guardian - teacher meetings take place once a year - usually in late November/early December, when teachers inform and guide parents on their child's progress in school. Sometimes these meetings do not cover all aspects which need to be discussed, in which case an appointment for a follow-up phone-call may be made.

We also realise the importance for parents/guardians, pupils and staff at Leixlip ETNS to have continuous and open channels of communications. While it is not possible for the class teacher to speak to parents/guardians 'on the spot' or during school hours (08:40 - 2:20), if there is an urgent matter that needs discussing, please contact your child's teacher or the school office via Aladdin, to arrange a time for a phone-call or meeting.

In addition, if there is a change in home circumstances (illness, separation, or any issue that you may feel may affect your child) please let your child's teacher or the principal know, we assure you the utmost sensitivity and confidentiality will apply.

## Parental Involvement

Parents have a range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for their children. In line with our key principle of democracy education, parents may participate in and make a valuable contribution to the school at every level, including:

- becoming a member of various committees – Parent Guardian Teacher Association
- going forward for election to the BOM
- fundraising
- volunteering to share a hobby, skill or interest during school hours in agreement with the class teacher and principal
- helping the principal and teachers with curricular activities
- volunteering to get involved in various projects with the pupils and teachers
- supporting initiatives in literacy and numeracy

## School Policies

As a new and developing school, we are continuously developing our school policies. Parental input is very much a feature of policy development - as new policies are drafted, parents/guardians and staff will be invited to give feedback and suggestions before ratification by the Board of Management. As new policies are ratified they will be communicated to the school community and published on our website.

## Code of Positive Behaviour

Our Code of Positive Behaviour aims to foster a positive atmosphere in which every child can learn, develop and reach his/her full potential. This policy enables teachers and pupils to work in a well organised environment where acceptable patterns of behaviour are followed and where self-discipline, based on mutual respect is fostered. A copy of our Code of Positive Behaviour is included in this pack. We ask that you read through this policy and ensure that you have signed the Registration Form confirming that you have read and accept our policy. You can also find it online

<https://leixlipetns.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2020/03/Shared-Code-of-Positive-Behaviour-.pdf>

## School Staff 2024-2025

Mary McDowell, **Principal**

Noreen Cronin, **Deputy Principal & Special Education Teacher**

Debbie Moriarty, **School Administrator**

Niamh Haughton [Junior Infants]

Caitríona O'Connor [Senior Infants]

Sharon Lynch [4th Class]

Pooja Puri [2nd Class]

Jenny Connolly [English as an Additional Language - EAL teacher]

### Five new teachers to be appointed to

1st Class

3rd Class

5th Class

Special Education Teachers x 2

## Additional Education Team

**Special Education Teacher**, Noreen Cronin

**EAL Teacher** - Jenny Connolly

**Additional Needs Assistants**, Grainne Moore, Noreen MacInerney, Julie Herron, Karen O'Flaherty, Sarah Brennan

**Part-time EAL and 2 SETs - to be confirmed**

## After-School Club

**Kids Inc** run an After-School club every day, solely for the children of Leixlip ETNS. Full Afternoon Care runs from 1.20pm or 2.20 pm – 6.30pm and includes homework supervision, nutritious snack, hot meal, sport and creative activities, games, free play. For more information, please contact Kids Inc directly at [ciara@kidsinc.ie](mailto:ciara@kidsinc.ie), tel: 083 4563284 or visit [www.kidsincafterschool.ie](http://www.kidsincafterschool.ie)

## Important Contact Details

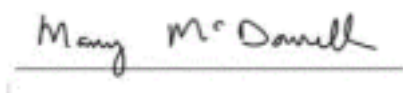
Office: [admin@leixlipetns.ie](mailto:admin@leixlipetns.ie) Phone: Office 086-8368959

Confidential email: [principal@leixlipetns.ie](mailto:principal@leixlipetns.ie)

Website : [www.leixlipetns.ie](http://www.leixlipetns.ie)

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to this school. It is the start of an exciting journey for all of us. I hope that you and your child have a very rewarding and fulfilling time with us in Leixlip Educate Together National School.

Kindest Regards



Mary McDowell, Principal