

St. Declan's National School

Scoil Nais Déagláin



Parent/Guardian Information Booklet

Bourne Avenue, Ashbourne, Co. Meath - A84KT02
School Roll Number: 19486K

www.decsash.ie

Phone: 01-8350594

Email: info@decsash.ie

Twitter: @decsash

Principal: Cian Kearins

Deputy Principal: Cathy Collier

Chairperson of the Board of Management: Geraldine Boylan

Cead Míle Fáilte

Welcome to St. Declan's N.S.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of the staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management I would like to welcome you and your child to St. Declan's National School. I hope that we will share a happy and successful future together and that your son/daughter will find school life both challenging and rewarding. Our philosophy of education can be best summarised by our school motto, "Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh siad" (Praise the youth and they will shine).

In St. Declan's we strive to create a happy, caring atmosphere where each pupil has the opportunity to grow and develop as a person and to reach their full potential. We do this in partnership with our parents who we recognise as the primary educators of their children. We look forward to sharing this journey with you and your child. Regular communication between home and school is vital to your child's progress at school and if you have concerns about your child at any stage, feel welcome to contact the school.

Each and every member of our highly motivated staff will endeavour to provide your child with the best possible education. Our current staff consists of Principal and Deputy Principal (both Administrative) along with 9 Assistant Principals. We have 25 Mainstream Class Teachers, 12 Special Education Teachers, 5 Special Needs Assistants, our secretaries

Karen and Joanne, our caretaker Tommy and our team of housekeeping/cleaning staff.

I hope you find this information booklet helpful as you learn about our school. Thank you for entrusting your child to us.

Is mise le meas,

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

Cian Kearins

Principal

Aims of Our School

We aim to encourage our children to become self-confident, tolerant, co-operative and self-disciplined and to help them learn the importance of punctuality, honesty, loyalty and consideration for others.

Our Mission Statement

Our school cherishes all pupils equally. We aim, with the involvement and co-operation of the entire school community, to assist each child to reach their full potential as individuals.

School History

We first opened our doors in April 1977, replacing the old village school which was no longer capable of catering for the rapidly expanding community. St. Declan's is a co-educational school catering for children from Junior Infants to 6th Class. The school operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Meath, Most Rev. Tom Deenihan. While the ethos of the school is Catholic, children of all faiths and none are welcomed and their beliefs respected. We celebrated our 40th year anniversary in April 2017.

School Attendance



There is a history of good attendance in St. Declan's. We appreciate the efforts made by parents to ensure regular and punctual attendance at school. I would like to impress upon you the close link between success at school and low levels of absenteeism. All schools must report absences in excess of 20 days to TUSLA who will investigate if necessary and act upon cases of unsatisfactory school attendance.

If your child is absent from school you will be required to provide a written explanation for the absence via Aladdin Connect. Alternatively you may send in a written note to your child's class teacher but via Aladdin is the preferred option. The school should also be notified promptly in the event of pupils being absent for a longer period. Your child's attendance will be available on Aladdin Connect which will be helpful to you in monitoring their attendance.

Please ensure that your child is at school at 9.15am each morning. If your child is late to school, for any reason, please send a written explanation to the class teacher. A written note should also be sent to the teacher if you need to pick up your child early from school.

Board of Management

The board of management manages the school on behalf of the patron and is accountable to the patron and the Minister. The Board must uphold the characteristic spirit (ethos) of the school. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, including providing guidance and direction to the teachers and other staff of the school and is accountable for that management.

The Board consists of patron nominees, parent nominees, community representatives and teacher nominees including the school principal. They work together as partners in promoting the success of the school in all its work and in its links with the wider community.

The Board of Managements Term runs from December 2023 to November 2027.

Members of the Board of Management	
Patron Nominees	1. Geraldine Boylan (Chairperson) 2. Father Stephen Kennedy
Parent Nominees	3. Dara Gill 4. Jennifer Mulvey (Treasurer)
Community Representatives	5. Valerie Tannam 6. Dermot Deegan
Teacher Nominees	7. Cian Kearins (Principal/Secretary) 8. Seona Conway

The Parents' Association

The school is fortunate to have a very active, co-operative and supportive Parents' Association. The Association involves itself in a wide range of activities designed to improve the quality of our children's education.

The aims of the Association are:

- To foster cooperation and mutual respect between parents, teachers and the Board of Management.
- To improve communication between all school partners.
- To inform parents on aspects of school life.
- To support school activities.

The Parents' Association has given substantial financial help to school projects over many years through its extensive fundraising activities.

The staff and Board of Management are highly appreciative of the work of the association and we urge all parents/guardians to become involved.

Holidays/School Closures

Holidays are largely agreed nationally with a small number of days left to the discretion of individual schools. In addition, teachers are sometimes required to participate in continuous professional development days where new ideas, approaches and methodologies are discussed. Schools are closed on these days and parents will be given notice of such school closures.

A calendar of school holidays, closures and other important events is circulated to parents in September. The school calendar is also available on the Aladdin Connect Homepage.

Notes are sent home via Aladdin on a regular basis keeping parents informed on school activities and any changes to the school timetable.

In exceptional circumstances e.g. interruption to electricity supplies, water shortage etc., it may be necessary to close the school at short notice. We always try to give as much notice as possible, however sometimes this may be out of our control.

Home-School Communication



We recognise the importance and value in maintaining effective home-school communication. The school uses a content management system called Aladdin Schools. Aladdin Schools offer an app called Aladdin Connect to maintain regular communication with parents. In addition, Aladdin Connect offers many other helpful features and services to parents and the school. Through Aladdin Connect parents can view the child's attendance and record absence reasons with ease. You can also view books that your child has on loan from the school's library and when they are due to be returned. Parents are invited to reserve meeting slots for our annual parent-teacher meetings held in November through

Aladdin Connect. We also manage all school payments through Aladdin such as book rental, swimming, school tours etc. At the end of the year, parents can view End-of-Year reports through Aladdin Connect.

In addition, Mrs. Collier prepares a monthly newsletter in which we share lots of recent school news and updates.

Should you like to contact the school for any reason you may do so via the school email address info@decsash.ie or by phoning the school office on 01-8350594 between 8.45a.m. and 3:45p.m.

School Timetable

The school doors will open to receive pupils at 9:15 a.m. School gates open at 9:05 a.m. each morning. The Board of Management does not accept responsibility for any child on school grounds before 9:05a.m.

School finishes at 2.00 p.m. for Junior and Senior Infants and 3:00 p.m. for children in 1st – 6th Classes.

Break times are 10.55 a.m. – 11.10 a.m. and 12.45 p.m. - 1.15 p.m.

The office is closed from 12.30 p.m. – 1.00 p.m.

Early collection/Late arrival

Unless in the case of an emergency, please refrain from collecting children for the 30 minutes prior to home time. All children must be signed in/out by a parent/guardian.

Infants: 1:30pm - 2:00pm ; 1st – 6th: 2:30pm - 3:00pm

When your child is Sick

If your child becomes ill while in school, we will ring you at the contact number you have given us. If he/she feels ill in the morning, or has not been well overnight please keep the child at home. A sick child is unlikely to learn. If your child is going to be absent from school you can inform the teacher by uploading a note on Aladdin.

Procedure for children in casts/slings/using crutches

Procedures for children who are on crutches, in casts or whose arm is in a sling were reviewed by the Safety Committee regarding accessing the yard: The following was agreed:

- a) Any child on crutches or in a sling to stay indoors due to risk of further injury to self and/or others
- b) If arm/foot in a cast, in general children from 3rd - 6th are allowed to access yard if they also have permission from their parent. Class teacher must instruct office to contact the parent and a note of this communication will be recorded on Aladdin. If parent has already sent in a note providing confirmation of their approval of the child going to yard, this will be given to the office for retaining on the child's file
- c) Children in 2nd Class or below who have an arm/foot in a cast generally do not go out to yard due to the risk of further injury to self and/or others.

Catholic Ethos, Religious Education & Sacraments

St Declan's N.S. is under the patronage of the Catholic Church. Therefore children in second class make their First Holy Communion and children in sixth class make their Confirmation. In both sacrament classes children and parents are asked to attend and participate in mass services in the months leading up to the day. We call this the HOME-CHURCH Link.

Every year we celebrate Catholics Schools Week which often includes Grandparents' Day. Each class has a Sacred Space in their classroom and teachers follow the Grow-In Love programme for Religious Education.

Healthy Lunches

St. Declan's is a Health Promoting School where pupils are encouraged to think carefully about diet, exercise and general personal health matters. All children are asked to bring healthy lunches to school. Naturally you are well placed to help in this area. This good habit will encourage healthy eating from an early age. Please avoid crisps, sweets, chocolate related products, popcorn and fizzy drinks. We regularly run the Food Dudes health eating programme in the school.

Hot Meals Programme

We have now been selected for the government's Hot School Meals Programme. The Schools' Procurement Unit have advised our school management body, CPSMA, that schools should pause any procurement for the scheme until new guidance, and contract templates are made available to schools. We will update parents with additional information as it becomes available.

Health/Hygiene

Your child will be sharing a room with a large number of other children. Close contact with other pupils is unavoidable, therefore we ask parents to pay particular attention to health and hygiene. Please check your child for head-lice regularly. Parents are asked to inform the school if children have health problems that the school should be aware of. Any infectious illness should be notified to the school without delay. Infectious illnesses include Covid 19, measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox, scarlet fever and whooping cough. If your child has any serious allergies or illnesses the school needs to be made aware of it as soon as possible. In the case where a child needs medicine to be administered during the school day the parents need to apply to the Board of Management to give their consent.

Digital Technology

St. Declan's NS excels in digital learning. We have 25 smart boards throughout the school. We also have 3 interactive panels. Each teacher has a ladybug and a school camera. We also have two iPad trolleys equipped with 16 iPads per trolley. We have a trolley equipped with 20 chromebooks which some of the senior classes use. We are currently implementing our Digital Learning plan which is led the Digital Learning team of teachers and pupils in the school.

School Website, Twitter Page

We have a very informative and easy to use school website which has recently been updated (www.decsash.ie). Teachers upload regular posts and photographs of events happening throughout the school year. You will find lots of information on the website regarding holidays, newsletters, policies, booklists, school activities, programmes taking place in different classes, sacraments, school sports, Parents' Association work, assemblies etc.

The school has a presence on social media also. We would encourage you to follow our Twitter page @decsash to receive regular updates on school news. The Parents' Association also have a Facebook page which you will find by searching for "St. Declan's Parents' Association".

School Library

Our school library (*Declan's Reading Den*) was redesigned and refurbished in 2018 and is a fantastic addition to the school's facilities. The library contains a large range of books to suit all ages, reading levels and interests. Each class is allocated a time slot per week to allow them to visit the library; they can browse books, read, listen to a story read by their teacher or take out books on loan. The books on loan are recorded on our Aladdin system. In 2022 we introduced the Accelerated Reader programme which allows us to motivate, monitor, and manage children's independent reading practice (in 3rd - 6th Classes) and watch as students develop a true love for reading.



School Uniform

A school uniform is worn by the pupils of our school. (See sample pictures of our tracksuit top, school jumper & cardigan)

Boys: Navy trousers, jumper, tie and blue shirt.

Girls: Navy pinafore/skirt/trousers, cardigan, tie and blue shirt.

The school also has a navy-blue tracksuit.

Junior and Senior Infant classes wear tracksuits only.

Children in classes 1st - 6th wear full uniforms with a navy tie.

The uniform should be worn to school daily except on P.E. days when the school tracksuits should be worn.

The uniform should always be worn by children when representing the school.

The school uniform and tracksuit are available to purchase in Anu Fashions (Garden City Shopping Centre, located near the school across from Centra). Their phone number is 01-8352370.

Alternatively school crests may be purchased from the school office @ €5.00 each and stitched onto suitable, plain clothing as described above.

Ties are also available from the office @ €4.00 each. Please note that office can only accept cash for these items.

Trousers/skirts/tie/blue shirts/polo shirts can be purchased anywhere, such as Dunnes, Tesco, Marks & Spencer etc.

School Tracksuit



Boys & Girls Uniform

Primary Schoolbooks Scheme

The Primary schoolbooks scheme is a funding scheme where the department of Education provides funding to schools to purchase schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks. The school will provide your child(ren) with the schoolbooks, workbooks and copybooks. It is very important that your child looks after the books carefully as they belong to the school and must be returned to the school in good condition at the end of the school year. They must also be returned if your child leaves the school.

Extra-Curricular Activities

In addition to the teaching of Primary School Curriculum, we offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities thanks to the enthusiasm, volunteerism and wide-ranging talents of our staff. The following is a list of current extra-curricular activities.

Sports



St. Declan's is actively involved in a variety of sporting activities. The school fields teams in Gaelic football (girls and boys), basketball, soccer and athletics.



In recent years the school has enjoyed some tremendous Gaelic football successes in Parnell Park and Páirc Tailteann.

We also emphasise sport as a fun activity for all children. In the last term of each year we hold a “School Sports Day” as part of Active School’s Week in June. A member of the School’s Leadership and Management team coordinates sports in the school and they are supported by a large team of teachers who train and prepare teams voluntarily at lunchtime and after school.



We had fantastic success in November 2022 when our Senior Boys’ Football team won the Division One final of the Cumann na mBunscol competition in Meath. It was an historic achievement for the school as it was the first time for the school to win the cup. Following on from

this, the boys also won the Division 1 Fingal League in May 2023.

We also had great success in May 2024 when our 5 A Side Boys Soccer team were crowned Leinster Champions in the 2024 FAI Schools Primary 5s Tournament. The team went on to participate in the All Ireland Finals in the Aviva Stadium

Choir



Our school has a long tradition of producing excellent choirs. They perform beautifully at various ceremonies throughout the year. Our choirs have also performed regularly at Christmas Carol Concerts, School Concerts and at the Corfhéile. We are very fortunate to have some very talented Musicians and singers on staff who lend their expertise in this area.

Active School Flag



The school has been awarded the Active School flag which acknowledges the school's promotion of physical activity. The Active School Committee of teachers and pupils lead this important initiative in the school. Our annual Active Week in June along with other seasonal active initiatives during the year are very popular with the children.

Seachtain na Gaeilge



Our annual Seachtain na Gaeilge celebrations are the highlight of the year for many of our pupils (and teachers!). Bíonn páistí (agus múinteoirí) ag damhsa, ag canadh, ag seinm ceoil agus ag baint spraoi as ár gcultúr.

Charity Fundraising



We participate in lots of fundraising events each year, including Vincent De Paul Collection, Food/Sweet collections, GOAL, Trocaire etc.

Green-School Flag



Green-Schools is Ireland's leading environmental management and award programme, working with primary and secondary schools across the country. St. Declan's have promoted environmental education and sustainability over the past number of years. In March 2020 we were awarded our 6th Green Flag for our success in promoting Global Citizenship: Litter and Waste.

Students' Council



Each September, children in each of our 4th, 5th and 6th Class elect two pupils to represent their class on the Students' Council.

Through our Student Council, we hope to give our pupils a more active role in the organisation of our school and ensure they are listened to and respected for their ideas and concerns.

Chess/Draughts competitions



Over the years, we have run an annual draughts tournament for pupils in senior classes at lunch time.

Special Weeks and Celebrations



We hold other special events such as Friendship Week, Wellbeing Week, Science Week, Maths Week and Book Week. These events afford us an opportunity to put a special emphasis on certain areas of learning throughout the year.

School Outings



School outings are regularly organised for children in all classes. Some are local and for others we must travel by bus. Outings include trips to the library, Dalgan Park, Hill of Tara, Murderous Maths in DCU, Dáil Éireann, and Fighting Words to mention some of the most popular trips. Pupils also have the opportunity to go on a fun school tour.

Dec's Got Talent



Our annual talent show, *Dec's Got Talent*, is a great favourite of the children and there's always a great range of talents on display culminating in a grand finale in the hall to finish off (complete with Simon Cowell-type judges!).

Quizzes



St. Declan's N.S. has a long history of participating in local quiz competitions.

Graduation



Our 6th Class Graduation Ceremony is a very memorable night for pupils leaving St. Declan's and progressing onto Post-Primary school. There are awards, photo collages, memories and stories shared and of course, a few tears thrown in.

Whole-School Assemblies



We have monthly whole-school assemblies for 1st - 6th Classes which provide us with a great opportunity to celebrate pupil achievements and successes, share school news, talk about our St. Declan's Code, learn about being a good Christian, discuss school rules and expectations and also to enjoy performances from various classes. Mrs. Collier coordinates our assemblies with the help of the Class Teachers and we all look forward to them each month. Three pupils from each class are acknowledged at each assembly for special achievements/efforts - awards include Pupil of the Month, Friendship Award and Gaeilgeoir na Míosa (Irish Speaker of the Month).

We hope that we will start our pupils on a road that will help them lead a full, contented and happy lifestyle, ready to take on the many challenges in life and also the rich opportunities that will come their way.

Should you like to contact the office or school staff for any reason you may do so via the school email address info@decsash.ie or by phoning the school office on 01-8350594 between 8:45a.m. and 3:45p.m.

[Go raibh míle maith agaibh.](#)

Principal

Mr. Cian Kearins

Deputy Principal

Mrs. Cathy Collier



Updated: June 2025