

## **Introduction:**

St. Mary's Boys' National School, Haddington Road was established in 1851. It is situated in the grounds of St. Mary's Church, Haddington Road. It is a Catholic primary school for boys, serving the local community and fostering the overall development of its pupils in a caring environment. The school provides a child-centred education for boys from 1<sup>st</sup> Class to 6<sup>th</sup> Class. Most of our pupils begin their education in St. Brigid's Primary School, which is adjacent to St. Mary's. They spend two years there, during which time they complete their Infant Programme.

## **Mission Statement:**

St Mary's is a Dublin City Catholic Primary School committed to encouraging and supporting each boy to reach his full potential.

- We believe in the Gospel values of respect, fairness, equality and we regard good manners as the touchstone of these values.
- We promote an atmosphere where the boys enjoy coming to school, are happy working here and feel they belong to a caring community.
- We foster a love of education in a disciplined and safe atmosphere where the boys are enthusiastic and active in their approach to learning for life,
- We are a school community where parents, teachers and the parish seek to work in partnership, for the welfare of the boys.
- We expect our school community to have a respect for the environment as we strive to maintain our 'Green School' ethos.
- We respect diversity in our school and in a new Ireland.

## **Health and Safety:**

### 1 Safety Statement

“The Board of Management of St. Mary's B.N.S. will ensure that, insofar as is practicable, the highest standards of safety shall prevail and that, at a minimum, the provisions of the Safety, Health and Welfare Act (1989) are applied.”

### 2 General health and safety issues

- **Up-to-date contact numbers must be available for all parents and guardians.** Any changes must be notified to the school (preferably in writing), so that the school may contact parents or guardians if necessary, and particularly in the event of an emergency.
- Parents or guardians must inform the school in writing if their son is on any long term or regular form of medication, especially if this involves the pupil taking medication during school hours. Please talk to the Principal re administration of medicine during school hours.
- Any minor injuries will be dealt with in school eg. plaster, antiseptic wipe, or ice-pack for minor bumps or bruises. However in the event of more serious injuries, the parent or guardian will be contacted, and if necessary, the child may be brought to hospital and the parent/guardian will be asked to meet the pupil there.
- The school is obliged to report all allegations of child abuse defined as neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse. In doing so, the Department of Education and Science guidelines ie “Children First”, will be followed. Our Child Protection Policy is available on request from the Principal.
- All personal items such as mobile phones etc. are brought to school at pupils' own risk. The school will not be responsible for any damage or replacement cost of missing items. Hand-held computer games are not allowed in St Mary's at any time.

## Management Structure:

St. Mary's BNS operates under the "Rules for National Schools", as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills (DES). The School Patron is the Archbishop of Dublin.

The Board of Management comprises of:

- 2 Bishop's Nominees
- 2 Parents' Representatives
- Principal and Teacher Representative
- 2 Community Representatives.

Boards of Management are renewed every three years.

## Structure of the Curriculum: (from Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup>)

The Primary School Curriculum, has 11 subjects. These 11 subjects are grouped in 7 areas.

Languages	Gaeilge
	English
Mathematics	
Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE)	History Geography Science
Arts Education	Visual arts Music Drama
Physical Education	
Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)	
Religious Education	

As well as learning about new ideas and finding out new information in the different subjects of the curriculum, the boy develops important skills such as:

- ◆ Communicating
- ◆ Estimating
- ◆ Designing and making
- ◆ Problem solving
- ◆ Working scientifically.

To help connect the skills learned in the different subjects, teachers often plan learning activities, which include more than one subject. For example, a topic like Water, provides opportunities for children to learn concepts and skills in all 11 subjects.

The curriculum for Religious Education in Irish primary schools is the responsibility of the different church authorities. Different programmes have been developed for different types of schools.

As St Mary's is a Catholic school, we follow the Religious programme approved by the Irish Bishops. However we respect the beliefs of children who are not Catholic.

**For further information log on to [www.ncca.ie/primary/parents](http://www.ncca.ie/primary/parents)**

Within this organisational framework, it is important to stress that all aspects of the child's development are interrelated and that the development process is interactive and complex.

## **Learning Support:**

Our Learning Support Teachers provide programmes for pupils with learning difficulties. Language Teachers provide instruction in English as a second language to our International Pupils in accordance with directives from the Department.

## **Extra – Curricular Activities:**

To help encourage such positive attributes as dedication, loyalty and teamwork and further enhance both the physical well-being and mental agility of the pupils, we have many and varied extra-curricular activities including:

- Basketball,
- Table Tennis,
- Swimming,
- Gaelic Football and Hurling,
- Chess (Our school teams regularly make it to the National Finals),
- Choir – Including participation in Confirmation and Communion, and the Hallelujah Chorus,
- Quizzes, including the Credit Union competition.

## **School Hours:**

The school opens to receive pupils at 8.50 am. The pupils' entrance is to the rear of the school. Access to the playground may be gained through the rear entrance to the school at 8.40am. Classes commence each day at 9.00am and pupils are dismissed at 2.30pm. Break is at 11.00am for 10 mins. and lunch from 12.30pm to 1.00pm. Staff meetings take place on the first Thursday of the month. Notice of these are given with the school calendar at the beginning of the year.

## **Pupil Absences:**

The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) was set up under the Education Welfare Act, 2000. Officers have been appointed to follow up on absences from school. Every school must notify the NEWB if a child has missed a total of 20 days in a school year - even if those absences are accounted for by letter. Every household in the country has been given information about this.

## **School Uniform:**

A school uniform is practical, avoids unnecessary expense, prevents undesirable competition and cultivates a sense of identity with the school. Our uniform consists of a dark green jumper (bearing the school crest), a grey shirt and trousers and a green and gold tie. For PE and sports, we have a special school tracksuit. All of these items can be bought in Guiney's of Talbot Street. An optional school jacket can be bought in the school. Ear-rings or jewellery are not allowed in school for health and safety reasons.

## **Book Lists:**

Book Lists are provided for parents in June each year. We organise a Book Rental Scheme to reduce costs to families. It complements our Green School Policy which aims to reduce waste. The textbooks provided as part of this scheme are listed, along with the overall price of rental. Certain other workbooks etc. will be listed and parents are expected to purchase these themselves. We prefer that copies are all of a uniform shape and size, so a price is listed to cover the cost of all copies for a pupil's initial needs each

year. The school then acquires the copies and the teacher distributes them at the beginning of the school year. Additional copies, pencils etc. may be purchased from the Secretary's Office, before the start of class each day. The list will also include a nominal charge towards the provision of art materials, photocopying, standardised tests in English and Maths (administered in June of each year).

### **Library:**

Each classroom has its own library, which is added to on an annual basis. We also make use of Pearse Street Library to supplement the supply of books in our class libraries. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes can avail of a dedicated Library Room to encourage reading in the Senior Classes.

### **Information Technology:**

All classrooms are interlinked through our Computer Network. Currently we have two computers and an Interactive Whiteboard in each classroom. We are constantly working on improving each child's access to IT and keeping abreast of developments in software related to the revised curriculum. Our recently installed computer room, "The Haven", is used by both pupils and parents.

### **Enrolment:**

The Board of Management of the school has developed an Enrolment /Admission Policy in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act 1998. A copy is available on request.

In general, the transition for boys from Senior Infants in St. Brigid's Primary School to 1<sup>st</sup> Class in St. Mary's is dealt with within the two schools. All appropriate information is transferred during transition. For anyone wishing to enrol a child at any other time, an Application Form is available in the office.

Decisions in relation to applications for enrolment are made by the Board of Management, in accordance with school policy. Children will be enrolled on application, provided that there is space available. In the event that applications for enrolment exceed the number of places available, boys' names will be kept on a waiting list and they will be informed if a vacancy arises. The Board of Management is bound by the Department of Education and Skills Rules for National Schools which provides that pupils may only be enrolled in Junior Infants from the age of four years and upwards, though compulsory attendance does not apply until the age of six years. All applications are accepted in order to ascertain how demand can be best met.

Places will be allocated according to the following criteria:

- ◆ Siblings,
- ◆ Boys in St Brigid's Primary School,
- ◆ Catholic boys from the Parish,
- ◆ Children of staff members,
- ◆ Catholic children from outside the Parish and who do not have a Catholic school in their Parish,
- ◆ All children who live in the Parish but are not Catholic applying for a placement are entitled to a place if there are vacancies after boys in previous categories have been allocated places,
- ◆ Children who apply to the school who are not Catholic, and not resident within the Parish boundaries, are entitled to a place if there are vacancies in the school after the above categories have been allocated places,
- ◆ Having applied the above criteria, children will be accepted into other classes throughout the school on the basis that there is a space in the particular class for which they are applying.

Boys starting in St. Mary's BNS in First Class are invited, with their parents, to come to the school for an introductory afternoon in the June preceding their entry.

### **Admission of Children with Special Needs:**

The Board of Management and Staff are committed to a policy of inclusion and are happy to admit children with Special Needs (either physical or intellectual) to the school **provided that the special needs of these children can be provided for within the school**. In the event of application by a parent to have their child with special needs admitted to the school, the following procedures will be adopted:

- ◆ The Board of Management will request a copy of the child's medical/psychological report or where such a report is not available, request that the child be assessed immediately.
- ◆ Parents will meet with the Principal, the Chairperson, the Psychologist and where possible, the Special Education Needs Officer (SENO), to discuss the special needs of their child. This meeting would include a tour of the school and a discussion with regard to class size, to enable parents to get a clear picture of the difficulties that might arise.
- ◆ Applications will be made to the Department of Education and Science regarding grants for any adjustments to the school building structure or any extra help with regard to staffing/support services that might be necessary.
- ◆ Parents will be informed by the Principal regarding the decisions of the Department of Education and Science and based on the support being made available will be advised as to the suitability of the school for the particular child.
- ◆ In the event of a child with special needs being admitted to the school, the child's progress will be reviewed and discussed with the parents/guardians at regular intervals.

### **It may be necessary for the Board of Management to defer enrolment of a particular child pending:**

- ◆ The receipt of an assessment/report,
- ◆ The provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education and Science to meet the needs specified in the Psychological and/or medical report,
- ◆ The presence of another Special Needs child in the particular class already who requires the help of a Special Needs Assistant.

### **Pupils Transferring:**

The Board of Management would like to specify that pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to school policy, available space and in some cases, the approval of the Department of Education and Science. Information regarding attendance and the child's educational records should be communicated between schools.

### **Lunches:**

Healthy lunches are encouraged. These are eaten in the classrooms. Milk and fruit are provided free of charge by Dublin City Council for those who wish to avail of it. Crisps, popcorn and other such foods, fizzy drinks and chewing gum are forbidden. In the interest of safety, no glass bottles are permitted.

### **Positive Behaviour Policy:**

St Mary's has developed a Positive Behaviour Policy in accordance with Section 23 (2) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. This has recently been updated in line with current National Education Welfare Board guidelines.

Parents wishing to enrol a child in St. Mary's BNS, will be provided with a copy of this Positive Behaviour Policy and it will be a condition of registering a boy as a student of the school that the parents of the boy confirm in writing that the Positive Behaviour Policy is acceptable to them and that they will make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such a code, by their son.

Copies of the Policy are available from the Principal.

In St. Mary's BNS, we strive to foster an atmosphere that is characterised by respect for all. We try to achieve this by encouraging such qualities as good behaviour, tolerance, courtesy, respect for self and others, and a good relationship among all members of the school community. Adults in particular have a responsibility to give example and to set the tone in trying to achieve the above. Our Positive Behaviour Policy adopts the motto..... **"Catch the pupils being Good!"**

We wish to accommodate the individuality of each child, while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a safe environment. It is essential that each child appreciates and understands that, with this right, come certain, personal responsibilities. Much time is spent in class discussing the expectations of the school, with regard to each child's behaviour, both inside and outside the classroom.

### **Complaints Procedure:**

1. If a parent/guardian has a complaint, he/she should see the teacher (by appointment) at the earliest opportunity. The issue will usually be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties.
2. If this fails to resolve the matter, it should be brought to the attention of the Principal, who, having listened to both sides, will try to settle the issue to the satisfaction of both parent and teacher.
3. If the issue is still unresolved, it should be passed in writing to the Board of Management through the Chairperson, in line with the complaints procedure outlined in the BOM Handbook. (available on request).
4. If this fails, the complaint should be forwarded to the Department of Education and Skills, in writing.
5. An anonymous complaint will not be entertained by a teacher, the Principal, the BOM or the Department of Education and Skills.
6. It is not the role of the Parents' Association to involve itself in a complaint against a teacher.
7. Complaints regarding the organisation of the school should be made in the first instance to the Principal, who is available by appointment.

### **Mobile Phones:**

Pupils may bring their mobile phones to school, but they must be switched off during school hours. Should a pupil be found using his phone in school, the phone will be confiscated and may be collected by a parent / guardian from the Principal. St. Mary's accepts no responsibility for phones that go missing during school hours. If parents/guardians wish to have **an important message** relayed to their child during school hours, they should do so through the school number. Likewise, if a child needs to send an **important message home**, he should get permission from his teacher or the Principal to use the school phone.

### **Homework:**

The general policy in St. Mary's is to give homework on Monday to Thursday in each class in order to develop a good study routine. Some teachers offer an incentive scheme to earn weekend homework off. Every child is expected to have a Homework Journal and is responsible for writing down homework every day, as directed by the class teacher. Parents are always expected to send a note when homework is not done. At class induction meetings in Sept/Oct, each teacher clearly outlines his/her expectations on homework for the year. After-School homework clubs are offered for some children under the "School Completion Scheme" funded by the DES. These are only offered to boys who the teachers feel would benefit from some extra help with homework.

### **Home School Community Liaison Programme (HSCL):**

St Mary's participates in the Department of Education and Science HSCL programme. A teacher, at present, Mr. Noel Keating, is assigned to work as the coordinator for both St Mary's and St Brigid's schools. The Mission of the programme is:

"To contribute to the education of children in St Brigid's and St Mary's by offering opportunities to parents and guardians, to gain the knowledge skills and confidence to actively support their own and their children's learning and development".

### **Home – School Communications:**

As partners in education, good communication between home and school is vital. Parents/Guardians are always welcome in the school and are encouraged to work hand in hand with the teachers to maximise the potential progress of each child.

In St. Mary's this communication takes place in the following ways:

- Newsletters – These give information, on a regular basis, of upcoming events in the school-year calendar. They will also inform you of closures during the year for such events as School Planning, Curriculum Development and Holidays. It is important that pupils' bags are checked regularly for these.
- We also use "Text-a Parent" as a means of communication. Please ensure that if you change your mobile number that you inform the school.
- Homework Journal – The class teacher or Principal may write a note as the need arises. Parents may also use the Journal to communicate with the teacher. Please check and sign the Journal as regularly as is requested by your child's teacher. This may well vary from teacher to teacher.
- Telephone.

### **School Completion Programme:**

The School Completion Programme aims to develop local strategies to ensure maximum participation levels in the education process. It entails targeting individual young people of school going age, both in

and out of school, and arranging supports to address inequalities in education access, participation and outcomes. Projects supported by the SCP include the After-Schools programme, ie Homework and Drama clubs, literacy and numeracy support and sporting activities.

### **Meetings:**

- **Class Meetings:** In September, each parent is requested to attend a general meeting with the class teacher. It will take place at 9am on a given morning and will be as brief as possible. It is an opportunity for the class teacher to outline and clarify plans, methods and strategies for the year and answer any queries that parents may have.
- **Parent/Teacher Meetings:** These are held formally in late January or early February to discuss each pupil's academic and social progress. It is important to attend these meetings. Extra meetings can be arranged at other times if required, by appointment.
- **Confirmation and Communion/Confession Meetings :** These will only affect the parents of pupils in Second and Sixth Classes and notification will be given well in advance.
- **Progress Reports –** Reports are issued at Parent/Teacher meetings and a final report is sent out in June each year.

Parents and Guardians can make an appointment to arrange private meetings with the Principal and or individual teachers.

### **Educational Outings:**

In keeping with the objectives of the Primary School Curriculum, teachers, from time to time, may arrange outings to places of historic, social, cultural and/or environmental interest. We also invite to the school, performers/artists/authors to work with the classes. Thanks to our privileged central location, we are able to avail of the many and varied opportunities that present themselves locally, throughout the year, and can use these opportunities to further the education of our pupils. Given our Green School Policy, many of these outings have a scientific and environmental bias. These include workshops in the R.D.S. and ENFO, practical visits to Bring Centres and Airfield House, which deal with environmental issues. We are also within walking distance of Dublin's main museums and galleries, and can take advantage of our relative proximity to "The Ark", Children's Theatre, to introduce them to live theatre at a young age. Every effort is made to keep costs for these outings to a minimum and parents are given advance notice of such outings. In keeping with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, a child who misbehaves on a school trip may have to remain in school during the next outing. A decision on this will be at the discretion of the class teacher and Principal.

### **Transfer to Post Primary Schools:**

To help with the choice of 2<sup>nd</sup> Level schools for 6<sup>th</sup> Class pupils, representatives from the various schools in the area are invited to speak to pupils about the courses and other facilities on offer in their schools. These talks often occur towards the end of 5<sup>th</sup> Class. Most Post Primary Schools hold Open Days which parents are encouraged to attend so that they can choose the school which best suits their child. No report is furnished to 2<sup>nd</sup> level schools without parents' permission. **Parents of 6<sup>th</sup> Class pupils should ensure**

**that each boy has applied for and been accepted, to the second level school of their choice, by the appropriate date.** From time to time pupils have received scholarships to post primary schools outside the area. Parents may discuss this possibility with the school Principal.

### **Parents' Association:**

St. Mary's has a very active and co-operative Parents' Association. Every parent/guardian with a child in the school is automatically a member of the Association, with the committee being comprised of parents/guardians who wish to get involved with the work of the Association.

A brief outline of some areas of involvement of the Parents' Association includes:

- Representing the views of parents.
- Informing parents of developments in the school and in education.
- Fostering co-operation between parents, teachers and school management.
- Assisting with the organisation of certain social events during the school year e.g. Communion and Confirmation Breakfasts and 6<sup>th</sup> Class Graduation Dinner.
- Fundraising, where the need arises, for funds not covered by Department of Education and Skills grants.

### **School Policies:**

Copies of the school's policies are available from the Principal on request.

### **Green School:**

Green School is an international programme promoting responsible behaviour among school children and the wider community towards the environment. St Mary's has been awarded Environmental Green Flags for its efforts to recycle waste, and save on energy and water and most recently, for transport. We are currently working on our fifth flag which investigates Climate Change. The school encourages the boys to walk, cycle or use public transport in order to get to and from school. We have a very active "Green School Committee" made up of pupils and teachers. We have a small school garden in which pupils grow organic vegetables which can be harvested and eaten by themselves!

### **Staff:**

There are 12 teachers in St. Mary's including the Principal, Mrs. Maeve Brew. This includes 7 mainstream classes from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, 2 Learning support/ Resource teachers, 1 EAL teacher, ( to work with our International Pupils ) and 1 Home/School/Community Liaison teacher (shared with St. Brigid's Primary School, next door).

### **Some Points to reflect on.....**

**If children live with *criticism*, they learn to *condemn*.**

**If children live with *hostility*, they learn to *fight*.**

**If children live with *shame*, they learn to *feel guilty*.**

**If children live with *tolerance*, they learn to *be patient*.**

**If children live with *encouragement*, they learn *confidence*.**

**If children live with *praise*, they learn to *appreciate*.**

**If children live with *fairness*, they learn *justice*.**

**If children live with *security*, they learn to *have faith*.**

**If children live with *approval*, they learn to *like themselves*.**

**If children live with *acceptance* and *friendship*, they learn to *find love in the world*....**