

Citywest & Saggart Community National School



Information Booklet
for
Junior Infant Parents
2020-2021



Dear Parents and families,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you and your family to Citywest & Saggart Community National School. This is the beginning of what I hope will be a rewarding and happy journey for your child.

I hope to provide a safe, calm and respectful environment for your children and a place where they can engage with active and enjoyable learning

environments.

Whether you are a new parent or one whose links to the school are more established, I hope you will find the information in this handbook useful.

We look forward to a successful partnership with you, which will enable your child to develop confidently and successfully.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Byrne". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Mike Byrne, Principal

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SECTION 1

Things to Consider Between Now and The First Day of School..

Before Your Child Starts

You should ensure that s/he is **as independent as possible** – physically, emotionally and socially. If s/he can look after her/himself in these areas s/he will feel secure and confident and settle in readily.

It would help greatly if s/he is able to:

- **Button and unbutton her/his coat** and hang it up.
- **Use the toilet without help** and manage trouser buttons.
- Also **encourage personal hygiene** and cleanliness. Your child should know to flush the toilet and wash her/his hands, without having to be told.
- **Use a tissue** and hand sanitiser when necessary.
- **Share** toys and playthings with others and “take turns”.
- **Tidy up** and put away his/her playthings.
- Eat their packed lunch without help.
- Remain contentedly for a few hours in the home of a relation, friend or neighbour. If s/he had this experience, then separation from her/his parents when s/he starts school will not cause her/him any great anxiety.

Preparing for the Big Day

Your child's first day at school is a day to remember for the rest of her/his life. You can help to make it a really happy one for her/him.

- Tell her/him about school beforehand and talk about it as a happy place where there will be a big welcome for her/him and s/he will meet new friends.
- Don't use school or the teacher as a threat or negative comment
- S/he will like to have her/his new uniform, her/his school bag, lunch box and water bottle when s/he begins. These help her/him identify more readily with the school and other children.
- No crayons, pencils, copies, etc. required. These will be provided by the school.
- It is important to have crayons, pencils and paper at home for when your child starts to get homework.
- Please label everything (Including all parts of the uniform and clothing).

Uniform

Uniform Day



- Grey trousers/ pinafore
- Blue school jumper with crest
- White shirt(recommend short sleeve)
- School tie
- **Black shoes** (preferably no laces)
- **Grey** tights or **white/grey** socks

PE Day

- School tracksuit
- **White polo shirt**
- Velcro Tie Runners



There is a school hijab available in the school office that was designed in collaboration with our Muslim parents.

- Available for purchase in the school on a designated day (To be confirmed).
- **€66.90**: Crested Jumper, tracksuit top & bottom, School Tie.
- Available from: *Available from:
 - The Schoolwearhouse, Unit D7 Ballymount Cross Industrial Estate, Ballymount, Dublin 24 or online at www.schoolwearhouse.ie
 - Email: info@schoolwearhouse.ie Tel: 01 4604371
 - Monday – Friday 10:00am – 5:00pm
 - Saturday 10:00am – 4:00pm
- Shirts/blouses, trousers & pinafores can be purchased in most department stores

- School jackets are available but only recommended from 1st class upwards
- Please **LABEL ALL ITEMS**

Items Needed

School jumper	✓
School tie	
Grey Trousers/pinafore	
Black shoes (preferably no laces)	
Grey tights or grey/white socks	
School tracksuit	
White polo shirt	
School bag big enough to hold A4 items	
Lunch box	
Resealable water bottle	
Triangular pencil & crayons at home	
Small hand towel in a sealable plastic bag*	
Small bottle of hand sanitiser (Optional)	
*In light of the recent pandemic – towels should be washed at home regularly	

Toileting Accidents

Toileting accidents can happen, especially as your child settles into a new routine. If you think your child may be prone to accidents, please keep a change of underwear, socks and trousers in your child's schoolbag. Please replace this supply when used.

If an accident occurs, it will be dealt with discreetly. The parent will be told at the end of the day. Only if a child soils themselves will a parent be phoned.

Assessment of Need

The HSE provides free assessments for children who have educational or behavioural concerns which could be categorised as a disability. If you have any concerns about the development of your child e.g. motor skills, speech & language, cognitive, etc. please

contact your Local Health Office as soon as possible to avail of this service. For more information or advice please feel free to contact the principal.

Personal Issues

- **Health Issues:** If your child has any physical or health problems or is on any medication, the principal should be informed when the child is enrolled. If a problem develops during the year, please inform the principal immediately. In this way appropriate provisions can be put in place.
- **Family Circumstances:** If there are any issues at home such as separation, family bereavement, access agreements etc. it can be helpful for both the child and the teacher to have an awareness of the situation. Such issues can be traumatic for the child. Teachers can then be mindful and supportive of the student at school or link the family to suitable services.
- **Assessments:** If your child has been assessed by or attended or is awaiting any classes with a speech and language therapist, an occupational therapist, psychologist, etc., or you feel your child may have specific needs please email or speak to the principal so we can ensure their needs are met when they begin school in September.

Class Allocation

- Children are grouped into two classes, providing a mix of:
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Religion
 - Ethnicity
- This is to ensure that there is an equal balance of all the above in each class.
- It is policy in the school to separate twins. The school, the children's and the parents' experience of this has been very positive, allowing both children to develop their independence and individuality.

- Unfortunately friends cannot be fully taken into consideration *but all children will have the opportunity to play together in the yard*

First Steps in Learning

The school is very lucky to have a very knowledgeable and hard working staff. The teachers and SNAs have had training and some have had years of experience which helps us to develop learning opportunities and school policy. **It is important to note that school may have changed quite a bit since you were in primary school or our way of teaching and learning in Citywest & Saggart CNS may not be the same as your experiences.** We also understand that you, as parents and primary educators, want to do your bit at home. Here are some suggestions of things you can do at home which will complement our approaches in school.

Speaking and Listening

You Can Help by...

- Talking to your child naturally and casually about things of interest that you or he/she may be doing at home, in the shop, in the car etc.
- Trying to make time to listen when they want to tell you something that is important to them. But don't always make him/her the centre of attention.
- Answering genuine questions with patience and in an adequate way. Always nurture her/his sense of curiosity and wonder.
- Introduce her/him gently to the ideas of Why? How? When? Where? If? etc.

Reading

You Can Help by...

- Having attractive colourful books in the home.
- Regularly reading your children a variety of stories
- Encouraging them to own and **look after** books
- Looking at the pictures with him/her and talk to him/her about what they see
- Reading nursery rhymes. Children will learn them off in time. Don't try to push them.
- Not pushing them with early reading. You may turn them against it for evermore.

You may not see your child reading for months yet, but rest assured the teachers are working on the **early reading skills** which are the building blocks for good readers.

Writing

You can help by...

- Helping your child to get the hand and eye working together. This is very important. Get them manipulating toys like:
 - (a) Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc.
 - (b) Plasticine (Marla/play dough) to make their own shapes
 - (c) A colouring book and thick crayons
 - (d) Sheets of paper that they can cut up with a safe scissors.
- Helping your child to hold a pencil correctly at the start. It will be difficult to change later.
- **Not** teaching your child letter formation at home. In Citywest & Saggart CNS we teach Cursive writing from the very start.
- Encouraging your child to use whatever hand they choose to right.

Maths

You Can Help by . . .

- Identifying where maths is used around us – money, public transport, shapes etc.
- Looking for patterns in the environment

Please rest assured, the teachers will introduce maths concepts at the correct levels. Do not pressurise your child into “sums”, addition, subtraction – these are just procedures. The school works with hands on materials in the first few year to develop **skills**. Maths is a **language**, and with any language, the skills need to be developed before they become confident with using the language fluently.

Apps to Download

1. **Aladdin Connect App:** This app will allow you to track your child’s absences, update personal information and download the end of year school reports. There will also be messages and notifications from the school.
1. **Seesaw App:** This app may be used by your child for home learning. A code would be sent home with your child. It can be used on any smart device or on a computer.

SECTION 2

Citywest & Saggart CNS

Some of Our Day to Day Procedures & Policies

Who's Who?

Principal: Mr. Mike Byrne

Deputy Principal: Ms. Orla Doherty (SEN Coordinator)

Secretary: Mrs. Karen Kelly

Class teachers for 2020.2021: Ms. Sarah Swan (Classroom 6), Mr Patrick Mount (Classroom 5)

Child Protection

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Mike Byrne

Deputy DLP: Orla Doherty

- The School has a statutory duty to report any signs of abuse or neglect to the HSE

Equality Policy

Central to the ethos of our school is inclusion and the celebration of difference. We instil in our children a belief that difference, when valued and respected is a very positive thing. Our equality policy is a powerful expression of our commitment to inclusion. Children in Citywest & Saggart CNS are taught that everybody deserves our respect, regardless of their age, gender, civil status, family status, race, religion, sexual orientation, membership of the Travelling community or disability. These are the nine grounds of the Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004.

The School Expectations

Rules are made to be broken, expectations are made to be met! We hope each child can meet our expectations to.

1. Treat themselves and others with respect
2. Work and play gently and kindly together
3. Work to the best of their ability
4. Arrive on time and in full school uniform
5. Take responsibility for what they say and do
6. Respect their own and others' property

For more information, please see our Code of Behaviour Policy, available in the office or on our website.

Anti-Bullying Policy

The following 6 statements form our Friendship Code (Due to be updated 2020)

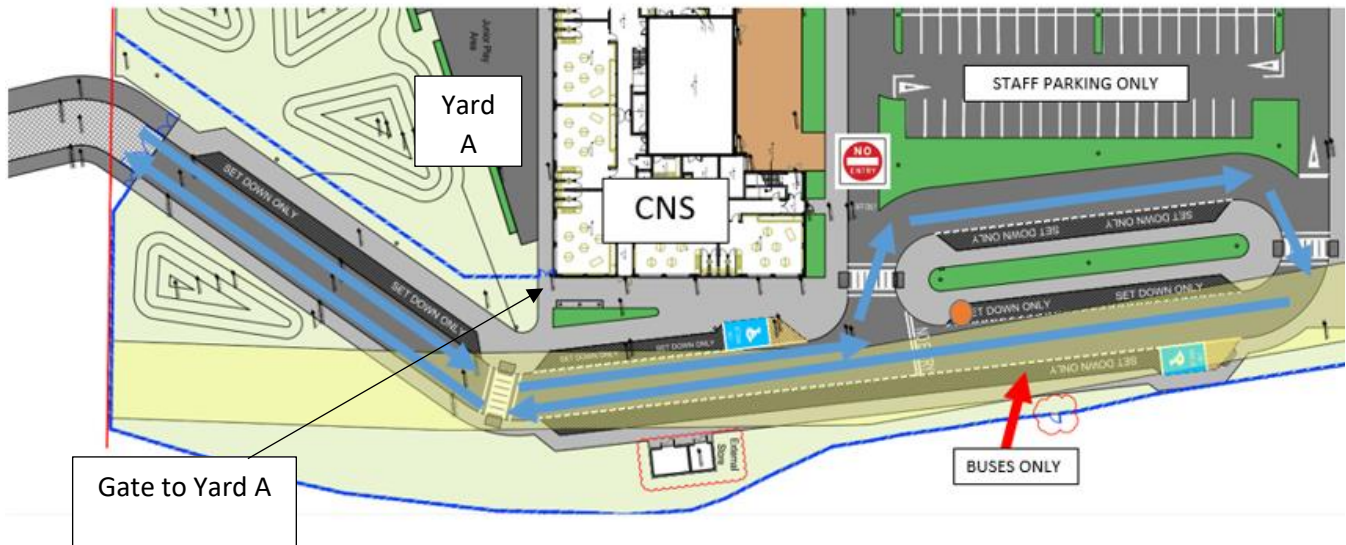
1. We will not bully others!
2. We will be buddies, not bullies!
3. We will include others so no one feels left out!
4. We will help those who are being bullied!
5. We will always tell an adult if we are being bullied!
6. This classroom is a bully-free zone!

For more information, please see our Anti-bullying Policy, available in the office or on our website.

Parking and Traffic Management

- There is no available space for parking on our school campus – the school just has a series of drop-off and collection spaces. If you need to park, please park off campus and walk.
- All families are encouraged to walk as much as possible to avoid traffic congestion
- Parents should not enter the staff carpark and should adhere to the traffic system.

- We are lucky to have parent volunteers to help with morning traffic, we would love to see some of our new parents volunteering to help children cross roads. Please contact the principal if you would like to get involved!



Starting Times (Provisional)

Wednesday 26th August

- Parents can come to the classroom for 8.55
- They must leave by 9.15
- Tea/coffee will be served in the P.E hall

27th Aug- 8th September

- Parents drop child to classroom door and ensure teacher is aware of the child's arrival
- Parent should leave as soon as possible

9th September onwards

- Leave child in yard A from 8.45
- Child should leave bag on his/her class line
- Child can go and play

On the first day...

When you arrive at the classroom, **be as casual as you can**. Your child will take their name badge and meet the teacher and the other children and will be shown to an activity. Hopefully s/he will be absorbed in the new surroundings. Having assured your child you will be back to collect them, wish her/him goodbye and **leave without delay**.

What To Do If Your Child Is Upset

In spite of the best efforts of both teacher and parents a small number of children will still become upset. If your child happens to be one of them don't panic. Patience and perseverance can work wonders.

A Word of Advice

- Trust the teacher. S/he is experienced and resourceful and is used to coping with all kinds of starting off problems.
- Try not to show any outward signs of your own distress. Sometimes the parents are more upset than the child and can cause his/her anxiety.
- When you have reassured her/him that they will be fine and you will be back to collect them, leave as fast as possible. The teacher can distract her/him more easily when you are not around.
- You must be firm from the start. Even if a child is upset you must insist that s/he stays and you will be back later.
- If your child is in distress, parents/guardians will be contacted. Therefore it is imperative that the school has an updated mobile number.

Finishing Times

26th August – 8th September

- Children are collected from their classrooms at 11.30 a.m

9th September onwards

- Children are collected from their classrooms at 1.30pm
- Only those listed on the child's collection permission slip may collect them. We will contact you by email to ask you to nominate a person to collect your child.
- Be sure to **collect your child on time**. Children can become very upset if they feel they are forgotten.
- Children are collected at the exit door of the classrooms, at the end of the day.
- Please wait at the main entrance of the school until you are allowed in.

Punctuality

- We expect all our children to be in school on time.
- Supervision in the yard begins at 8.45 and school begins at 8.55am
- Children arriving after 8.55am will be marked as *late* after this time.
- If you need to collect or return your child to school at any point during the school day, you will need to report to the office and sign them in and out in a special book.
- **Traffic can be quite heavy so give yourself plenty of time.**

Absences

- All absences are recorded.
 - If your child is absent from school, you should fill in the details using the school Aladdin App.
 - We notify parents of term dates well in advance and ask that **holidays are not taken during term time** as it is very disruptive to a child's education. School work will not be provided for children who miss school due to holidays.
 - If you need to take your child out of school for any reason, the principal must be informed in writing at least two weeks beforehand.
 - If a child is absent regularly, we must report them to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).
 - It is beneficial to get a doctor's cert if your child is absent due to illness.
 - The school must be notified immediately of any infectious illness including the following:
 - Bacterial Meningitis
 - Chicken Pox
 - Head Lice/ Nits
 - Measles
 - Ringworm
 - Rubella
 - Slap cheek
 - Scabies
 - Scarlet Fever
 - Strep Throat (Strep tonsillitis)
 - Threadworms
 - Viral Meningitis
 - Whooping cough (Pertussis)
 - Covid-19
- Department of Health circulars will be issued when a particular infectious illness is reported. **There will be further guidelines issued in due course in relation to symptoms of Covid-19.**

Emergency Closing

The safety of the children is of primary importance at all times. Should an emergency closing be appropriate (e.g. in the event of no heat, heavy snow, problems with the building, etc.) the decision to close the school will be taken by the principal and the school chairperson at the earliest possible time so as to maximise notice to parents/guardians. A text message will be sent to you. This day may have to be made up later in the year.

Lunches

- There will be one break until the full day starts, then there will be a small and big break
- Healthy eating policy: the following items are **not allowed**
 - Sugary drinks including Capri suns and minerals
 - Nutella
 - Crisps
 - Cereal bars
 - Chocolate, sweets, lollipops
 - High sugar foods
- This school is a **Nut-Free Zone** due to severe nut allergies among our school children
- We recommend a sandwich, fruit, a yoghurt/cheese and a bottle of water.
- All children should have a re-sealable water bottle for drinking throughout the day.
- If your child does not finish their lunch it will be sent home in their lunchboxes. Also, in the interest of recycling and cutting down on school expenses, we will send empty cartons etc. home for your own bin. This will also allow you to easily see what your child has or hasn't eaten in that day.

For more information, please see our Updated Healthy Eating Policy, available in the office or on our website

Yard

- The junior infant children will initially enjoy yard time separate from the other classes in the school. After approximately 5 days, the senior infants will join them on yard until they start their full day. This is to allow them to settle into the daily routine and become familiar with their classmates and the yard. Teachers familiar to your child will supervise the classes during this time.
- When they are on the full yard, it is divided according to class groupings. We keep the junior and senior infants and 1st class together.
- If your child is too sick to go out to yard he/she is too sick to be in school. Exceptions are considered in the case of ongoing or chronic illness and limb injuries. Otherwise all children are expected to go out to yard as it is a vital part of social interaction and their physical health.
- *'There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing'*. Fresh air and exercise increase your child's ability to concentrate and therefore learn at school. Please ensure your child

comes to school with adequate clothing for yard time. Storms may keep us in, but cold weather may not 😊

Communication

Citywest & Saggart CNS has a 'Positive Communications Policy'. The school will send letters home regularly throughout the year. In order to reduce cost and to stay green, we send these letters home by **email**. Please keep a close eye on your email account so you do not miss any. The school also uses text messages to inform you of any important issues. Please ensure the school has an up to date mobile phone number for you. The parent's association also issues letters and newsletters and these are also emailed.

If you do not have access to a smart phone or an email account, please notify the school and we will ensure you receive a paper copy of each letter.

The school also has very active social media platforms:

- www.cscns.ie
- Facebook
- Twitter

We have recently introduced a new school App. Further information will be provided separately. An individual log in link is texted to each parent. This App allows you to see and edit your child's details, their attendance and school reports. It also has a noticeboard and messaging system which allows your class teacher to communicate with you. Times for parent teacher meetings will be arranged through this App and permissions at different times.

The school uses this system now to send messages for free. Please 'allow notifications' on the App to ensure you are kept updated. Emails will still continue to be used for longer messages.

Lost property

Lost property is collected and kept in a box in the school office. If it is labelled it can easily be returned to its owner. **Please remember to make sure all clothing and personal belongings are clearly named.** Try to encourage your child to take responsibility for their own possessions. It is important that your child's clothing(jumpers, coats, scarfs, hats,

gloves) and bottles are clearly labelled. Check your labels regularly to ensure they do not wash off.

Supervision

Parents are asked to vigilantly supervise their children around the school grounds when not under the supervision of a school teacher. Children are not allowed to enter the school or school yard before or after school unless supervised by a teacher. Yard supervision does not start until 8.45am.

Parents Association

Citywest & Saggart CNS has a very active Parents Association that run many events throughout the year. If you would like to contact the committee of the Parents Association you can email them at cscnspace@gmail.com. Any member of the committee will be happy to chat to you at any time.

At the AGM in September they will be looking for new members and they usually have interesting guest speakers. The evening will also give you a great insight into their work.

Cards, Invitations and Birthday Parties

In the interests of fairness and the children's contentment, the staff at Citywest & Saggart CNS do not distribute invitations, cards, treats or gifts as experience shows it can upset other children and cause conflict and hurt in the class. It is also not possible to have a birthday cake or treats in the class.

Dates to Remember

- Date TBC - Infant induction day (online and uniform purchases)
- Mid to late August - letter via email classroom number and teacher
- Wednesday 26th August - 1st day of school 8.50-11.20

- Monday 14th September - 1st full day of school 8.50-1.30
- September (date to follow)- Induction meeting with class teacher

Parting Thoughts

Please read this Information Booklet. It tells you all about school life in Citywest & Saggart CNS. If there is something you are not sure of or just don't understand please contact us.

Teacher and Parent

At the early stages, some parents meet the teacher almost daily and this is a very desirable thing. However, if there is something in particular that you would like to discuss you can arrange to meet him/her at a time when you both can have a little peace and quiet. Please email the school office or speak to your teacher to make an appointment.

Easy Does It

There are lots of ideas and suggestions in this little book as to how you can help your child. We are not advocating that you do ALL of these with her/him in a systematic way. But if you find from time to time that she/he enjoys a fun approach to certain aspects of learning then we would say - give it a go - but remember don't overdo it.

Our Hope

We are offering this Guide to Parents as a little practical help in dealing with the education of your child at the very early stages. We will be very happy if you dip into it from time to time and find something in it of value to you and your child.



Fortunestown Lane
Citywest
Dublin 24

Ph. Tel.: 01-4133080
Email: cscns@ddletb.ie
Website: www.cscns.ie