

St Joseph's National School

Milltownpass Co Westmeath

Roll No: 16304J
Registered Charity Number: 20137168

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Deputy Principal: Ms. Emma Martin

Principal: Ms. Emer Bermingham

Dear Parent/Guardian,

A very warm welcome back to the new school year to all our parents and children, old and new. We look forward to having a productive and positive partnership with you throughout the coming year. For me the year brings added excitement and anticipation as I take on the role of Principal in St Joseph's NS. I hope to continue to build on our culture of openness, inclusion, educational excellence and kindness that has been to the forefront in our school, ably led by our outgoing Principal, Pauline O'Hara. I wish her many years of joy, happiness and adventure in her retirement.

Staffing We welcome Mr Shane Farrell, teaching 1st/2nd and 3rd class this year. Mr Farrell is covering Ms Hanevy's maternity leave position. Dervila Armstrong is now returning as a full time member of staff and we welcome her to the team. Congratulations to Ms Martin who has recently been appointed as Deputy Principal.

Congratulations: Hearty congratulations to Ms Hanevy on the recent birth of her baby boy. Wishing her a healthy and happy time with her family.

Dates for Sacraments *Confirmation* will take place on *Wednesday 28th January* in Mullingar Cathedral, time to be confirmed. The date for First Holy Communion has not been confirmed yet but I will contact parents as soon as I know.

Art/ Photocopying Money This money is now due please, **€30 per child with a cap of €75 per family**. Please ensure that **all monies** sent to the school are in an **envelope clearly labelled with your child's name, class and purpose of money**. No change is given.

Healthy Lunch Policy and rubbish disposal We encourage all children to bring healthy lunches to school. We will be asking all children to bring home all items of packaging and leftover food from lunches to dispose of at home. Reminder, no glass is permitted.

Hot School meals As you may be aware, the department have changed the procurement procedures for the Hot School Meals programme and only released the documents in mid August. The process is lengthy and we hope to be up and running by January 2026. This is disappointing as we were all looking forward to it.

Swimming Please see attached swimming letter. (Note that we begin next week) PE uniform can be worn on this day. Black bottoms, black hoody or jumper with a white polo shirt. Children not swimming will get their PE day from the class teacher.

Changes to school calendar: Please note 3 additional closure days for staff training in the following areas: **November 13th** - Child protection procedures, **February 9th 2026** - New Primary Curriculum Day 1, **May 11th 2026** - New Primary Curriculum Day 2

Heritage in schools: We are excited to have a visit soon from Ross Cochrane of Heritage in schools to give a workshop to all students on local hedgerows and folklore. This is the first in a series of talks in the area of biodiversity planned for this school year. Many Thanks to Milltownpass TidyTowns for supporting us in this initiative.

Punctuality / Before and After School Supervision School starts at 9.10a.m. every morning. Children arriving after 9.10a.m. are late. School finishes at 1.50p.m. for Junior and Senior infants. All other classes from 1st to 6th finish at 2.50 p.m.

Children are permitted to stand on their designated footprints from 9am and the bell will ring at 9.10.

Children who arrive on the school premises before 9 a.m. are not supervised by school staff and remain the responsibility of their parents. This is in accordance with our School Insurance policy with Allianz insurance which states the following;

“The school will open to receive pupils at 9.10 am. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before this time. Classes end each day at 1.50pm for Junior and Senior Infants and 2.50pm for all other classes. Parents who wish to have their children escorted home should make their own arrangements to have them met at the school gate no later than 1.50 pm for Infants and 2.50pm for all other classes as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after children after that time”. Allianz Insurance

I would request that children make their way **promptly** to the gate or to their car upon dismissal as no congregating at the school gate is permitted after dismissal.

Early Leavers / Late Arrivals In the interests of safety, children who are leaving school early will not be allowed out of the school building unaccompanied. The person collecting the child will be required to fill in the “Sign Out” book at the office.

Parental Permission Form Please fill in and return this form as soon as possible

Absences If your child is unwell or misses school for any reason please inform the school by completing the **Pupil Absence Note**. (see attached note) This is a legal requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Communication Positive parent/teacher communication plays an important role in your child’s education.

There will be parent/teacher meetings and IEP meetings in October (date to be confirmed)

The school communicates messages to parents by **text and monthly newsletter and via the school blog (at milltownpassns.com)**

Please ensure that the school secretary has the correct mobile number of the contact person for all school messages and emergency contact name and number. If you are concerned about any issue pertaining to your child’s development, make an appointment to speak directly to your child’s teacher. All staff members are committed to promoting good positive relationships with parents and working together with them as true partners in education. As you can imagine the school is a busy place. Unfortunately, we cannot answer the telephone and respond to messages immediately.

If you wish to speak with the Principal or a teacher please phone the secretary to arrange a mutually suitable call back time.

Please note: the school phone is unattended after 12.30pm so therefore any voicemails left may not be heard until the following morning.

T.Y. Students We look forward to welcoming Jason Moran and Kayla Leigh for their transition year work experience over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely

Emer Bermingham, Principal