

# Procedures and Practices

SLIABH A'MHADRA NATIONAL SCHOOL

## Arrival and dismissal of pupils

Children are supervised in the schoolyard from 8.45 – 9.00a.m. The school bell rings and children line up in silence outside their class door. The class teachers will supervise children on entering the classroom.

Junior and Senior Infants go home at 1.40pm. All other classes go home at 2.40 p.m. Each class is escorted to the school gates by the class teacher; however, in compliance with our school policy on supervision, no responsibility is accepted for children outside school hours.

## Absences

We have a very good attendance record. In the event of a pupil being absent the parent is asked to write a note or write in the homework journal giving reason for absence. The NEWB have to be notified if a child is absent for 20 days or more. (See Attendance Policy)

## Book Rental Scheme

We operate a book rental system in our school. The school receives a grant of money each year to help reduce the cost of books. The grant isn't sufficient to defray all costs so a small rent is charged.

From infants to second class - books that are re-useable .i.e. English readers, Alive-O and any other re-useable books the class teacher may use are rent free. All other books are purchased by the parents/guardian.

Third to sixth class get all their re-useable books for a rent of 25euro approx. This price is determined by the number of new books that have to be bought. Every effort is made to minimise the change in schemes used. Books that are written on are purchased by parents/guardians, i.e. spelling books and Handwriting books. The survival of this scheme depends on how well the books are maintained during the year, Book lists are sent out before the summer holidays.

## Bookfairs/Book Catalogues

We host a Bookfair every two years usually in November. Cases full of books are delivered to the school. We have them for a week and during that time children get to examine the many books and read some too. Parents are invited to come along after school or at night, to look at the books and purchase them.

Members of the Parents Association help with the running of this. We usually get 60% commission of the sales in the form of books. Everyone is happy with this event.

Twice a year we distribute the Setanta Catalogue. Again parents can purchase books and we gain the commission. There is no obligation on anyone to buy and parents are made aware of this.

We also mark World Book Day in March. Every child receives a voucher for €1.50 to put towards the purchase of a book.

## Charities

During the year we make the children aware of the less well off. We raise funds for such charities as Children Helping Children, Amnesty Ireland, Jack and Jill Foundation and other causes that we might see in need of our help.

## Emergency Closures

An emergency closure e.g. bad weather, heating breakdown will be broadcast on the local radio station, Radio Kerry. Parents should listen for such broadcasts should the situation arise. Parents will also be notified using the Text-a-Parent service.

## Enrolment

The Board of Management will inform the school community of the procedures for application through the parish newsletter in the second term. Prospective parents are invited to an open evening where they are given information about the school and furnished with application forms.

Parents who wish to enrol pupils in the school should return the forms by the due date given on the evening. All offers of enrolment are subject to acceptance of the school's Code of Behaviour, a copy of which is given to the parents/guardians at the meeting.

## EPV Days

Where a teacher has, during the school year, attend a course approved by DES, personal leave may be taken subject to Board of Management approval. Three days (Extra Personal Vacation) for attendance at a five day course. On completion a certificate must be presented and stored in the office. The following points outline school policy on the arrangements for course days:

Maximum of one teacher on course day on any one day, except in exceptional circumstances. Make official application to Principal for course day. Fill in on calendar. This is for staff information purposes.

Where possible, give one week's notice of intention to take a course day.

When leaving work for your class, use text books, workbooks, copies etc. Children should be familiar with all work.

Class will be divided when teacher is on a course day according to school policy.

## Field Trips

Field trips or out of school excursions, which relate to a particular area are encouraged. These trips can range from simple walks around the school to organised trips to relevant places of interest. The Principal must be informed in advance if it is proposed that a class leave the school grounds. Teachers are encouraged to plan and prepare children in advance of the trip and to carry out some follow up work in the classroom following it. Teachers should ensure adequate supervision at all times. Where necessary, an extra teacher or parent/guardian should accompany the class. Children should be appropriately dressed for the field trip eg. raingear, suitable footwear etc. No child is to be refused participation in any proposed activity because of family inability to pay.

## Fire Drill

Fire Drill is held at least twice per term. Fire Officer sounds the fire bell. The first fire drill of the year is notified to the children so that they can be reminded of procedures. Pupils are evacuated to the Assembly point in the yard where they line up with their teachers for Roll-call. Teachers carry roll books and ensure that doors are closed behind them. See Fire drill procedure for further details. Ms. Keane is the Fire Officer and Stephen Tobin is the Safety Officer.

## Graduation

Before 6<sup>th</sup> class leave our school we host a Graduation ceremony for them to mark their eight years with us. On the night speeches are made, sixth class put on a performance of music, song and dance and graduation certificates are presented along with a Yearbook to each pupil. The Parent's Association liaise with the school to compile this book. It is a lovely keepsake of their time in Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. The Parent's Association also provide refreshments on the night.

## Green-Schools

It is the policy of Sliabh a' Mhadra N.S. to foster in the children love, respect and appreciation of all living things and their environment and to become active agents in the conservation of environment for future generations. Participating in the Green-Schools – a European educational programme, we hope to promote responsible behaviour among the children and the wider community, encouraging reduce, reuse and recycle.

## Healthy Lunches

The school operates a healthy lunch policy and we expect parents/guardians to cooperate with this. Children are not allowed crisps, chewing gum, chocolate, sweets, popcorn or fizzy drinks. We promote fruit, sandwiches, yoghurt, milk and juices. Mrs. Wallace is the Health Promotion Coordinator.

## Holidays during term time

Parents are actively discouraged from taking their children out of school to go on holidays during the course of a school year. In keeping with this policy, teachers will not prepare or mark work for children who are taken out of school in this way. Their attention is drawn in particular to the fact that the month of May is the time when standardised testing takes place in the relevant classes.

## Library

The school is proud of its well stocked library. Reading and a love for books is encouraged amongst the children. The children have weekly access to these books whereby they can take books home with them. Respect for books is paramount to the survival of the library. Teachers also take sets of books for use in the classroom. New books are got from commission received from the Bookfair or Setanta catalogue. Parents also donate books which are greatly appreciated. Parents also volunteer their time to cover the books.

## Parent-Teacher Meetings

These are held once a year, usually in November. School ends at 2.45pm for the children and the meetings commence at 3.15 p.m. Parents meet with the teachers in the classrooms. Outside of formal parent-teacher meetings, parents are welcome to discuss their child with the teacher at any time but should make an appointment through the school office or a note in the homework journal, as it is difficult for a teacher to discuss a child during class time.

## Participation in Competitions/Festivals

Sliabh a' Mhadra endeavours to promote the development of each aspect of the child's development and therefore participates in many competitions and festivals throughout the year in its efforts to achieve this. Teachers are encouraged to hold an even balance in this regard and give the pupils an opportunity to participate in competitions across the curriculum.

We participate in many competitions and encourage the children to do so. We support local events as well as national competitions.

Credit Union

Science Quiz

Mini-Sevens Football

Cumann na mBunscoil, Girls and Boys

Hurling

Seachtain na Gaeilge

Credit Union Art competitions

Science Awards

Nature colouring competitions

Poetry-short story – Writers Week

Green-Schools

Feiseanna

St. Patrick's Day Parade

## Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is vital for the success of any school. We see parents as partners in education. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's education. Our parents are actively involved in our school. Two parents –one mother and one father- are elected to represent the parent body on the Board of Management. We have an active Parents' Association who greatly enhance the life in our school. The association works in accordance with 'A Guide for Best Practice.' See also Home –School Links Policy.

## Parents' Association

Our Parents' Association play a meaningful role in supporting the aims and objectives of the curriculum. They are consulted in the development of relevant school policies. They contribute to the school by making the skills and talents of individual parents available that may be valuable to the school. They also contribute financially to enhance the resources in the school.

## Promotion / Marketing of Commercial Products:

All sales people arriving at the school present themselves to the secretary. They are asked to leave a card/catalogue. Should a display of goods be required then an appointment is made for a date in the future when teachers are notified and given an opportunity to inspect the goods. This may be arranged on an informal basis during break-time or at a time when teachers are released from class and the class is supervised by the principal or other teachers available at the time. A record of goods requested is given to the principal and a decision is made regarding the purchase of these. Payment of such items may come from central funds, provided by the BOM or the Parents' Association.

## Phone calls/Mobile phones

Mobile phones are not allowed. (See mobile Phone Policy)

It is not usual school policy to call a child to receive a telephone call. A message will be relayed to the child from the school office. Children may use the school telephone when necessary.

## Recycling

We are a Green School and promote recycling. The junior classes take home their lunch wrappings until such time as they can rinse cartons themselves and place them in the recycling bin. We recycle paper, plastic and tinfoil. We compost apple cores etc. and collect waste bread for ducks/hens. We shred paper; children take this home for animal bedding. We also collect mobile phones, batteries, library books and stamps.

## Resources

Resources for art and crafts, Science, P.E. etc. are looked after by Mrs. O. Carroll who liaises with the reps to provide displays of their updated books and equipment. A central bank of stock is provided for all teachers use and these are stored in the staff-room, office and old office. A loan scheme is organised for use of these books, where teachers use a ticket when borrowing them. Any samples of books left into the school by company reps are distributed to the class teachers at the level they are published and may be used as supplementary work in the classrooms, to judge their usefulness or suitability for future use generally in Sliabh a' Mhadra.

## Roll Books/Registers

Roll books are maintained by the class teachers. They are responsible for end-of-week, monthly, term and end-of-year returns. A daily roll copybook is circulated for entry of pupils present in school. The Principal is responsible for the collation of these records in the Leabhar Tinrimh and also the returns to the NEWB. The Principal is also responsible for entering each new child as he is enrolled in the school or removing a child from the roll if he leaves the school.

## Sacraments

Children in 2<sup>nd</sup> class prepare for the sacraments of Penance and Communion. First Penance is usually just before Easter and First Communion is in early May. Children receive these sacraments with pupils from Ballincrossig N.S. and Ballyduff N.S. Both ceremonies take place in St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Ballyduff. Parents and children take part in the 'Do This in Memory of Me,' within the parish. Children in 6<sup>th</sup> class prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation. The date is selected by the bishop and the ceremony alternates between St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, Ballyduff and St. John the Baptist Church, Causeway.

## School calendar

The school calendar, in accordance with the standardised school year of the Dept. of Education is sent out to all parents in September. This includes holidays and closings known to date. In the new school year, all additional closures or early closings are notified to parents as soon as possible. New parents receive the calendar when their child joins the school.

## School security

All possible effort is made to maintain the security and integrity of our school building. Visitors have to ring the buzzer to gain entry. The secretary will take messages etc. An intruder alarm system is in place. Every staff member has his/her own code to activate/inactivate alarm.

## School tours

All classes may go on a school tour each year, usually in May or June. Tours must comply with the supervision policy on teacher: children ratio of 15:1. These tours are primarily based on educational activities and are at the discretion of the Principal and teachers. Over the course of their 8 years we endeavour to ensure that children experience a wide variety of destinations.

## Shared Reading

The practice of shared reading, where an adult listens and participates while a child reads aloud, is part of our English Curriculum. Infants to 3<sup>rd</sup> class improve on their literacy skills while enjoying the benefits of pupil/parent quality time.

## Standardised testing

Standardised testing takes place in each class in May. All results are sent to the Principal and LST team for their consideration in determining allocation of Learning Support time. (see Assessment Policy)

## Supervision duties

Children are supervised in the yard 8.40 – 9.00 a.m. They are supervised at Small Break 10.35 – 10.45 a.m. either in the yard or in the classrooms, depending on the weather. At Big Lunch 12.10 – 12.40pm, children are supervised in the class room first, after which, on a fine day, supervision moves to the yard. See separate policy on supervision.

## Transition to Secondary School

We are the feeder school for Causeway Comprehensive School and most of our pupils transfer there. To help with the transition, 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils are taken on an orientation day to the school where they can experience life there. A basketball blitz is also organised by Mr. McGaley in May/June to bring pupils from all the feeder schools together. Where a child has special needs, with the permission of the parents, our school liaises with the secondary school principal to make sure provisions are in place to meet the child's needs.

## Uniforms/Tracksuits

School uniform consists of a navy pants/pinafore/skirt, royal blue jumper with white stripe or royal blue cardigans, white shirt, silver and blue tie and black shoes. School uniforms are available from Kay's Children's shop, Listowel. Navy tracksuits should be worn only on days designated by the class teacher.