

A Message from the Principal

The staff of Scoil an Linbh Íosa take great pleasure in welcoming you to our school. We aim to develop the full potential of each child and to celebrate their uniqueness and individuality. We derive great personal and professional fulfilment from the role we play in the lives of young people whose education is entrusted to us.

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children and so we look forward to the opportunity to build on that foundation as we journey together in educating your children. Thank you for joining us on this path.

Le gach dea ghuí,

Marian Carr

Principal



New Junior Infants



Fáilte romhat agus roimh do pháiste.

Starting school will be the first big change in the life of your child. Up to this he/she has felt safe and secure with you in the home and family but now he/she is facing the wider world of classroom and school. This may seem a big step for someone so small but most children manage it without any great fuss or stress - and in fact take to it like ducks to water.

However, it is also a time when parents and teachers should take special care to ensure that the transition from home to school is as smooth as possible. If the child's first experience of school is one of happy involvement, a very good foundation will have been laid for fruitful school years ahead.

We know from experience that parents are very anxious to help in any way possible. With these aims in mind we have put together this little booklet as a general guide for parents. It deals briefly with the period before your child comes to school and his/her introductory stage in Junior Infants. It includes some ideas for the home, which should stimulate your child's interest and nurture her.

We trust you will find it helpful and that your child will be happy and fulfilled with us.

Getting Ready for Learning



Children are natural learners. They have an inbuilt curiosity and an eagerness to know more about everything – about themselves, about others and about the world around them. And they learn fast – but only when they are ready and their interest is aroused.

Because they come to us so young we must guard against putting pressure on them to learn what they are not yet ready for. Demanding too much too soon can switch a child off completely. At the same time we must cultivate readiness so that they can get moving as soon as possible.

The rates of progress of children can vary greatly. We try to give them an opportunity to move ahead at their own pace or as near to it as possible. Our first year in school therefore, is mainly about settling in, relating to others, making friends, feeling happy and gradually getting used to the routine of the school. On the learning side the emphasis is on getting children ready for learning by –

- Developing their oral language and expression.
- Sharpening their senses, especially seeing, hearing and touching.
- Developing physical co-ordination especially of hand and fingers.
- Extending their concentration span and getting them to listen attentively.
- Learning through play – the most enjoyable and effective way.

- Co-operating with the teacher and other children.
- Performing tasks by themselves.
- Working with others and sharing with them.
- Teaching each child to accept the general order, which is necessary for the class to work well.

Preparation for School

Goals for your child

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

It would help greatly if he/she is able to-

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

Goals for you

Your child's first day at school is a day to remember for the rest of his/her life.

You can help to make it a happy one for him/her.

- Tell him/her about school beforehand, casually, and talk about it as a happy place where there will be a big welcome for him/her and he/she will meet new friends.
- Don't use school or the teacher as a threat. "If you behave like that for teacher she'll be unhappy with you" though said light-heartedly can make some children very apprehensive.
- He/she will like to have his/her new uniform and his new bag when he begins. These help him/her identify more readily with the school and other children.
- Make sure that you are familiar with the policies of the school with regard to Bí Cinéalta-Anti-Bullying / Code of Behaviour, Homework etc. These can be viewed on the school website www.killymard.com. If you have any concerns about them, broach the matter with the teacher/ principal. Otherwise, it will be assumed that you are happy to comply with them!
- Fill in the enrolment forms carefully, giving the teacher as much information as he/she needs to care for your child effectively. Should you move house, change your phone number or your doctor you will need to have the enrolment form altered accordingly

School Uniform

Our uniform is as follows and please ensure your child is in full uniform at all times.

- Uniform: Blue crested sweatshirt
White polo shirt
Grey skirt / pinafore / trousers
Grey socks / tights
Black shoes / plain black runners

- Tracksuit: Blue crested sweatshirt (as per uniform)
White polo shirt
Plain navy tracksuit bottoms (no stripes)
Runners

N.B. Navy or grey knee length shorts may be worn on warm days. No sports shorts or beach type shorts allowed.

Local stockists: All Sports, Quay Street, Donegal Town for the crested sweatshirt.

All non-crested items of clothing can be purchased from any retail outlet.

- Please ensure that all clothes likely to be removed i.e. coats, hats, scarves, sweatshirts etc. are clearly labelled with your child's name. We have some spare clothes for use if needed. However, if your child has any toileting problems please let teacher know and send in a spare set of clothes for emergencies.

P.E./Extra Curricular Activities



Children will wear their school tracksuits on designated P.E. days. Extra-curricular activities such as GAA coaching/soccer/gymnastics/dancing etc. may take place throughout the year. You will be informed of these activities in advance.

School Books Scheme



- The text books, work books and copy books/folders for all classes are purchased by the school and will be distributed to the children when they start school.
- All of these books are paid for under the Government Book Scheme and therefore there will be no charge. Please see note below regarding stationery.
- A contribution will be collected from parents to cover the cost of art materials / photocopying expenses annually.
- The textbooks will be on loan and must be well cared for.

School Stationery

All new incoming students require the following supplies:

Large Pritt Stick glues x 4

Children's metal scissors (can be purchased for left or right handed)

Triangular Pencils x 4

Eraser Enclosed sharpener

Colours – Twistables or thick crayons.

Pencil case

School bag- needs to fit A3 size folder, lunchbox & bottle

Please label all individual items

*Please check your child's pencil case regularly and refill if necessary.

The Big Day

The first day of school for Junior Infants starts at the later time of 9.30a.m. Following on from this school will begin at the normal time of 9.20a.m. For the first 5 days they must be collected at 12.30p.m. Please provide a small snack for these days.

This allows them to gradually settle in. After the 5 days children will finish at 2.00p.m. Children will always line up in the school yard and will be collected from here by their parents.

Coming in on the first day:

When you arrive at the classroom, be as casual as you can. He/she will meet the teacher and the other children and will be shown his/her chair and given an activity to do.

Hopefully he/she will be absorbed in their new surroundings. So, having assured him/her you will be back to collect him, wish him/her goodbye and make your way without delay.

Handling the Upset Child

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.

- Trust the teacher. She is experienced and resourceful and is used to coping with all kinds of starting –off problems.
- Try not to show any outward sign of your own anxiety.
- When you have reassured him/her, leave as fast as possible. The teacher can distract and humour him/her more easily when you are not around.

Packed Lunches



We currently use an external provider, schoolmeals.ie, to provide our hot lunches. You will receive a link from them in August where you will have to option of signing up and ordering food for your child.

We strongly urge you to follow our Healthy Eating Policy. Due to a number of our student having a nut allergy nuts and nut products are not allowed in school. We recommend a small snack, i.e. fruit and juice for the morning break for all students. For those students who opt out of the hot meal scheme please send a nutritious lunch, i.e. sandwiches, yoghurt, fruit etc. for the lunch break. Please make sure that children can open and close their own lunchboxes / food containers and that their fruit is peeled if necessary. Extra drinks are recommended for PE days and warmer weather. Please ensure that your child's lunchbox is clearly labelled.

Going Home

- Be sure to collect him/her on time from the school yard. Children can become very upset if they feel they are forgotten.
- If at any time the collecting routine has to be changed ensure you inform the child and the teacher.

As Time Goes on

- Children need plenty of rest after the effort and excitement of a day at school. You should ensure that he/she gets to bed early and has a good night's sleep.
- When he/she has settled in and hopefully, looks upon school as a "home from home" do continue to show interest in his/her daily adventures. Give him/her an ear if he/she wants to tell you things.
- If his/her progress is slow do not compare your child adversely with other children in his/her learning. Loss of self-esteem can be very damaging to him/her. All children progress at different stages.

Homework

Homework for Junior Infants usually starts in October. The pupils will receive a small amount of homework daily Mon-Thurs each week. The teacher will put a list of activities to be completed in their homework pack each evening. If your child attends a homework club it is still your responsibility to check and sign work. We strongly encourage that children have the support of a parent/guardian when completing their homework.

Please sign all written homework

At times the children will be asked to submit their homework via the seesaw app. This will make up part of their digital learning folder.

Photos of your child will be added by the teacher throughout the year.

Some Important Areas of Early Learning



Developing the Command of Spoken Language.

It is important that the child's ability to talk is as advanced as possible. It is through speech that he/she communicates his/her thoughts and feelings, his/her needs and desires, curiosity and wonder. If he/she cannot express these in words he/she will tend to remain silent and will often withdraw from the learning activity of the class. This can be the first sign of struggle in the school system and must be remedied, if at all possible. That is why a lot of attention is given to language development in the first years of school.

How to Help....

- Talk 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. Remember that all the time he/she is absorbing the language they hear about them. It takes him/her a while to make it his/her own and to use it for his/her own needs.
- Try to make time to listen when he/she wants to tell you something that is important to him/her. But don't always make him/her the centre of attention.
- Answer his/her genuine questions with patience and in an adequate way. Always nurture his/her sense of curiosity and wonder.
- Introduce him/her gently to the ideas of why? How? When? Where? If? etc. These demand more advanced language structures.

- He/she will have his own particular favourite stories that he/she never tires of hearing. Repeat them over and over again and gradually get him/her to tell them to you.

First Steps in Reading



Ability to read is the foundation for all future progress in our school system.

However, learning to read is a gradual process and a lot of preparatory work must be done before a child is introduced to his/her first reader.

We very deliberately do not rush or push children into reading. We get them ready for it over an extended period. Reading is something to be enjoyed. It should never start as a chore for the small child.

You can help..

- Read him/her a variety of stories from time to time. He/she will get to associate these wonderful tales with books and reading.
- You must convey to him/her gradually that books are precious things. They must be minded and handled carefully and put away safely.
- Have attractive colourful books in the home
- Look at the pictures with him/her and talk to him/her about what they say.
- Read him/her nursery rhymes. He/she will learn them off his/her own bat.
- Take him/her to the library.

- Above all, don't push him/her with his early reading. You may turn him/her against it for evermore.
- Sing the alphabet song with your child, so that he/she at least heard of the letters. If he/she knows what each one looks like, all the better.

Understanding Maths



First a Word of Advice

Maths for the small child has nothing to do with “sums” or figures or tables or adding and subtracting. These will all come much later. Maths is really part of the language he uses in understanding and talking about certain things in his daily experience e.g.

- He associates certain numbers with things – two hands, four wheels, five fingers etc.
- Counting – one, two, three, four, etc.
- Colours – black, white, red, green, etc.
- Prepositions (telling position) and their opposites: over/under, before/after, inside/outside etc.
- Matching/Sorting – objects of the same size/colour/texture/shape etc.
- Odd One Out – difference in size/colour etc.

Understanding of these concepts comes very quickly for some children. For others it takes a long time. Be patient. You cannot force Maths understanding on a child.

You Can Help...

- In the course of your ordinary daily routine in the home, in the shop, in the neighbourhood, you should use suitable opportunities to casually

introduce the maths vocabulary, referred to above. E.g. How many cakes? The glass is full/empty. We turn left at the lights.

- The child gets to understand Maths best by handling and investigating and using real objects. This has been his/her natural method of learning since he/she was a baby.

Gaeilge

All children enjoy learning another language besides their own language. They have no difficulty in picking it up because it fascinates them as another code of communication.

We would ask his/her parents to give every encouragement and help in their efforts to acquire Irish. If they learn new words in school encourage them to use them at home. Use little Irish phrases or words now and again. Children are delighted to find out that their parents are into their new code as well. If they must learn Irish, let them enjoy it and master it to the best of their ability.

Getting Ready For Writing



Making letters on paper is not easy for the small child. He/she must learn to hold the pencil properly and make regular shapes. His/her hand and finger muscles are only gradually developing at this stage.

You Can Help...

- He/she must develop the ability to get the hand and eye working together.

This is very important. Get him/her manipulating toys like:

(a) Jigsaws, Lego, beads to thread etc

(b) Plasticene (Marla) to make his/her own shapes

(c) A colouring book and thick crayons

(d) Sheets of paper that he/she can cut up with a safe scissors

- When he/she begins to use a pencil make sure that he/she holds it correctly at the start. The 'tripod grip' is pencil hold your child should be encouraged to use. It will be difficult to change him/her later.
- He/she may be making capital letters at home even before he/she comes to school. This is fine. But when he/she starts making lower case letters at school you should try to get him/her to discontinue the blocks and practise his/her new system whenever he/she feels like it.
- Encourage your child to make markings on paper with their pencils and crayons. Their markings will tell their story. Take an interest in their markings as they show them to you. This will encourage them to create an interest in writing. Again, don't overdo it. Don't force it. Let it be their markings.
- Don't discourage left-handedness. If that is his/her definite natural inclination, don't attempt to change it.

Other Areas of the Curriculum

The child in Junior Infants learns a lot through many other activities, which do not need any elaboration here. His/her general development is enhanced through Art & Craft, P.E., Music, Nature and also through Religious Education. The moral and social aspects of religion are covered right through the school day e.g. kindness to others, sharing with them, saying we are sorry, being aware of God through the beauty of nature etc. Again, as in the other areas we referred to already, the child will benefit from practising at home what he/she has learned at school and telling you what he/she has discovered.

Social skills are very important. We encourage good manners at all times, please/thank you, addressing teachers properly, being courteous to fellow students and teachers. It is important to ask your child whom he/she played with at school and to ensure he/she isn't alone, also encourage

mixing rather than being dependent on one friend only. Rough behaviour is totally discouraged in the playground.

As time progresses your child will get used to the general discipline of the classroom. They will get to understand very quickly that in certain important matters an instruction from the teacher must be obeyed promptly and without question. It is very important that parents reinforce positive social behaviour at home also.

Teacher and Parent

If a parent wishes to speak with a teacher an appointment should be made via the school office for a date and time that suits both the parent and the teacher.

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 him/her in a systematic way. But if you find from time to time that he/she enjoys a fun approach to certain aspects of learning then we would say – give it a go – but remember don't overdo it.

PROCEDURES AND INFORMATION

Arrival and Departure

- The school opens to receive pupils at the hour of 9.10 a.m. School starts at 9.20a.m. No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time. Only staff may enter the school building before 9.10 a.m. Children must wait in their cars in the car park until the gates are opened at 9.10a.m. They will be supervised on arrival by the SET Team and Principal. Children should walk in a single line – one way on the corridor.
- Punctuality and full school attendance is of vital importance. The school roll is taken by 10.00a.m. each morning and children arriving after this time will be marked as late.
- Children are not allowed to play around the Church area or congregate on the Church steps before or after school.
- Parents/guardians whose children's formal schooling ends at 2.00 p.m. should have their children collected at that time. The pupils will line up in the school yard for collection by parents/guardians. No child should leave the yard unaccompanied.
- First to Sixth Classes end each day at 3.00p.m. Parents/guardians should collect their children in the yard. The school cannot accept responsibility for looking after children after 3.00 p.m. No child should leave the yard unaccompanied.
- If you have made alternative arrangements for collecting your child please inform the school.
- In the case of children traveling by School Bus, the school cannot accept responsibility for escorting them to or from the bus. Parents/guardians who feel that their children may need to be escorted on these occasions should make arrangements to ensure that some escort is provided. Children waiting on school buses must go directly to the school yard in the morning if they arrive before 9.10a.m.

Yard Safety

- While in the playground, children should stay on the tarmacadam at all times. They should stay off the grass and the 'Striped No-Go Area.' If there is a problem, they must speak to the teacher on yard duty. If they wish to go into the school building for any reason (e.g. toilet, feeling sick, etc.) they must get permission from the teacher. They must only use the playground equipment when being supervised by a teacher.
- No pets allowed on school premises.

Notes to School

Explanatory notes are requested from parents on the following occasions:

- (a) When a child has not got homework done.
- (b) When you want your child to leave the school during the school day.
- (c) When you wish your child to be excused from P.E. due to illness/injury.

Note: All absences are reported on the Aladdin Connect App only. All correspondence is sent via the Aladdin Connect App so please ensure that you have the notifications on for this app at all times.

Sign-out / in:

- If your child is leaving school during the day he/she must be signed out by an adult in the school office. If he/she returns an adult must sign in the child.
- Parents/visitors must report to the front office on arrival. Parents should not make their way down the corridor or to the classrooms at any time.

Various:

- The front door is locked at all times. Please use the buzzer system to gain entry. Parents should report to the front office and must not make their way to the classrooms unless advised by a staff member to do so.

- In the event of your child becoming ill or having an accident you will be contacted on the numbers you have provided to the school. Please ensure that we have your current numbers.
- If a parent wishes to see a teacher an appointment must be made by contacting the school office. Please do not telephone teachers on their private numbers.
- All gates are kept closed in the interest of safety. Parents cannot drive vehicles into the school grounds.
- Do not permit your children to bring mobile phones / smart watches to school.
- Children are expected to obey the classroom rules of their respective teachers.
- Children must obey the school's Code of Conduct and comply with the Anti-Bullying Policy which are available on the school website www.killymard.com, at all times.
- Pupils are not permitted to distribute birthday party invitations or party bags at school. This is to eliminate situations where children feel excluded when they do not receive an invitation card.
- If your child has an illness / allergies please refer to our Medicine Policy on the school website www.killymard.com. and ensure that you have informed the school.

Our School Website

www.killymard.com



Visit us on our school website www.killymard.com, on our Instagram or Facebook page where you will find all there is to know about our school with regular updates of events that take place involving our school community of pupils, parents/guardians, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff, Board of Management, the Parish and the wider community.

Also, on our school website you will find all school policies which you should refer to on an on-going basis.

Promotion of Healthy Diet at School

We in Scoil an Linbh Íosa encourage the children to eat a well-balanced daily diet. The students will have the option to receive a hot meal daily but for those who opt out please follow the guidelines below.

As a Green School we also aim to reduce waste management volumes through these lunch choices.

ALLOWED	NOT ALLOWED
Breads Pasta Rice Cereals Home baking Salad Vegetables Fruit Cheese Yogurt Lean meats Oily fish Eggs Water Milk Unsweetened fruit juice Homemade soup	Lunchables Sweets Chocolate Biscuits Sweet buns / cakes Cereal bars Crisps All crisp type products Lollipops Chewing gum Fizzy drinks <u>Nuts and nut extract to safeguard all pupils with related allergies.</u> Sugary drinks

Drinks: Use refill drink containers (Green School).

Wrapping: Keep to a minimum and children will bring all used wrapping home (Green School).

Exceptions: School organised events, class parties, outings, rewards from teachers.

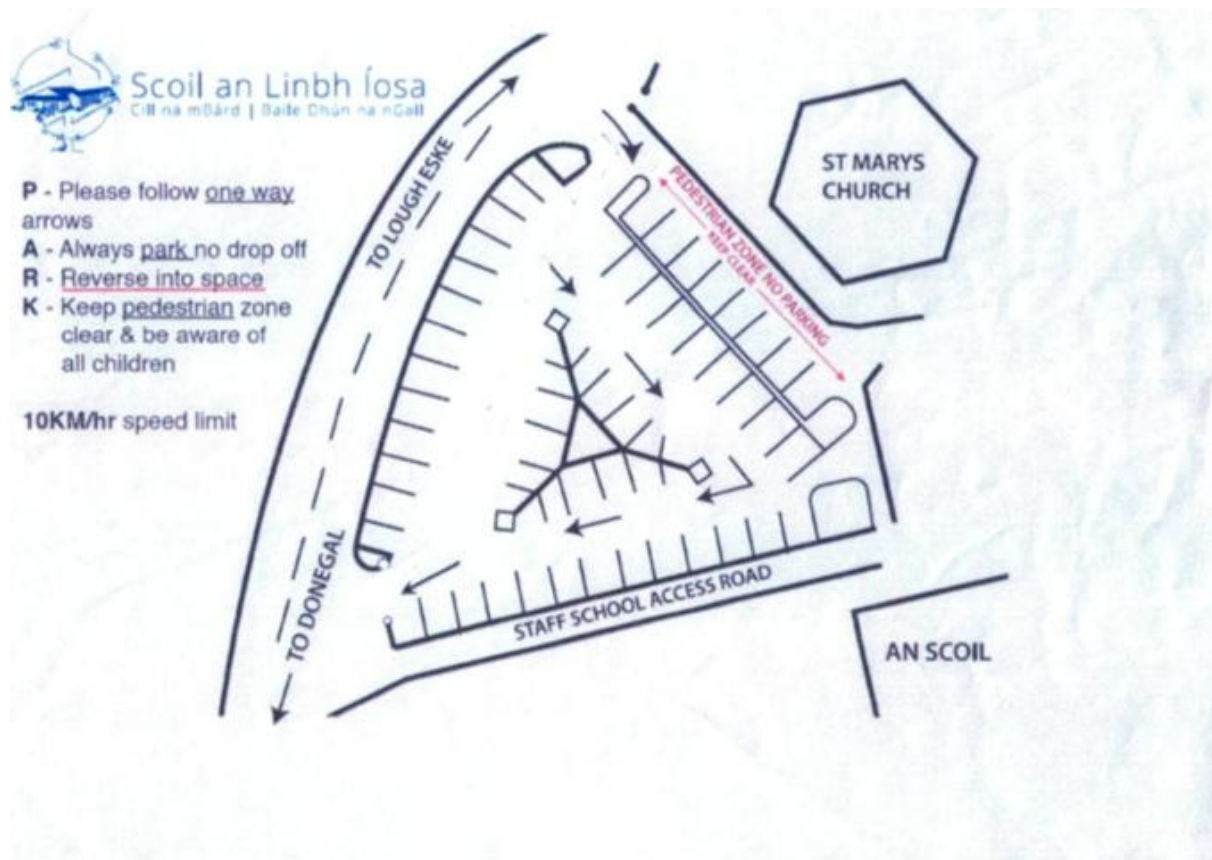
PLEASE DO NOT SEND IN TREATS FOR A CLASS ON THE OCCASION OF A BIRTHDAY ETC.

Car Park Safety Procedures

The parish car park is available to you on school days.

When you are using the parish car park, it is your responsibility to follow these procedures, making it a safe place for all who use it:

- Enter the car park and **follow the signs indicating the one-way system**
- Drive slowly and carefully. Be vigilant in the car park at all times.
- Reverse when parking (to maximise visibility when moving off).
- Do not allow children to wander / play in the car park.
- **Follow signs** when entering and leaving the car park.
- **DO NOT** park in the small car park directly in front of the Chapel as this area is reserved for Church users only.
- The area at the school gate is designated for buses only. Do not park in this area.



To: Parents/Guardians

Re: Education (Welfare) Act 2000

The importance of a good education

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to develop into mature and responsible citizens and to obtain secure employment. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every child stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

TUSLA (Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency)

Under the Act, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school, whichever comes later. TUSLA was established to support school attendance **and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.**

School Policy

It is school policy that you must inform the class teacher in writing of the reason your child was absent (please use the templates in the Homework Journal). Verbal explanations or telephone calls to the school office are not acceptable. The school will notify TUSLA if your child is absent for 20 days or more. The school will also notify the TUSLA if an absence of less than 20 days is giving rise to concern. Prior to this you will receive an Aladdin notification if your child has missed in excess of 15 days.

Reporting

If your child has been absent through illness or for other good reasons the school will still be reporting the absence in the normal way but will be informing the TUSLA that it is not concerned about your child's educational welfare. In these cases no action will be taken by the TUSLA. Therefore, it is advisable to attach a Medical Certificate to your explanatory note if your child is absent on medical advice. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be visited by the Education Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education. Parents/Guardians can be prosecuted under Section 25 of the Act.

Further information concerning the new service and about school attendance matters generally can be obtained from the national Lo-Call Education Helpline (Telephone 1890 36 36 66) which is staffed by an Education Welfare Officer.

Our Hope



We are offering this Guide to Parents as a little practical help in dealing with the education of their children 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.

Tá súil againn go mbeidh do pháiste an-sásta linn i Scoil an Linbh Íosa.