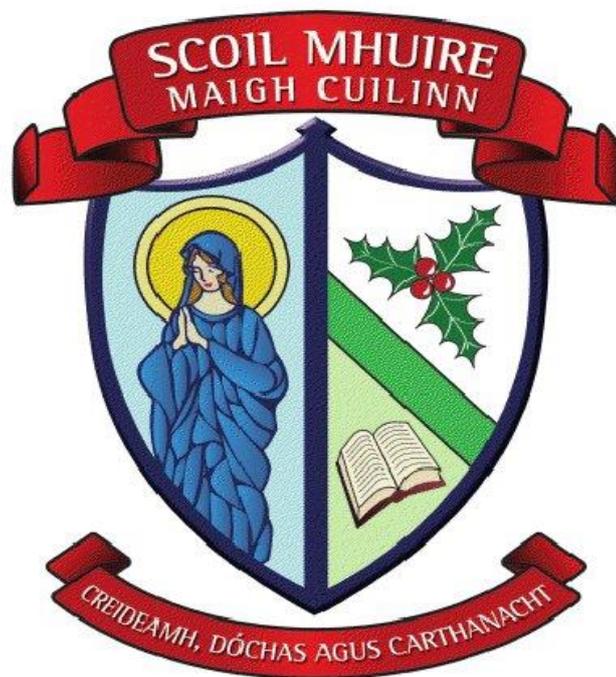


Scoil Mhuire Maigh Cuilinn

Lámhleabhar na Scoile



Scoil Mhuire Moycullen

2019

School Handbook

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A Thuismitheoir, a Chara,

Go raibh maith agat as ucht do pháiste a chlárú linn i Scoil Mhuire. Tá súil agam go mbeidh sé/sí go breá sásta anseo i Scoil Mhuire agus le linn a c(h)uid ama linn, go ndéanfaidh sé/sí forbairt ar na buanna atá aige/aici, go bhfaighfidh sé/sí oideachas cuimsitheach agus go mbainfidh sé/sí amach a c(h)uid spriocanna féin de réir a stíl foghlama pearsanta agus a (h)ábaltacht féin. Tá sé mar chuspóir againn go mbeadh mianta arda agus pleananna móra ag ár ndaltaí agus cruthaitheacht a chothú iontu. Cuireann muid luach ar an iarracht maraon leis an toradh.

Is scoil fáilteach, cuimsitheach í an scoil seo ina chothaítear atmasféar ómósach agus ina mholtar do dhaoine meas a bheith acu ar a chéile. Tá caidreamh maith idir an scoil agus ár dtuismitheoirí agus moltar dóibh siúd páirt gníomhach a ghlacadh in imeachtaí na scoile agus teagmháil rialta dearfach a dhéanamh leis an scoil.

Is scoil speisialta i Scoil Mhuire, áit a bhfuil muid an-bhródúil aistí. Tugann cuairteoirí chuig an scoil faoi deara cé chomh deas séimh agus atá an t-atmasféar intí, cé chomh stuama, dea-mhuinte agus atá na daltaí agus cé chomh fial fáilteach agus atá an scoil. Tá an t-ádh linn go bhfuil Bord Bainistíochta éifeachtach forásach, múinteoirí díograsacha díchealla agus tuismitheoirí comhoibrithe tacúla againn, ach is de bharr na daltaí iad féin atá an scoil chomh maith agus atá sí. Is dóigh liomsa go mbeadh turas fada bóthair romhat sula bhfeicfeá a sárú in aon scoil eile sa tír, ach is dóigh go bhfuil mise claonta ina leith. Tá ár ngasúir iontach uilig.

Leis sin, ba mhaith liom fáilte mhór mhíllteach a chur romhat agus go háirithe roimh do pháiste chuig Scoil Mhuire. Tá súil agam go neireoidh go breá libh anseo linn i Scoil Mhuire.

Terry Kavanagh
Príomhoide

Dear Parent,

Thank you for choosing to enrol your child with us in Scoil Mhuire, Moycullen. I hope that he/she will be very happy here in Scoil Mhuire, and that throughout his/her time with us, he/she will develop his/her own particular set of talents and abilities, benefit from a well-rounded education and experience the success that is uniquely applicable to him/her according to his/her own particular learning style. We encourage our pupils to aim high, to dream big and to be creative. We value effort as well as achievement.

We are an open, inclusive school, in which a spirit of respect for each other is fostered. We enjoy an excellent relationship with our parent body, whom we encourage to participate in the school and with whom we seek to maintain regular effective, cordial communication.

Scoil Mhuire is a special place, a place of which we, the staff, are immensely proud. Visitors and those new to the school routinely comment on their first impressions of the school using phrases such as “lovely, calm atmosphere”, “mannerly, well-behaved children” and “warm, welcoming place”. We are fortunate to have a highly effective and progressive Board of Management, a very positive, supportive parent community and a dedicated staff of hard-working teachers, but those most responsible for making Scoil Mhuire the wonderful place it is are, first and foremost, our pupils. I can’t help but be biased, but I honestly do believe that you would be hard pressed to find another school in the country with pupils as fantastic as ours, in every sense of the word.

You and your child are most welcome to the Scoil Mhuire Community. We hope that you enjoy a long and happy association with us.

Terry Kavanagh
Principal

Cuspóir na Scoile

Déanann foireann na Scoile seo tréan iarracht atmasféar foghlama a chruthú atá suaimhneach, sábháilte, taitneamhach agus smachtaithe a dhéanann freastal ar fhorbairt phearsanta, shoistialta, intleachtach morálta agus spiriodálta gach paiste. Is mian linn a chur ar chumas gach páiste a uas mhianach a bhaint amach, a bheith feinmhuiníneach agus forbairt mar dhuine cumasach stuama agus mór shaoránach freagrach.

Mission Statement

We, the staff of Scoil Mhuire, Maigh Cuilinn, are dedicated to the creation of a pleasant, relaxed, safe, controlled learning environment providing for the personal, social, intellectual, moral and spiritual development of each child.

We wish to enable each child to realize their maximum potential, to develop self-confidence, security and to develop as well adjusted human beings and responsible citizens.

Our Ethos

Scoil Mhuire is a co-educational Catholic National School under the patronage of the Bishop of Galway, Kilfenora and Kilmacduagh. Together with the Board of Management, the parents and the parish community, we provide Religious Education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and prepare them for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion and Confirmation. We promote the formation of the pupils in the Catholic Faith in a manner that is welcoming to and inclusive of the presence of pupils committed to other religious traditions and none.

Our Christian ethos also informs our actions, attitudes and practices on a day to day basis.

Our Children

Our children are what is best about our school. As a school staff, our love of and care for them should be second only to what they might expect from their own families. We expect children to always do their best and to treat others in a polite, courteous respectful and tolerant fashion. In this, they rarely disappoint us. They, themselves, are to be treated in a similar way at all times.

Scoil Mhuire has high levels of achievement in Literacy and Numeracy. We do our best to encourage and support our pupils in achieving their own unique academic potential.

Of equal importance to us is encouraging creativity in our pupils and providing them with the opportunities to express themselves creatively. Scoil Mhuire's annual Seachtain na Féile Ealaíne (Arts Week) is the best known expression of the importance we attach to fostering creativity in our pupils.

Scoil Mhuire is an open, welcoming, inclusive school and we do all we possibly can to provide for pupils with Special Educational Needs. We are firmly of the opinion that, if at all possible, a child should attend his/her local school in the company of his/her neighbours and friends and we are determined to make every effort to facilitate this. We sincerely believe that as much as pupils with Special Educational Needs benefit from their time with us, we gain as much, if not more from their being with us.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 require that Boards of Management must undertake an annual review of their Child Safeguarding Statements. The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire has completed a Child Protection Risk Assessment, which includes:

- A comprehensive list of school activities
- A list of potential risks of harm associated with those activities
- Procedures in place or to be put in place to mitigate the identified risks of harm

The Board of Management has also reviewed and ratified a Child Safeguarding Statement for 2019.

You are strongly encouraged to read these documents. Any observations you might care to share with us are very welcome. Both documents are available from the school website: <http://moycullcentralschool.ie/child-protection/> and in hard copy from the office.

The Designated Liaison Person for Scoil Mhuire is Mr. Seán Óg Flaherty.
The Deputy Designated Liaison Person for Scoil Mhuire is Ms. Louise McKiernan.
All concerns or queries of a Child Protection nature should be brought to the attention of Mr. Flaherty or, in his absence, Ms. McKiernan.

Each member of the Teaching Staff of Scoil Mhuire is a **MANDATED PERSON** under the Children First Act 2015. *MANDATED PERSONS* are people who have ongoing contact with children and families and who because of their qualifications, training and experience are in a key position to protect children from harm.

HARM, in Child Protection and Safeguarding means:

- the assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child's health, development or welfare
or
- the sexual abuse of the child

Teachers have a responsibility to report child protection concerns to Tusla if they believe that the **THRESHOLD OF HARM** has been reached. The **THRESHOLD OF HARM** is the point **where the child's health, development or welfare have been or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.**

If a child tells a teacher that he/she has been harmed or is being harmed, or if the teacher has good reason to believe that a child is at risk of being harmed, the teacher in question must follow the school's Child Protection Procedures and inform the Designated Liaison Person, who will then seek advice from TUSLA regarding how to proceed.

The Teaching Staff of Scoil Mhuire are required to fully implement:

1. The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum
2. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme
3. The Stay Safe Programme

1. Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is taught to all children from junior infants 6th Class.

The SPHE curriculum...

- fosters children's well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging
- develops children's sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions
- promotes children's self-awareness and understanding by helping them to manage their own feelings, to recognise and appreciate individual abilities, and to cope with change of various kinds
- supports children to become active and responsible citizens

The curriculum consists of three strands:

1. Myself
2. Myself and Others
3. Myself and the Wider World

The SPHE Curriculum for Primary Schools is available at:

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Social-Personal-and-Health-Education-Curriculum>

2. Relationships and Sexuality Education RSE is taught in all classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class.

Pupils to learn about human relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible manner.

Children learn about their own development and about their friendships and relationships with others. This work is based on developing a good self-image, promoting respect for themselves and for others, and providing them with age-appropriate information.

The RSE Course Content and Teaching Materials are available at: <https://pdst.ie/node/811>

3. The Stay Safe Programme is a personal safety skills programme taught to all children from Junior Infants through to 6th class.

The programme develops children's self-protection skills by through lessons on safe and unsafe situations, bullying, inappropriate touches, secrets, telling and recognising danger. The programme aims to enable children them to recognise and resist abuse/victimisation and teaches them that they should always tell (an adult who can help) about any situation which they find unsafe, upsetting, threatening, dangerous or abusive.

The Stay Safe lessons are available at: http://www.staysafe.ie/teachers_dlssp.htm

Whole School Evaluation

A Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) in Management, Leadership and Learning was conducted in our school in January 2018 by Inspectors from the Department of Education and Skills (DES). Their report on our school was extremely positive; a welcome affirmation of the good work being done by the entire school community.

A copy of this report is available on the DES website at:

https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Inspection-Reports-Publications/Whole-School-Evaluation-Reports-List/19529C_WSEMLLP_6995_20180202.pdf

Our Board of Management

Our school is fortunate to have a very effective, hard-working Board of Management, consisting of very capable, professional people. Its members are:

Mr. Patrick Kelly, Chairperson, Patron's Nominee

Mr. Joe Howley, Patron's Nominee

Mr. Terry Kavanagh, Principal

Ms. Louise McKiernan, Teachers' Nominee

Mr. Patrick Byrne, Community Representative

Ms. Paola Bigli, Community Representative

Mrs. Sarah Spellacy, Parent's Nominee

Mr. Cian McNamara, Parents' Nominee.

We have been successful in having Scoil Mhuire included in the Government's School Building Programme and are currently liaising with the Planning and Building Unit of the Department of Education and Skills for the purposes of constructing a new 16 classroom school building. Our Board of Management has done an enormous amount of work in this area over the past two years, in addition to ensuring the effective management of our school.

Our Parents' Association

Scoil Mhuire Parents' Association consists of a group of volunteer committee members, all of whom are very generous in the amount of time and energy they give to our school. Apart from collaborating with the Board of Management in matters of fundraising for our new school

building project, the Parents' Association has done great work in improving the school playgrounds, providing equipment for the pupils to play with at break times and organising events for pupils and parents. The Parents' Association, is a great source of good ideas, advice and support to the school.

As a member of the Parent/Guardian Community, you are automatically a member of the Parents' Association, and we would encourage you to attend meetings and become involved. If you are interested in assisting the committee with their work, or if you would like to learn more about the Parents' Association, please send an email to moyscoilmhuirepa@gmail.com.

Our Curriculum

Primary education consists of an eight year cycle: junior infants, senior infants, and first to sixth classes. The primary curriculum aims to provide a broad learning experience and encourages a rich variety of approaches to teaching and learning that cater for the different needs of individual children. The primary curriculum is designed to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life—spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.

The primary curriculum is presented in seven areas, some of which are further subdivided into subjects:

Arts Education

Visual Arts

Drama

Music

Language

English

Gaeilge

Mathematics

Religious Education

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education

Science

Geography

History

Physical Education

Social, Personal

and Health Education

Scoil Mhuire endeavours to fully implement the Revised Primary School Curriculum (1999). The full range of subjects, as prescribed in the curriculum, are taught.

An Ghaeilge

Scoil Mhuire is located in the Language Planning area of Moycullen (Ceantar Pleanála Teanga Maigh Cuilinn). The fostering and promotion of the Irish language is very important to our school and we are proud of our Gaeltacht heritage. Although the vast majority of children in the school are not native speakers of Irish when they begin school, the school aims to expose them to the Irish language in a natural, consistent, supportive way so as to ensure that they are as fluent and proficient in the language as possible when they progress to second level education. The school firmly believes in the advantages of bilingualism and is committed to the preservation and advancement of Irish as a living language. In our school, the Irish language is promoted as a real and effective means of communication. All members of the school community are invited and encouraged to use the Irish Language.

The following is a sample of useful Irish phrases. Please feel free to use whatever Irish you have (even if it is literally only “the cúpla focal) when speaking to any member of staff in Scoil Mhuire. Your efforts will be greatly appreciated.

Gaeilge	Phonetic	English
Dia Duit	<i>Jee-ah gwitch</i>	Greeting (to 1 person)
Dia dhaoibh	<i>Jee-ah yeev</i>	Greeting (to 2+ people)
Dia is Muire Duit	<i>Jee-ah iss mwirrah gwitch</i>	Reply to Greeting
Cen chaoi a bhfuil tú	<i>Kayn qwee a will thoo</i>	How are you
Togha, go raibh maith agat	<i>Thoww guh ruh moh aath</i>	Great, thank you.

Gabh mo leithscéal	<i>Guh muh leh shkale</i>	Excuse me
Le do thoil	<i>Leh duh hull</i>	Please
Go raibh maith agat	<i>Guh ruh moh aath</i>	Thank you
Cá bhfuil ?	<i>Caw will</i>	Where is ?
An bhuil cead agam labhairt le	<i>On will keyad om louw-irch leh</i>	May I speak with
Táim ag iarraidh	<i>Thawm egg eera</i>	I want
Slán	<i>Slawn</i>	Goodbye

The School Uniform

The uniform of Scoil Mhuire consists of the formal version and the less formal, both of which are outlined below, with accompanying photographs. Scoil Mhuire adopts a very reasonable, practical approach to the school uniform and either version may be worn. It should be remembered, however, that **the school uniform must be worn by all pupils** unless otherwise advised by the school, e.g. non-uniform fundraising days.

The less formal version of the uniform is favoured by most pupils as it is economical, practical and comfortable. Its ubiquitous visibility in the community long after school hours is its greatest endorsement. It is important to note, however, that plain, logo free versions of the Navy Track Pants are intended to be worn and that those bearing large, gaudy logos are not permitted, nor indeed are leggings or other such tight fitting stretch trousers.

Formal Uniform

Boys

Navy V Neck Sweater/Cardigan
(with or without the school crest)

White Shirt

Red Tie

Slate Grey Trousers

Black Shoes

Girls

Navy V Neck Sweater/Cardigan
(with or without the school crest)

White Blouse

Red Tie

Slate Grey Slacks/Pinafore/Skirt

Black Shoes/Boots

Informal Uniform

Boys and Girls

Navy Round Neck Track Top
(with or without the school crest)

White Polo Shirt

Navy Track Pants

Navy or Grey Shorts (in summer)

Runners

Some Samples



Footwear that is not conducive to being able to run safely is strongly discouraged. Comfortable shoes and trainers (runners) are ideal.

Make-up, lip gloss and other such cosmetics are not to be worn in school.

If earrings are worn they must be of the stud variety. For safety reasons no dangling or hoop earrings are permitted.

During summer months when the weather is warm, pupils may wear shorts; these must be long (within 10cm of the knee) Navy or Dark Grey shorts. Chino shorts or cargo pants are permitted. Football shorts are not permitted. Tight fitting or skimpy shorts are not permitted. During the warmer weather of summer, children tend to discard their school tops with abandon in the yard at break times. These items often end up in the "lost and found."

Occasionally, items are innocently mistaken by children for their own, picked up and brought home. We would ask parents to please check their children's school uniforms to ensure that items they are wearing are their own. We would also urge parents to mark their child(ren)'s name(s) clearly on their school tops with indelible marker, so that they can be easily identified and returned to the owner if misplaced. We are left with a substantial amount of unclaimed tops, jackets and coats at the end of each school year. Many of these are of good quality and the vast majority are unlabelled. All such items will be left in the Halla Mór for collection by their owners in the days preceding the summer holidays. Any unclaimed items will be donated to charity when school closes for the summer. We hold a uniform exchange in the Halla Mór on the day of the summer holidays. Parents are welcome to bring unwanted items of uniform (clean and of good quality) to the Halla Mór that day and exchange them. If you do not have an item to exchange, you may take items you need in return for a nominal donation to the Parents' Association.

Lunches

Children are expected to bring a healthy lunch and a drink to school with them each day in accordance with the school's Healthy Eating Policy.

Sweets, chocolate and other foods and drinks high in sugar content are only to be brought on special occasions (decided by the school) as outlined in the school's Healthy Eating Policy.

Sugary fizzy drinks and chewing gum are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. Children may not bring treats to school for their classmates as part of any type of celebration, e.g. birthdays.

It is important to note that nuts of any kind and in any form e.g. certain cereal bars, Nutella etc. are **STRICTLY PROHIBITED** as they pose a significant health and safety risk to a number of our pupils who have nut allergies. If your child has a particular feeding routine, special dietary requirements or food allergies, you must bring this to the attention of the school and of your child's teacher as a matter of utmost urgency.

Drop Off System/Parking

In order to facilitate the smooth operation of our morning drop off system, and in the interests of the safety of our pupils, parents are asked to refrain from parking in the drop off zone. This is a set down area only. There is a demarkation barrier in place outside the front gate of the school. This is to facilitate the school bus in safely dropping pupils off each morning at 8:45 and collecting them each evening at 2:30. Please be aware of disabled zones, clearly marked, and of the need to keep the front gate of the school clear at all times. Parking in these areas, at any time, is illegal (other than in the case of parking in disabled zones by permit holders). Parents who wish to park their cars and convey their children to school are encouraged to use the church car park.

Children should be encouraged to use the pedestrian traffic lights when crossing the road.

The Naíonra next door to our school has asked us to remind our Parents/Guardians that none other than those persons delivering children to the Naíonra, or patrons of Arus Uilinn, should park in the carpark at Arus Uilinn between 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. as it poses a health and safety risk to children attending the Naíonra. Our school does not possess a carpark at the moment. We have no authority over the use of the Arus Uilinn carpark and can neither permit people to park there, nor prevent them for doing so.

Morning Supervision

Each morning, children in 1st to 6th Classes are supervised by teachers in the front yard of the school and, on wet days, in the Halla Mór, from 8:40 am until the school opens at 8:50 am. This is to facilitate parents who need to drop their children to school before the school opens. This supervision does not extend to children in the infant classes, and does not cover the yards behind the school. Children in infant classes may avail of the aforementioned morning supervision so long as they wait with an older pupil such as an elder sibling, cousin, neighbour etc. in the front yard of the school or in the Halla Mór. The older pupil must then convey the younger child to his/her classroom when the bell rings at 8:50 am.

When the bell rings at 8:50 a.m., instead of converging on the main entrance, children will line up in their class groups (Línte) as they would usually do when the bell rings at the end of Am Sosa (morning break) and Am Lóin (lunch break). The class teachers will then bring the children to their classrooms.

On wet mornings, the supervising teachers will bring children into the Halla Mór and, when the bell rings at 8:50 a.m., the children of each class will assemble in their Líne in the Halla Mór and will be brought to their classroom by the class teacher.

A number of parents of children in 1st to 6th Classes tend to remain with their children in the front yard as they wait for the school to open each morning, or in the Halla Mór on wet mornings. This is a lovely thing to see, as it allows parents who might not otherwise often have a chance to do so to meet and have a chat. Schools, after all, are at the heart of the community, and parents of our pupils are always as welcome as we can possibly make them.

Parents of children in 1st to 6th Class, are asked to bring their children to the Líne rather than walk them to their classrooms. If you need to deliver a quick message to your child's teacher, he/she will be bringing the class in from the yard or the Halla Mór, so you will still be able to do so. If you have a particular reason for needing to bring your child to his/her classroom on an ongoing basis, please speak to your child's teacher.

Parents of children in Junior or Senior Infants are welcome to convey them to their classrooms, but are responsible for their supervision as they wait for school to open. Under no circumstances should children of infant classes be left unsupervised in the yards behind the school, i.e. beside Rooms 11 and 12 (see plan of school) or near the right rear door of the school. If a child is brought to school before 8:50, a parent or a person appointed by the parent must remain with them in order to ensure that they are properly supervised.

The school does not accept responsibility for the conveyance of children to or from school. Parents of children in Infant classes who wish to have their children escorted home should arrange to have them collected from their classrooms not later than 1:30 p.m. Parents of children in other classes should arrange to have their children collected from the front yard of the school at 2:30 p.m. In the case of children travelling on the school bus, Scoil Mhuire cannot accept responsibility for conveying them from the bus to the School, or vice versa.

The School Day

The Principal, Teaching Staff and Special Needs Assistants of the school are required to be present for work at 8:50 a.m.

Scoil Mhuire opens for the reception of pupils at 8.50 a.m. Children are expected to go directly to their classrooms at 8:50 a.m. and are encouraged to be seated in their classrooms by 9:00 a.m. in order that formal instruction may commence at the official time without disruption by latecomers.

The Am Sosa (First Break) is from 10:40 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.

Am Lóin (Lunchtime) is from 12:30 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The school day for children in Infant Classes ends at 1:30 p.m. (for the first 2 weeks of September, the school day for children in Junior Infant Classes ends at 12:30 p.m.)

The school day for children in 1st to 6th Classes ends at 2:30 p.m.

Attendance and Punctuality

School begins at 8.50 a.m. All pupils are expected to be on time. It is completely understandable that, from time to time, pupils will be late due to circumstances beyond their parents'/guardians' control. In such cases, a simple note to the child's teacher will suffice. The school will contact parents/guardians directly in the event of pupils being consistently late.

The roll call is taken at 9:50 am each morning. Any pupil not present when the roll is called will be marked absent for the day.

Parents/Guardians are required to account for their child's absences from school. If a pupil is absent from school, a note of explanation must be given to his/her teacher. If the child is absent from school for an extended period, or regularly due to illness, a medical certificate should be given to the child's teacher. Please see the school's Attendance Policy for further details.

Scoil Mhuire would strongly discourage Parents/Guardians from taking their children out of school for the purposes of going on holiday. This practice is very disruptive, especially during mid to late May when standardised testing takes place). It is not considered a valid reason for absence from school.

Early Collection of Children from School

Scoil Mhuire prioritises the Health and Safety of its pupils above all other considerations. We take the issue of Child Protection very seriously. With this in mind, we would ask you to please follow the following procedures when collecting your child early from school:

If you need to collect your child early, i.e. before 1:30 p.m. in the case of Infant Classes or before 2:30 p.m. in the case of all other classes, you should, if possible, inform the class teacher of your intention to do so beforehand by means of a note, in person or by speaking to Renee in the office.

Please let us know:

- approximately what time your child will be collected from school and
- by whom your child will be collected.

This will allow us to ensure that your child will be ready for collection either in his/her classroom or from the office. The teacher will also know whom to expect, and will have had the opportunity to set homework for the child before he/she leaves.

When you or the person appointed by you arrives to collect your child, you/they should call to the office and sign the child out before going to the child's classroom. A reason should be given for withdrawing the child early from school, i.e. dental appointment. Your child may then be collected from his/her classroom, as we will know where your child will be and that he/she is in safe hands, with your knowledge and consent. Of course it will not always be possible to give prior notice of early collections from school, but we would insist that you sign your child out from the office before collecting him/her. The school must know where each child is, and with whom, at any point during the school day.

If your child is to return to school later that day, he/she should be signed in again at the office.

Medical/Health Issues

The staff of Scoil Mhuire are keenly aware of their responsibilities regarding the health and safety of the children in our daily care. It is therefore essential that Parents/Guardians make us aware of any health/medical issues their child(ren) may have and provide the school with any medication the child(ren) may require, along with instructions to follow in the event of a medical

incident/emergency. **It is entirely the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to ensure that any medication is kept up-to-date and that the school is kept fully informed of any changes/developments regarding the child's circumstances.**

Please note that the **staff will only administer medicines to children in the event of a medical emergency**, e.g. an Epipen in the case of an anaphylactic reaction, Buccolam in the case of an epileptic seizure, inhalers in the case of a severe asthma attack. **Staff will not administer other medicines to children, e.g. Calpol, Neurofen, Antibiotics as treatment for routine illnesses.**

We also ask that Parents/Guardians provide us with at least one emergency contact number in case they themselves cannot be contacted.

If children are ill, they should not be at school. If well enough to attend school, the decision as to whether a child is in a position to go outside at lunchbreak should be based on the advice of the child's doctor. If it is necessary for the child to remain indoors, a note to this effect from the child's doctor must be given to the child's teacher, as arrangements for his/her supervision will have to be put in place.

Homework

The object of homework is:

- To consolidate the work that has been done in school
- To enable children to practice study and research skills
- To allow the child to work independently
- To enable the child to learn self-discipline and time-management skills
- To give feedback to the teacher.

Children are assigned homework each evening from Monday to Thursday and are not usually given homework on weekend nights or during school holidays. A teacher may decide to assign homework on these occasions if it has not been done on time or properly completed.

The amount and type of homework given can vary, depending on the work being done in class and the activities of the particular day in question.

As a general rule Children from 1st Class to 6th Class will have English Reading, Irish Reading, English Spellings, Irish Spellings, a piece of written work, Maths and tables most nights. On occasion, they will be given some facts to memorise (e.g. The Counties of Ireland in 4th Class) or project work to do.

Please note that spellings should be done every night and not left until the night before the weekly spelling test.

The following is a guideline as to the time an average child might be expected to spend doing homework at each of the class levels:

Naí Bheaga/Junior Infants	5-10 minutes
Naí Mhóra/Senior Infants	10-15 minutes
Rang a hAon/First Class	15-20 minutes
Rang a Dó/Second Class	20-30 minutes
Rang a Trí/Third Class	30-40 minutes
Rang a Ceathair/Fourth Class	40-50 minutes
Rang a Cúig/Fifth Class	50 minutes-1 Hour 10 minutes
Rang a Sé/Sixth Class	1 Hour-1 Hour 20 minutes

Homework should be done in a quiet environment, as free as possible from distractions. It may be done soon after school or after a break, but it should never be left until last thing before bed or the following morning. Preferably it should be done in one time block.

All children are different. They vary in aptitude and ability and will have different attitudes to homework. You should consult with your child's teacher who will be in a position to advise you on how best to approach your child's homework. Too much time spent on homework can be counter-productive. If your child's homework is taking too long or is causing undue upset, you should contact your child's teacher as soon as possible. It may be necessary to adapt and differentiate homework to a degree to suit the child and enable him/her to work most efficiently and derive the maximum benefit. However, all children are expected to do homework. While a child may be excused from on certain occasions, this should not become a regular practice. A note to your child's teacher in his/her homework journal is sufficient to excuse him/her from homework.

Each day, your child will write the homework that he/she has been given into his/her homework journal. This should be checked every evening to see that all given homework has been completed and to see if the teacher has written a note for you.

You should then sign in the marked space to let the teacher know that you are satisfied that your child has completed his/her homework or has made a reasonable effort to do so.

If your child is having difficulty in recording his/her homework in the homework journal, please inform your child's teacher.

Homework is not a punishment and will not be assigned as such by your child's teacher. Homework from a previous night that has not been done to the teacher's satisfaction, or at all, may be given at the weekend, rather than in addition to the following school night's homework. Neither is homework an alternative to television or a means to keep your child busy or quiet.

School Books

A booklist for each new school year issues before the end of the preceding school year. Books may be purchased new or, if in good condition, second hand. Please note that workbooks that have previously been written on may not be purchased second hand.

The school operates a Book Rental Scheme in respect of Irish, English and Maths textbooks. A book rental fee is payable in at the start of each school year. This represents a substantial saving over the cost of purchasing the textbooks concerned. Pupils are expected to return these textbooks in good condition at the end of the year.

Standardised Testing

Standardised testing in the areas of English, Irish and Mathematics is done each year from mid to late May. These tests are assessment tools, nothing more. They inform us of the progress children are making in Literacy and Numeracy. The results arising from standardised tests are useful to staff in identifying areas for improvement and in showing us where interventions and strategies have been effective. The results provide us with a snapshot of how a child is performing in a particular area at a particular time. It is important to remember that a child is not defined by his/her test result.

The results of these tests should not be seen as validation or otherwise of the work done by a teacher in a particular class during a particular year. **Children should not experience any undue pressure to perform in these tests, nor should they associate concepts of failure or success with the tests. Excessive discussion of these tests or comparison of different children's test results is unhelpful and highly inappropriate.** The last thing a child needs coming to school in the morning is to be worried over a test that he/she is due to sit or whether he/she is as "smart" as other children in his/her class. Anxiety of this kind is unavoidable, if regrettable in the case of Leaving Cert Students. **It is not something a Primary School Child should have to experience.**

The results of these tests, as appropriate, will be shared with Parents/Guardians at Parent-Teacher Meetings in November and via end-of-year reports and the Parent Portal. Results are expressed to Parents/Guardians in terms of STen scores, which provide a good, simple picture of a child's current performance.

Parent Teacher Meetings

A Parent Teacher Meeting is held each November on an appointment system. Parents/Guardians meet their child's teacher, receive an update on his/her progress and have an opportunity to ask questions, voice any concerns and inform the teacher of things they believe may be helpful. These meetings are not intended to involve a long protracted, in-depth discussion on every aspect of a child's education. If it is felt by a Parent/Guardian or the child's teacher, that a further meeting is necessary, it may be arranged with the child's teacher at a later date.

Parent-Teacher meetings are as valuable and informative to teachers as they are to parents. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to maintain an open line of communication with their child's teacher and to touch base with him/her from time to time throughout the year.

As a staff, we value the excellent relationship we have with our parent/guardian body and teachers are usually willing and able to accommodate parents who need to meet briefly and informally, without prior notice, to discuss minor issues that require only a minute or two of a teacher's time. However, if a longer meeting is required, or if the issue is of a more serious nature, an appointment must be made in advance. The teacher will then arrange to meet with the parents/guardians at the teacher's own convenience.

Parents/Guardians and teachers should aim to meet in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation, with the best interests of the child(ren) in question as their primary concern. Parents/Guardians and teachers are expected to be civil towards each other and to refrain from raised voices and accusative language. Many of the differences of opinion between Parents/Guardians and teachers are based upon misunderstandings on both sides and a civil and frank discussion can yield positive results in most cases.

Meeting the Principal

As Parents/Guardians, Scoil Mhuire is your school and you are welcome here. You, are our partners in your child's education. You are a valuable source of information. Your views and opinions are important.

The Principal Mr. Kavanagh is always happy to meet Parents/Guardians. His office door is usually open and, time allowing, he will accommodate people who need to chat for a minute. They say that *a stitch in time saves nine*; similarly, a brief, timely chat can solve a minor issue before it becomes a major one.

Scoil Mhuire is a large and very busy school, with an enrolment of over 400 pupils, therefore, it will not always be possible to chat with the Principal at short notice. You are welcome to pop in on the off chance that he is free, but if you need more than a minute, or if you consider the matter to be important, you should make an appointment to see the Principal by calling the secretary. She will speak to him and call you back with a time and date. You can also make an appointment by sending an email marked Attn. Mr. Kavanagh to moycullencentralschool@gmail.com Mr. Kavanagh will reply when he has had a chance to read your email.

If you need to discuss issues relating to your child such as homework, academic progress, issues with other children, your first point of contact is your child's Class Teacher. You should speak to him/her before approaching the Principal. If, having brought issues to the attention of the Class Teacher, the issues have not been resolved, you should then bring the matter to the attention of the Principal.

Reconstitution of Classes

Reconstitution or "shuffling" of classes has gained wide acceptance from Boards of Management, children, parents and teachers in many schools. Reconstituting classes benefits all children from a social, developmental, behavioural and academic point of view. The process of forming new friendships is a life skill which is important to develop. A positive and supportive attitude from parents is a key element in achieving a successful outcome in the new groups.

The following principles apply in Reconstituting Classes:

- Mixed-ability classes are formed. Imbalances between classes will be kept to a minimum
- Consideration is given to the emotional, behavioural, physical and social factors that will influence class dynamics
- The learning needs of every child are considered
- The school tries ensure that some of that child's friends are also placed in the same class. It will seldom be possible to satisfy all demands for groups of friends to be kept together. This decision will lie ultimately with the Principal, who must consider the needs of every child in the class

Preparation for the reconstitution of classes begins in the final term of the year. The reconstitution process is led by the Class Teachers, in consultation with the Principal and the SEN Team. Draft Class Lists issue to parents in mid-June each year. Final Class Lists are published on the Aladdin Parent Portal in the second last week of the school year.

Communication

Effective and timely communication is essential in maintaining strong, healthy and constructive home-school relations. As a school, we rely on you, our Parents/Guardians for information and updates on your children, e.g. your child's:

- health/medical requirements
- happiness wellbeing
- capacity to manage homework

as well as any other concerns or ideas you may have.

We try to keep our Parent/Guardian Community as well informed and up-to-date as possible. We use a variety of media to do this, e.g.

- The Aladdin Connect App. This is our preferred means of communication.
- Aladdin Parent Portal
- Email and Text Messages
- Notes sent home with children
- The Scoil Mhuire Monthly Newsletter

The Aladdin Administrative System

Scoil Mhuire uses the Aladdin System to assist us with the smooth and effective administration of the school. Aladdin is now the leader in school administration software and is in use in over one third of Irish primary schools. It is a secure, cloud based system with extended SSL encryption meaning that even if it is accessed across an unsecured wireless connection, the data is fully protected. It also eliminates the chance of physical loss and theft of data and enhances our school's compliance with data protection law.

Parent Portal

The Parent Portal module on our Aladdin System may be accessed by Parents/Guardians, using a smartphone, tablet or laptop to log on securely via an internet browser. Parent Portal gives Parents/Guardians secure access to their child(ren)'s details and enable them to check up on their child(ren)'s progress. Parent Portal enables Parents/Guardians to:

- Monitor their child(ren)'s attendance
- View notices from the school and/or your child(ren)'s teacher
- View school emails and texts
- View school newsletters
- View class lists
- View booklists

- Update their personal contact information
- Opt into or out of their child(ren)'s class contact list (this allows them, if they wish, to share their contact details with the other parents in their child(ren)'s class)
- View their child(ren)'s standardised test scores
- View and print a copy of your child(ren)'s end-of-year school report

Along with strengthening our home-school partnership, we also envisage the parent portal helping the school by:

- Help **improve attendance** by allowing parents view just how many school days their child may have currently missed, along with late arrival and early leaving information.
- Help **eliminate class/school notes being sent home**.
- Help the school/ teachers **communicate** with parents when the need arises.
- **Reduce costs** by eliminating the need to post home school report cards
- **Reduce costs** by reducing the number of texts that need to be sent.

Parents/Guardians are directed towards the Parent Portal to access their children's end-of-year documents such as reports, class lists and booklists as it is a time efficient and cost effective means of communication. In order to allow a Parent/Guardian to access their child(ren)'s end of year documents via Parent Portal, the school will need an active, valid email address.

Parents/Guardians new to the school will **receive an email message** containing their **registration link**. There will be one link per parent, which will allow each access to all their children in the school within the one account. During registration a password must be chosen, that will be used in conjunction with an email address to access the Parent Portal going forward. Notification issue via email when there is a new message for in the Parent Portal.

Aladdin Connect App

Aladdin have developed a new app for use with the Parent Portal feature. The main benefits include alerts for new messages, quicker easier access, and a more streamlined look.

We would strongly encourage all Parents/Guardians to download the app and enable notifications as those people will receive notifications rather than text messages, thus saving the school the cost of sending webtexts.

Parents/Guardians can download the App from the Google Play for Android devices or the App Store for Apple devices. If you have an iPhone that is running iOS 9 or older, or an Android Phone running a version older than 4.0 (Ice Cream Sandwich) you may not be able to install or use Aladdin Connect.

Please contact Renee, our School Secretary at 091 555454 or moycullencentralschool@gmail.com for assistance.

Aladdin ePayments

Scoil Mhuire uses the Aladdin ePayment System, enabling Parents/Guardians to use an internet browser on a computer, phone or tablet to make secure payments to the school using their credit or debit card. The purpose of the ePayment system is to facilitate the easier payment of school money collections for Parent/Guardians and to reduce the amount of cash and cheques being sent into our school in line with recent central bank directives.

Aladdin uses state of the art security to safeguard information, and data is stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish data protection laws.

When money is due for any school activity that is relevant to their children, Parents/Guardians **receive a text/email message** containing a **payment access link**. This will bring them to a parent payment page which will contain all payments requested for all siblings in a

family. There is only one link per family ensuring Parents/Guardians have the option to pay all amounts due for all their children in one transaction. Once payment has been completed, Parents/Guardians are issued with a reference number. They will also receive an email receipt which will contain details of the transaction and reference number.

Permissions

From time to time, the school will need to request permission from parents/guardians for their children to participate in certain school activities, such as sporting events, school tours, trips/outings and participation in community events. In the past, this was done by means of a paper permission slip. From September 2019 onwards, Scoil Mhuire will be using a new means of securing permissions from parents/guardians that is quicker and more convenient for all concerned. The Permission List is a feature in Aladdin Connect that allows us to gather permission from parents. The school will set up permission lists for any activities that we need to get permission for. The permission will then be released to parents/guardians for them to give or refuse permission. You can conveniently view all permissions for each of your children by going to the permissions page in the app. (Click on the child's name in the app, click on **Student Menu** and click on **Permissions**) Should you need to change permission, this can be done by clicking on **Change Permission**. You can give or refuse permission by logging on to your Connect account (either on a web browser or using the app). Any permissions that you have not given a decision on yet will be highlighted on your home page. You can view existing permissions on the student profile page by clicking on the Permissions tab.

School Code of Behaviour and Rules

Learning best takes place when the pupil-teacher relationship is based on respect and co-operation rather than fear. The more positively children are motivated, the less need there will be for external discipline of any kind. The quality of teaching has a direct influence on pupil behaviour.

Positive expectations can make pupils more responsible in their work and conduct. Parents play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes in their children that produce good behaviour in school. To maintain high standards of behaviour, the school must rely on the support and co-operation of parents. The primary responsibility for the behaviour of pupils when they come to school lies with their parents. Parents can co-operate with the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules and by visiting the school when requested by the Principal or other members of the teaching staff. Please communicate regularly with the school about factors likely to affect the behaviour of your child at school.

The Code of Behaviour of Scoil Mhuire is based on 5 guiding principles from which the School Rules are drawn. All members of the community of Scoil Mhuire, Pupils, Parents and Staff, are expected to observe the following 5 principles in their dealings and interaction with each other:

Respect

Children are encouraged to have and show respect:

- For themselves
- For God (or the right of others to believe in God)
- For other people
- For their school and its property
- For their community

Tolerance

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to be tolerant of differences in other people and to refrain from bullying or discrimination of any kind.

Patience

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to be patient with other people.

Honesty

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to be honest and truthful in their dealings with other people.

Kindness

Children are taught, encouraged and are expected to show kindness to other people.

The aims of our Code of Behaviour are:

- To provide guidance for pupils, teachers and parents on behavioural expectations.
- To provide for the effective and safe operation of the school.
- To develop pupils' self-esteem and to promote positive behaviour.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self-discipline in pupils based on respect, consideration and tolerance of others.
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption.

School Rules

The following are the rules that the pupils of Scoil Mhuire are expected to observe.

Be Punctual

Try your best to be on time for school, for class, for training etc.

Be Calm and Orderly

Walk quietly on the school corridors. Don't be loud and boisterous in your classroom. Sit quietly or move quietly and purposefully in your classroom. Follow the directions of your teacher at all times.

Remain seated when staying inside at break time on wet days.

When the bell rings at the end of break-time, line up in a calm, orderly fashion and wait for your teacher.

When travelling on a bus, remain seated with your seat belt fastened at all times.

Keep your voice at an appropriate level depending on the circumstances.

Be Safe

Do not climb on railings, walls or boundary fences. Do not jump down flights of steps. Never leave your classroom without the permission of a teacher. Never leave the school premises without the permission of the Principal, unless in the company of a parent/guardian/minder (he/she will have informed the Principal before taking you out of school, so you will have the permission of the Principal).

If you are to be collected from school and the adult who is to collect you has not arrived, you must come back into the school building, find a teacher and ask for help. Do not go off on your own.

Eat/Drink Healthily

Sit while eating your lunch. Never bring lunch out into the school yard. Always bring a healthy lunch to school, as outlined in the school's Healthy Eating Policy. Never bring chewing gum, crisps or fizzy drinks to school.

Don't be a Bully.

Never, EVER bully another person. There are several kinds of bullying such as

Name-Calling

Humiliation

Aggressive Language

Sarcasm

Spreading Rumours

Ridicule

Racism
Exclusion

Threatening
Hurting

Taking/Hiding Property

If you see bullying taking place or if you are being bullied, you should tell a teacher. Remember, Bullies love secrets. TELLING TAKES THE BULLY'S POWER AWAY.

Do not treat people unkindly because of their appearance or because they are different to you in some way.

Don't Hurt Others

Fighting is the absolute last resort when all other efforts have failed. You should never, ever have to fight at school. Never respond to provocation with a punch or a kick. Be strong enough and big enough to try a better way. Say "STOP!" get away and tell a teacher.

It is important too not to hurt other people's feelings on purpose by saying hurtful things to them or about them.

Be Civil

Speak respectfully to each other and to teachers. Never use rude or offensive language.

You shouldn't interrupt a teacher when he/she is speaking to another child or teacher. If you have an urgent message, you should interject with "Gabh mo leithséal, tá brón orm."

If you meet another child in a doorway, it is polite to stand aside and let him/her pass. If you meet an adult in a doorway, you *must* stand aside and let him/her pass.

You should greet teachers and other adults with "Dia duit" and "Slán leat."

You should be polite in delivering messages and making requests of teachers and other staff, using phrases like "Go raibh maith agat" and "le do thoil."

You must address teachers using their proper title, i.e. Mr. Mrs. or Ms.

Be Obedient

Follow the directions of your teacher at all times. If you have not heard or understood properly, you should ask your teacher to repeat or explain, but it is rude to question a teacher's instruction, e.g. "Why do we have to..."

Treat Property with Respect

Do not damage or deface school property or the property of others. Do not take that which does not belong to you without the owner's permission. Take care of your own property and do not be wasteful. Do not litter your classroom or the school premises. Dispose of your waste responsibly and in an environmentally friendly way.

Items Not Allowed in Scoil Mhuire

For Health and Safety and other reasons, there are certain items that children are not allowed to bring to school. They are as follows:

- Pen knives, glass bottles, water guns, matches/lighters
- Heelies or roller-shoes
- Mobile phones, iPods, iPads/tablets or any other internet capable device
- Cameras or any device capable of recording images
- Missile toys (slings, catapults, guns that fire missiles, etc.)
- Invitations to parties or events unrelated to school (e.g. birthday parties) are not allowed to be distributed during school hours out of understanding for non-invitees. Christmas/Celebration cards also fall into this category. Parents should arrange for these to be distributed privately, before or after school and outside of school grounds.
- Gifts, eg. pupils returning from holidays etc. may not distribute sweets, gifts for class as this puts pressure on others to do the same
- Other items may be banned from time to time if deemed necessary

Discipline

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the Principal. Each teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within the classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises / grounds.

The following steps will be followed where the Code of Behaviour has been breached by pupils:

Minor Misdemeanours

The pupil's teacher or other teacher involved will:

- Establish, insofar as possible, the facts, sequence of events and the persons involved
- Afford the pupil and other persons involved an opportunity to explain and to admit or deny culpability
- Ask the involved persons to write an account of what happened
- Where culpability has been established, discuss the misbehaviour with the pupil, remind the pupil of the School Rules and explain to the pupil why the behaviour is unacceptable
- Decide on how the pupil should make amends for his/her misbehaviour e.g. apology, penalty sheet, Reflective Exercise
- Inform the pupil's parents, if deemed appropriate
- Keep a written record of the misbehaviour and the measures taken

Serious Misdemeanours

The pupil's teacher or other teacher involved will:

- Establish, insofar as possible, the facts, sequence of events and the persons involved
- Afford the pupil and other persons involved an opportunity to explain and to admit or deny culpability
- Ask the involved persons to write an account of what happened
- Where culpability has been established or is strongly suspected, refer the matter to the Principal

The Principal will then:

- Investigate the matter further, if necessary
- Discuss the misbehaviour with the pupil, remind the pupil of the School Rules and explain to the pupil why the behaviour is unacceptable
- Establish culpability and impose an appropriate sanction
- Decide on how the pupil should make amends for his/her misbehaviour e.g. apology, penalty sheet, Reflective Exercise
- Inform the child's parents and, if necessary, request a meeting to discuss the issue
- **Repeated Misdemeanours or Very Serious Misdemeanours**

The Principal will then:

- Establish, insofar as possible, the facts, sequence of events and the persons involved
- Afford the pupil and other persons involved an opportunity to explain and to admit or deny culpability
- Ask the involved persons to write an account of what happened
- Investigate the matter further, if necessary
- Discuss the misbehaviour with the pupil, remind the pupil of the School Rules and explain to the pupil why the behaviour is unacceptable
- Impose an appropriate sanction
- Inform the child's parents and request a meeting to discuss the issue
- If necessary, refer the matter to the Board of Management

Sanctions

Pupils will not be deprived of engagement in a Curricular Area except on the grounds of health and safety. However, if it is the opinion of the teacher that a pupil's misbehaviour is posing a risk

to the health and safety of the child himself/herself or of others (e.g. boisterous behaviour or refusing to listen or follow instructions *during* P.E., Art etc., he/she may exclude the child for the remainder of the class. Sanctions will depend on the seriousness and regularity of the misdemeanour(s). They may include:

- A verbal reprimand
- Giving extra written work given e.g. a penalty sheet
- The pupil being separated from peers/friends for a period
- The pupil being detained at breaktime
- The pupil being sent to another classroom for a period
- Giving a Reflective Exercise, to be signed by parents
- Notification of parents
- The Principal being informed of the incident
- The pupil being sent to the Principal
- The pupil being excluded from a special class treat, e.g. a trip to the playground/library
- Meeting with parents regarding the difficulty/misbehaviour
- Involvement of the Board of Management to discuss further action e.g. suspension and expulsion (in accordance with rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000).

Anti-Bullying

It would be naïve to say that bullying never happens in our school. Bullying happens in all schools, to a lesser or greater degree and must be dealt with promptly and effectively.

It is important for pupils and parents to distinguish between rude, mean and bullying behaviour. The following definitions are helpful:

Rude behaviour:

When someone does or says something unintentionally hurtful, once.

Mean behaviour:

When someone does or says something intentionally hurtful, once.

Bullying behaviour:

When someone does or says something intentionally hurtful, and keeps doing it, even when told to stop or when they know it is causing upset.

Scoil Mhuire believes that all members of the School Community, Pupils, Staff and Parents have a right to learn, work and interact in a climate that is free from fear and intimidation. The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of the targeted person(s). Therefore, the school does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well-being of the targeted person(s) and the perpetrator(s). All staff members try to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priorities, should a bullying incident occur are:

- to end the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*)
- to resolve the issues involved
- to enable the perpetrator(s) to understand the effect his/her/their actions have had on the victim(s) and to empathise with him/her/them
- to allow the perpetrator(s) to make amends in an appropriate way
- to restore the relationships involved insofar as is practicable

The successful resolution of a bullying incident should benefit both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s). Bullying behaviour is a mistake, albeit a serious one. Mistakes are learning opportunities.

Scoil Mhuire seeks to help victims of bullying to protect themselves from being bullied by:

- reinforcing his/her/their self-esteem
- empowering them to confront the perpetrator(s) in a calm, confident, appropriate way
- enabling them to report incidents of bullying, confident in the knowledge that they will be safe in doing so and that the incidents will be investigated and dealt with

Scoil Mhuire seeks to help perpetrators of bullying by:

- enabling them to realise the effect their actions is having on the victim
- allowing them to make amends in an appropriate way
- helping them to restore the relationships involved
- helping them to learn from their mistake and to change the habits or attitudes that led to the bullying

All Pupils and Staff are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community, pupils are encouraged to notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious to go unreported. Awareness of bullying, and the fostering of a willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is an important part of a child's education.

If you suspect that your child may be the victim of bullying, you should:

- Do your best to get him/her to confide in you and ensure him/her of your unconditional love and support
- Inform his/her teacher and/or the Principal of your suspicions and of any background information that might be useful
- Reinforce the school's message regarding bullying, which is that telling takes the bully's power away

Starting School

Sending a child to school for the first time can be a highly emotive experience for both the parent/guardian and the child. You can be assured that your child's teacher and indeed all members of the staff of Scoil Mhuire take the duty of care they have to our pupils very seriously.

Scoil Mhuire is fortunate to have excellent and highly experienced Infant Teachers, who aim to give children a happy and positive start to their primary education.

Our priorities for pupils starting school are:

- That they are safe
- That they are comfortable and happy
- That they make friends and learn to socialise
- That their first steps on their lifelong journey of learning are confident and positive ones

By law, a child must be at least 4 years of age when enrolling in a primary school for the first time. Because children's maturity levels vary, there is no age that has been agreed upon as the ideal age to start school. Children who have attended pre-school will have a definite advantage over those who have not in terms of socialisation, familiarity with routine and the ability to cope with the length of the school day.

On starting school, your child will be expected to have achieved a certain level of independence. You can help your child to get off to a good start in Primary School by:

- Ensuring that he/she is able to go to the toilet and wash his/her hands
- Teaching him/her to button and unbutton trousers
- Buying him/her a coat that is easy to fasten and unfasten
- Buying him/her footwear that is fastened by means of Velcro
- Buying him/her a school bag that is easily opened and closed without help.
- Making sure he/she can eat lunch without help

- Providing him/her with a manageable lunch (peeled fruit, small sandwiches etc.) and a drink that is non-spill and easy to open/close.
- Writing his/her name on all belongings - coat, hat, shoes, books and schoolbag, lunchbox, drink container, gloves etc.
- Ensuring that he/she can express his needs/concerns to the teacher, e.g.
 - I feel sick
 - I need to go to the toilet
 - Can you help me please

You should prepare your child for school well in advance of his/her first day. You should talk to him/her about starting school in positive terms. You should try not to let your emotions transfer onto him/her if you are feeling concerned or upset. Even when your child is adequately prepared, as above, the first morning in school can present problems. Often it is an emotional time for the parent as “Baby” is suddenly transformed into a school-going child. This emotional upset can easily be transferred to the child, who will then become distressed. He/she may worry that, you may be lonely without him/her, as indeed you may. It is important to get your child off to a good start, so be matter of fact when leaving. Emphasize that you will collect him/her in a short while. Settle the child in his/her place, involve him/her in play with another child then leave, quickly and without fuss. Don’t pretend that you are waiting outside the room. He/she may decide to look for you during the day if he/she thinks you are there. Once you have left the classroom, don’t turn back. Don’t look in the window just to see how he/she is settling in. He/she may see you and sense that you are worried.

Some children are overawed by the situation and begin to cry. Try to calm him/her and hand him/her over to the teacher. Most teachers will tell you that the children usually stop crying after their parents leave. The teacher quickly gets them interested in a game or activity and the problem is solved. Whatever happens, don’t bring your child home as he/she will see that crying has worked. Having left your child at school, go home and relax. In a few hours, you have to go and collect a very excited child, full of chat about the first day in school.

Make sure that you collect your child on time. He/she will become upset if you are not there waiting for him/her. After a few days when he/she has settled into the routine of school, both you and the child will wonder what all the fuss was about.